

NEW YORK

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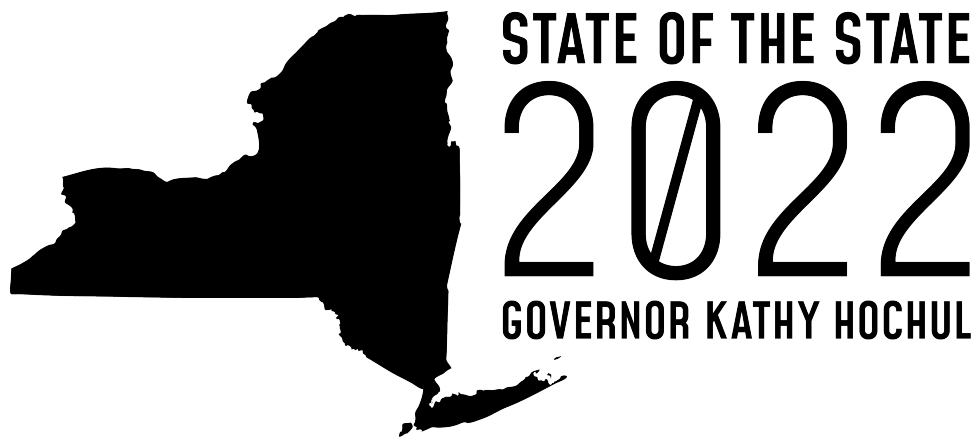
OF

THE

STATE

A NEW ERA FOR NEW YORK

2022



A NEW ERA FOR NEW YORK

2022 State of the State

Governor Kathy Hochul

The Constitution of New York State requires the Governor to deliver an annual message to the Legislature regarding the state of the state. The State of the State proposals are the first step in defining the Governor's agenda in 2022.

Additional policies and funding details will be included in the upcoming Governor's Executive Budget.

FOREWORD

As Governor of New York, I am well aware of the significance of this moment: the first time a woman has presented the State of the State. But I am not here simply to make history. I am here to make a difference.

For a long time, Albany's Executive and Legislative branches were not fighting for New Yorkers side-by-side. Too often, previous administrations worked against, not with, the Legislature, or altogether ignored the critical, constitutional role of the Legislature in our government.

In the four months since I took office, my administration has demonstrated that there is a different, better way to get things done. Our government will be defined by its shared success. Since day one as Governor, I have not made a single decision in a vacuum. I have listened to the experts and the elected officials on the ground, and I have always listened to the people of New York, steeled with the knowledge that every decision I make must go through one lens: what is best for New Yorkers.

New Yorkers have endured tremendous hardship over the past two years. Throughout this pandemic, we have buried loved ones, shuttered small businesses, and missed out on some of life's most precious milestones: holidays, weddings, graduations, births of grandchildren. There has been so much loss, not just of life, but also of hopes and dreams and opportunities. People are asking themselves if we will ever really get through this.

Yes, we will.

New York is not just going to come back. We are going to come back stronger than ever before. Why? Because we are New Yorkers. We have been knocked down before. We have been counted out. But if there is one thing New Yorkers know how to do, it is how to prove the naysayers wrong. It stirs something up inside us.

That pride and resilience has not just pushed this state forward in good times and bad. It has also been a constant source of inspiration for the rest of the country.

That is why I believe that this is not a moment of despair, but a moment of great possibility. We will meet this moment by acting decisively and with urgency.

That is exactly what I have done since my first day as Governor and what I will do every day I lead this great state. I have spent my lifetime in public service, I know the people, the places, and the challenges across New York, and I know the path we must take forward to lift up each and every New Yorker.

New York is due for a comeback the likes of which this country has never seen. Together, we will lead that comeback.

We will control the virus, and not let it control us. To confront this pandemic and prepare for the future, we will support the men and women who have been on the frontlines from the very beginning and who will help keep New Yorkers healthy long after this crisis is over. During the terrifying early days of this pandemic, while many New Yorkers hunkered down in the security of their homes, our healthcare workers and first responders showed up to work, day after day, night after night, double shift after double shift, putting their lives on the line to save others.

With the ongoing onslaught of rising cases and new, more aggressive and transmissible variants, the daily sacrifices being made by healthcare workers are unrelenting. The health of every New Yorker depends on a strong, stable, and equitable healthcare system, and healthcare workers are its very foundation. We must stop the current hemorrhaging of healthcare workers, and we are going to do it not just by saying we owe them a debt of gratitude but actually paying them the debt we owe. This year, we will ensure that people in this state receive the best

possible treatment by growing and preserving the workforce and filling its ranks with the best and brightest in their fields.

As we bolster our bone-tired healthcare workforce, we know they are not the only heroes of the pandemic. I am so grateful to all who are working to keep our children safely in schools. The role of a teacher is irreplaceable in a child's life, and as the past two years have hammered home, they are irreplaceable in a parent's life, too. As a mother, I know this firsthand.

This workforce is also stressed and overworked. So we will ramp up efforts to recruit and retain teachers with more effective training and support, faster and easier certification, and stronger career pipelines and ladders.

We also must rebuild and reinvest in the myriad industries that were decimated by the pandemic. This has not just been a public health crisis but an economic crisis as well. We will help our small businesses stay open with targeted tax relief, and we will deliver a tax rebate to middle-class families, benefitting millions of New Yorkers. We will also provide funding and tax credits to the agricultural sector that literally provides the resources that feed us and to the arts and culture organizations that feed our souls.

Getting out of this crisis is our first order of business, but we know we cannot stop there. To come back stronger, we need to raise our ambitions and look to the future. The pandemic did not create all the problems we are facing today, but simply exposed and magnified the cracks in our society that had been too easy to ignore before.

We have the will to act, and we have the means to mend those cracks and create a better, stronger, and fairer version of our state.

As we embark on this New Era for our state, we need to take a hard look in the mirror and deal with a harsh reality. Nearly 300,000 New Yorkers left our state last year. That is the steepest population drop of any state in the nation.

To those who left temporarily because of the pandemic, or are trying to decide their next steps during these uncertain times, I have one message: You do not want to miss what is about to happen next. Right now, in real time, we are building a new New York worthy of your talents and ambitions.

We are going to jumpstart our economic recovery by being the most business-friendly and worker-friendly state in the nation.

We are laser-focused on bringing in new jobs in high-growth industries like technology, healthcare, and green energy to New York, and we are going to make sure we have a workforce trained to do these jobs and to thrive in these jobs.

My grandfather first became a migrant farm worker in the fields of South Dakota, then later he and Grandma were domestic workers, and then, it all changed when he heard there were great jobs in a place called Buffalo, New York.

Grandpa worked at the Bethlehem steel plant. Grandma worked at Bell Aerospace, making parts for our planes during World War II. That was their ticket to the life that they came to this country in search of.

But what really transformed my family was the fact that my father was able to get a college degree at night, while working at the same steel plant as his father. If he had not taken that leap and invested in himself by broadening his horizons, I would be living a very different life today. My whole family would be.

I believe to my very core that there is nothing more valuable than education and training when it comes to unlocking opportunity and prosperity. It changes lives, across generations.

That is why I am so focused on expanding educational opportunities, starting by making the State's tuition assistance program available to part-time students. Students should not be penalized for working their way through school. In fact, so many have no choice.

World class higher education offered at both private and public institutions is one of our state's greatest assets, and I believe that SUNY and CUNY have untapped potential that needs to be harnessed and unleashed, as engines of social mobility, and as launching pads to careers with good paying jobs. I am outlining a vision to make SUNY the best public higher education system in the nation.

Connecting New Yorkers to the education they need to learn, compete, and grow will ensure no one is left behind.

As we upgrade our state's higher learning institutions, we acknowledge that there are populations at-risk of falling through the cracks, and we must target job training and education opportunities to them, as well. We will launch a new "Jails-to-Jobs" initiative to provide incarcerated people with the help and support they need to find employment after release and stay employed.

And we need to address one of the most basic of human needs: to feel safe in our communities. Many factors contribute to our streets feeling less safe, including the uptick in gun violence since the start of the pandemic. Going forward, we will double down on practical, proven strategies to combat gun violence.

Supporting both law enforcement and community-based programs will be critical. But if we want New York to reach its true potential, we must address every factor contributing to the pervasive unease many are feeling on our streets.

We must confront the crisis of street homelessness if we want to improve quality of life for everyone. Each person who finds themselves on the street or in a shelter must be treated with dignity, compassion, and respect. We will take direct action to get homeless New Yorkers off the street and into stable living situations, while also addressing the root causes of homelessness.

To ensure we have the housing we need for these individuals and others experiencing homelessness, we will launch a comprehensive housing plan, including the creation and preservation of 100,000 affordable homes and 10,000 supportive housing units. To prevent those at risk of homelessness from falling into the cycle in the first place, we will expand our efforts to confront poverty head-on and put resources and funding behind proven solutions to ensure every person can access housing.

As we ensure the most basic needs of all New Yorkers are met, we must also continue to lay the foundation upon which they can build that brighter future for themselves, and for their families.

I will use my power in the Office of the Governor to build the solutions to allow New Yorkers to move over, under, and through the obstacles that have been put in their way.

New Yorkers deserve 21st century infrastructure, and that is exactly what they are going to get. We will also take action to ensure the basic rights of clean air, clean water, and a clean environment for every New Yorker. We are in a climate crisis. We must act like it.

In September, Hurricane Ida was responsible for the first flash flood emergency in New York City's history. We are experiencing record-shattering climate events and extreme temperatures across New York. The cost of inaction is too great to bear.

We will accelerate our adoption of clean energy technologies for buildings, truck fleets, schools, and state agencies. We will make New York the renewable energy capital of the nation. We will drive the clean energy economy forward, create tens of thousands of good-paying jobs, and turn targets into results.

While we invest in the economy that keeps our state moving forward, we will also invest in the people that give New York its life. New York is the greatest state in the union because of the strength of its people. Just look at how New Yorkers responded to the COVID-19 pandemic: with strength, conviction, and compassion.

We will reaffirm our commitment to an equitable society to ensure that everyone, regardless of their circumstance, not only has the tools they need to succeed, but knows where to find them. We say all the time that our state's diversity is its greatest strength, so it is our responsibility to honor the multitudes of people who choose to call New York home by protecting their basic dignity.

To get all of this done, we need a functioning democracy. Every day as Governor, I have taken every action with the goal of restoring trust in government. My administration will continue to lead by example in showing the people what good, honest, functioning government looks like.

We will enact term limits for statewide officials, and because our officials should only be focused on serving New Yorkers, we will ban statewide public officials from earning outside income. We will replace JCOPE with a new ethics enforcement agency, one that answers to New Yorkers — not to politicians.

I am proud to have the boldest, most far-reaching policy agenda to jumpstart the economic recovery of our state, build back stronger than ever before, and usher in a new era of government. Right now, in this moment of unlimited possibility, we have the chance to be the New York I know we can be, the idea of New York that so many of us hold in our hearts.

Think about the feeling you get deep inside when you cross over the Manhattan Bridge and catch a glimpse of the Statue of Liberty, or when you are in the Finger Lakes and you can feel the shadow of Wesleyan Chapel in Seneca Falls, or when you pass through Poughkeepsie on Route 9 and see the sign for the Home of Franklin Delano Roosevelt. That immediate rush of hope and pride — pride that for generations, this state has been the epicenter, inspiration, and beating heart of the American Dream.

Those first waves of European immigrants arrived on New York's shores in search of a better life — those huddled masses, yearning to be free. I stand on the shoulders of so many people who have blazed trails and made New York the birthplace of so many hopes and dreams and visions of a better life.

We will prove yet again that New York will always be a beacon to the world, the place where the American Dream is not just pursued and achieved by the fortunate few, but fully realized by all. That is the future that the next generation of New Yorkers deserve to inherit. That is the future we will start building today.

Governor Kathy Hochul

January 2022

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SECTION I

REBUILD OUR HEALTHCARE ECONOMY TO PROVIDE CARE FOR MORE NEW YORKERS

All New Yorkers should have access to safe, affordable and high-quality health care. The COVID-19 pandemic taxed an already strained healthcare system, exacerbating disparities and systemic healthcare delivery issues. The recent rise of the Omicron variant threatens to set things back even further, as essential health workers heroically forge ahead against the latest surge to care for New Yorkers.

All New York State's healthcare goals must start with the foundation of our healthcare system: our workers. To support a stable, strong, and equitable healthcare system, New York must rebuild the workforce that was lost during the pandemic, grow the workforce needed to meet increasing demand for healthcare, and retain the valiant but weary workforce that faces new challenges every day. To invest in the healthcare workforce that protects us, Governor Hochul has proposed a sweeping set of initiatives to rebuild, grow, and retain workers — with the significant goal of growing the workforce by 20 percent over the next five years.

With that foundation of workers in place, Governor Hochul will advance care for more New Yorkers through a series of actions built around wider access to digital health services, stronger healthcare affordability programs, larger investments in maternal health, holistic plans to support aging populations, and capital investments in hospitals and health systems in underserved communities. Without a strong workforce, New York cannot achieve these ambitious goals. With it, we can do all of it — and lead the nation in equity across the care spectrum.

New York has stayed strong throughout this pandemic. By taking care of the workers who take care of us, we will be able to face whatever comes next.

Part I-A: Rebuild and Grow the Healthcare Workforce by 20% Over the Next Five Years

Even before the COVID-19 pandemic struck, healthcare providers and advocates across the state raised workforce concerns. A pre-pandemic survey projected the need for health care workers in New York to grow 32 percent¹ between 2018 and 2028.

The pandemic has dramatically exacerbated this need, impacting the experience of our essential healthcare workers as well as access to high-quality care for New Yorkers. As of June 2021, New York's healthcare workforce was still 3 percent² below pre-pandemic levels, and 11 percent³ below where it would need to be by the end of 2022 to keep up with pre-pandemic projected demand.

The growing demand for our essential healthcare workforce requires swift and strong action. Governor Hochul will rebuild and grow the healthcare workforce with a program designed to improve the career pipeline, expand access to healthcare training and education, recruit care workers to underserved areas, and strengthen home care.

Most significantly, with many of the pandemic's heroes earning minimum wage, Governor Hochul will make a \$10 billion commitment to healthcare, supporting higher wages, bonuses, and investments in care.

Together these efforts will not only honor those who cared for us before and during the pandemic — they will strengthen our healthcare system to unlock innovation and provide higher levels of care to all New Yorkers.

Make a \$10 Billion Investment in Healthcare and Support Wages for Workers

New York's essential healthcare workers have seen us through a once-in-a-century public health crisis and turned our state into a model for battling — and beating — COVID-19. But many of these workers are still earning a wage far below what they need to sustain a household and a fair quality of life.

To grow New York's healthcare workforce by 20 percent over the next 5 years, we must attract talented people into the profession at a time of such significant strain. And to do that — while also retaining those who have been working so tirelessly and heroically these past two years — we must treat our healthcare workforce with the dignity they deserve.

Simply put, we must build the healthcare system of tomorrow. To do that, Governor Hochul will make more than a \$10 billion, multi-year investment in healthcare, including more than \$4 billion to support wages and bonuses for healthcare workers. Key components of this multi-year investment include:

- \$2 billion to support healthcare worker wages.
- \$2 billion to support healthcare and mental hygiene worker retention bonuses, with up to \$3,000 bonuses going to full-time workers who remain in their positions for one year, and pro-rated bonuses for those working fewer hours.
- \$500 million for Cost of Living Adjustments (COLAs) to help raise wages for human services workers.
- \$2 billion for healthcare capital infrastructure and improved lab capacity.
- Other investments in workforce and healthcare access and delivery.

New Yorkers owe an endless debt of gratitude to our healthcare workers for all they have given us. It is time we start to repay it in a meaningful way.

Increase the Training Capacity of Medical Institutions

With their focus on delivering immediate care to New Yorkers, our state’s medical institutions often lack the training capacity to focus on preparing the next generation of healthcare professionals. To support a steady pipeline of high-quality healthcare workers, Governor Hochul will increase the training capacity of medical institutions. This initiative will cover the costs of new programs, provide compensation to allow workers to train full-time support staff (who help free up existing staff do more training), and the development of new training techniques.

Attract Students into Healthcare by Relieving Their Financial Burdens

The average amount of student debt amassed by a person entering the healthcare industry in the U.S. is higher than any other industry at a staggering \$72,800,⁴ discouraging many strong would-be professionals from entering the field in the first place. Governor Hochul will provide direct financial support for the education of healthcare professionals, provided that they work in New York State for a specified period after obtaining their credentials.

Governor Hochul’s plan will offer free tuition, cover instructional costs for high-demand health occupations and provide stipends to make up for lost income while in school. It would also provide for wraparound services such as childcare or transportation support to eliminate obstacles that stand in the way of New Yorkers training for healthcare professions. Together these efforts will make it easier for many more talented New Yorkers to pursue a career in healthcare — and help meet the needs of our state.

Award Prior Learning Credit across SUNY and CUNY

Health and human services workers engage in significant on-the-ground learning through the direct care they provide, often before they pursue additional school training. But not every training program recognizes this work in the same way,

creating barriers to would-be professionals pursuing a health or human services career.

As part of the Governor’s plan to make it easier for New Yorkers to move between college and career, the State University of New York (SUNY) and the City University of New York (CUNY) will adopt a consistent, statewide policy for crediting relevant prior learning and work experience, supporting credit accumulation, certifications, and post-secondary attainment.

While this program will benefit all students in SUNY and CUNY schools, it will be particularly meaningful for New Yorkers who have spent years working in the health and human services field and gaining invaluable experience on the job. Under this policy, it will be a far more seamless experience to return to school to gain the necessary credentials to move up the career ladder.

Recruit Medical Professionals to Work in Underserved Areas

Governor Hochul recognizes the need to recruit medical professionals to work in underserved areas, particularly in rural parts of the state, and to ensure a diverse healthcare workforce throughout the state. To achieve these goals, New York State will:

- *Increase Funding for the Doctors Across New York Program:* This proposal will provide loan forgiveness up to \$120,000 for doctors who work in underserved areas for three years.
- *Create a “Nurses Across NY” Program:* Based on the successful Doctors Across NY program, this proposal will place nurses in underserved areas across the state.

- *Expand the SUNY Pre-Medical Opportunity Program and the Diversity in Medicine Program:* These programs will recruit and train a diverse healthcare workforce that represents the diversity of the patients in underserved communities to ensure health equity across the continuum of care.

Connect Immigrant New Yorkers to Direct Support Professions

The immigrant labor pool is often unemployed or underemployed due to the adversity faced in obtaining recognition for foreign education or credentials in the U.S. Skilled immigrant New Yorkers may have professional credentials, but a licensing board may be unable to translate foreign education to the board's requirements.

State agencies will work with external partners to develop an apprenticeship job training program that provides new and existing immigrant workers with a career pathway in the workforce — addressing the gap in immigrant employment while filling more urgently needed direct support professions.

Allow Doctors and Nurses to Easily Relocate to and Practice in New York

Inconsistent professional licensing requirements across states can create barriers for doctors or nurses wishing to relocate to and practice in New York. To reduce these obstacles, Governor Hochul will propose legislation for New York to join the Interstate Medical Licensure Compact and the Nurse Licensure Compact. Joining these compacts will enable doctors and nurses to relocate to New York and use their existing license to more quickly be able to practice in the state through telehealth or otherwise, attracting more healthcare workers at a time of great need. This practice was temporarily allowed by Executive Order during the COVID-19 pandemic and resulted in greater availability of qualified healthcare professionals in New York.

Expand Workforce Development Partnerships to Build a Human Services Talent Pipeline

To further strengthen the human services talent pipeline, Governor Hochul will use federal funds to expand two successful workforce development programs:

- *Expand the Direct Support Professional Career and Technical Education Program:* Currently, the Office for People with Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD) partners with the Capital Region Boards of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) to offer high school students the opportunity to become direct care workers through the Direct Support Professional Career and Technical Education program. Governor Hochul will expand this successful program to other BOCES statewide and direct the human services agencies to collaborate with BOCES to establish programs for all direct care workers.
- *Expand the SUNY for All Partnership with OPWDD:* SUNY for All is a free training tool for direct support professionals to enhance their skills and help them enter, or advance, in the health and human services field. This proposal would expand the SUNY for All partnership to all 10 SUNY Educational Opportunity Centers statewide and create opportunities for all direct care workers.

Grow the Home and Community-Based Health Care Workforce Through Benefits and Skills Development

The need for home healthcare workers in New York is estimated to grow by roughly 65 percent⁵ by 2028, the most of any healthcare occupation. The American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) provided significant funding for states to invest in their home and community-based health care systems. Under Governor Hochul's leadership, New York State has applied to the Federal government to spend \$2.2 billion on 14 initiatives to strengthen our care workforce. These include:

- *Home Care Workforce Initiative:* Enables home care agencies to implement evidence-based programs that help them to recruit, retain, train, and support their direct care workers.
- *Workforce Transportation Incentive:* Solves transportation-related barriers related to home care worker recruitment and/or retention.
- *Retention Incentives for the Intellectual or Developmental Disabilities Workforce:* Provides longevity and retention incentives to direct support professionals.
- *Direct Support Professional Workforce Development Grants:* Provides skills development for direct support professionals.
- *Workforce Recruitment Initiative:* Implements data-driven strategies for effective recruitment of workers for OPWDD.
- *Community Residence Program:* Increases funding for rising direct care staff costs.

Part I-B: Retain the Existing Healthcare Workforce

Given the tremendous and unrelenting strain on healthcare workers since the start of the pandemic, it is not hard to appreciate the challenges of workforce retention. Across healthcare nationwide, employment was down nearly 6 percent⁶ in November 2021, compared with where it would have been based on pre-pandemic trends. The challenge of rebuilding and growing New York's health workforce will only mount if we cannot keep talented workers on the job. To simply keep up with growing demand, prior to the pandemic, healthcare employers and providers were

adding an average of 34,000 new workers in high-demand positions (home health aides and nurses) each year, on top of the roughly 100,000 workers who needed to be recruited each year to replace those who leave their jobs.⁷

Governor Hochul will strengthen retention in the healthcare workforce by developing career pathways for long-term care workers, investing in mentorship and transition tools to get workers from school to professional practice, and launching programs to coordinate training, retention, and care delivery strategies across the state, among other initiatives. A central goal is to make the day-to-day job more satisfying and rational for these vital workers so they can stay in the profession and improve care for us all.

Support More Career Flexibility for Direct Care Workers

Long-term care workers often face barriers to moving across caregiving roles. For example, certified nursing assistants are not allowed to administer medication in long-term care facilities, even if they have sufficient training or experience. Such rules make it harder for health workers to take new jobs and make it harder for facilities to fill open roles.

This initiative will facilitate the creation of a model for training “universal” long-term care workers who want to move across caregiving roles, ensuring that long-term care providers experiencing extreme workforce shortages can obtain and deploy trained workers in a timely and efficient manner.

Improve Training and Coordination Between EMS Professionals Statewide

The COVID-19 pandemic has shown the critical need for the Emergency Medical Services (EMS) workforce to be nimble and ready to respond to public health emergencies. Based on lessons learned during the pandemic, Governor Hochul has a plan to modernize New York’s EMS system and workforce. Core initiatives include:

- Developing statewide treatment protocols across EMS agencies for basic and advanced life support by a single statewide council.
- Creating a coordinated statewide EMS emergency response system.
- Attracting a new generation of EMS providers through new EMS educational opportunities that foster professional growth and increase the overall number of EMS personnel.
- Updating the definition of “emergency medical services” to include new models of health care delivery such as community paramedicine, which permits EMTs to provide health services where access to physicians, clinics, and/or hospitals may be difficult.

An investment in our frontline responders is an investment in urgent care for all New Yorkers.

Reform Rules Limiting What Services Health Workers Can Provide

Healthcare “scope of practice” refers to the health-related actions permitted by a worker’s professional license. In September, Governor Hochul issued an Executive Order⁸ declaring a statewide emergency due to healthcare staffing shortages that expanded the scope of care for some professionals, enabling them to help New Yorkers in urgent need. To maintain this critical flexibility, Governor Hochul will propose legislation to make permanent the most beneficial provisions from the Executive Order, listed below, as well as others implemented during the pandemic.

Under the Governor’s proposal, more professionals will be allowed to administer vaccines, flu, and COVID-19 testing; supervisory requirements in clinical laboratories will be modernized; and requirements will be waived for Nurse Practitioners to have a written practice agreement with a physician, which is an obstacle that stands in the way of Nurse Practitioners providing the maximum amount of care to New Yorkers.

New York's health workforce is filled with tremendously talented professionals who are learning more about how to battle this pandemic every day. We should leverage the growing skills of the workers already caring for New Yorkers to provide even more care when it is needed most.

Create an Office of Healthcare Workforce Innovation

To better coordinate statewide health and direct care workforce strategies, Governor Hochul is directing the Department of Health (DOH) to create an Office of Healthcare Workforce Innovation. This new Office will work across agencies and gather regular, organized input from health and direct care providers, educational organizations, labor unions, and other stakeholders to (1) build a workforce hub, or a statewide online portal that matches candidates with training opportunities, support services, and jobs, (2) develop approaches for strengthening the health and direct care workforce that have been implemented in other states, (3) test new models of care and new educational strategies, and (4) recommend policies to increase the supply of health care and direct support personnel and meet the demands in New York.

Part I-C: Advancing Health Equity: Expand the Reach of Our Healthcare Workforce Through Digital Innovation

The COVID-19 pandemic jumpstarted the development of telehealth and other digital health tools. In the first months of the pandemic, telehealth claims in New York State skyrocketed from being just a fraction of all commercial insurance medical claims to being nearly 17 percent.⁹ Nationally, telehealth claims were 38 times¹⁰ higher in February 2021 than pre-pandemic February 2020. Since the onset of the pandemic, new federal laws and policies have made it easier for people to receive medical care through telehealth paid for by Medicare, Medicaid, and the **Children's Health Insurance program (CHIP)**.

New York is fast becoming America’s digital health capital, thanks in large part to our leading healthcare sector, and is well positioned to build on the lessons learned during the pandemic to broaden the impact of digital healthcare for all New Yorkers. Telehealth and other digital services are especially important for ensuring access to specialists who are difficult to find in underserved communities, particularly upstate. This momentum also has the potential to create high-quality new jobs. In New York City alone, healthcare startups raised \$7.6 billion¹¹ just through March 2021.

To build on this success and expand the reach of our growing healthcare workforce, Governor Hochul’s plan is designed to ensure that more New Yorkers can access digital health services and make these services more convenient and equitable. She will empower New Yorkers to better meet their healthcare needs and manage their healthcare costs, keeping our state at the forefront of America’s digital health future.

Require Private Insurers to Reimburse Appropriate Telehealth Services at the Same Levels as Traditional Services

The pandemic demonstrated the inequities in our healthcare system and showed that telehealth is a critical tool to expand access to healthcare, especially for behavioral health support. During the crisis, New York saw an approximately 130-fold increase in telehealth usage. Increased telehealth usage has been demonstrated to lower health costs and improve the patient experience, including expanding access to care and improving health outcomes.

Medicaid already pays for telehealth services at the same rates as equivalent traditional services. But that isn’t true for many private healthcare plans, and this limits access to these important services for many New Yorkers. Governor’s Hochul will establish parity for telehealth services across commercial insurance plans and

require insurers to offer an adequate network of telehealth health care providers, expanding access for telehealth services throughout the state.

Right now, telehealth adoption is uneven across the state. In particular, telehealth is underutilized by rural populations, those over 60 years old, low-income communities, racial and ethnic minorities, and groups with limited English proficiency. These groups often face a number of barriers to accessing telehealth, and legislative reform is needed to build a more accessible, equitable, effective, and efficient healthcare system. This proposal is a critical step.

Additionally, Governor Hochul will require insurers to provide up-to-date information in their provider directories about which providers offer telehealth services, and require providers to disclose and make publicly available the telehealth services they offer — making it easier for New Yorkers to find the services they need.

Create Powerful Patient and Provider Information Tools

Telehealth and other digital health services continue to expand the amount and type of information they put directly into the hands of New Yorkers, but there is still room to improve access to digital healthcare information.

To create stronger patient and provider information tools, Governor Hochul will establish partnerships between New York State and digital health companies to provide patients with their own health information through familiar formats, such as mobile health apps. This will enable more New Yorkers — especially those who have historically been underserved — to actively manage their own care.

Create a Center for Medicaid Innovation to Lower Costs and Improve Care

The New Yorkers who can least afford healthcare costs often lack access to emerging digital tools that can help provide more affordable care. To expand access and improve health equity, Governor Hochul will create a Center for Medicaid Innovation, whose purpose is to identify and cultivate innovative digital health technologies and solutions capable of furthering the goals of the Medicaid program to achieve better quality, lower costs, and improved patient experiences. The Center will connect private technology companies looking to integrate with Medicaid systems — making these innovative care tools available to more New Yorkers.

Part I-D: Advancing Health Equity: Close New York’s Coverage Gap by Making Affordable Coverage Available to All

Prior to the pandemic, New Yorkers spent more in healthcare costs per-person than nearly any other state, with spending exceeding the national average¹² year after year. The reason was not that New Yorkers used more services — it was that costs kept going up.

As the pandemic forced businesses to shut down or cut workers, the Essential Plan, Child Health Plus, and Medicaid served as critical safety nets. But despite these vital support lines, roughly 1 million New Yorkers remain uninsured due to coverage options that are not accessible or affordable. This population includes New Yorkers who lose insurance coverage due to costs, children who lose coverage because their households cannot afford the monthly premium, and adults who lose access to Medicaid because they turned 65 or became disabled, among others.

Governor Hochul will make coverage more affordable and available to more New Yorkers by proposing a healthcare equity package designed to expand affordable coverage for low-income households, families with children, vulnerable seniors, and individuals with disabilities. These efforts will reduce the uninsured population and help New Yorkers afford the care they need and deserve.

Make Healthcare More Affordable to More New Yorkers

Expanding income eligibility for the Essential Plan will both reduce the number of uninsured New Yorkers and offer an affordable alternative to those who may fall off coverage purchased in the insurance marketplace due to financial burdens.

Governor Hochul will expand Essential Plan eligibility for New Yorkers, raising the threshold from 200 percent of federal poverty line to at least 250 percent subject to federal approval. This will reduce the ranks of the uninsured by at least 14,000 and make healthcare more affordable for at least 92,000 New Yorkers.

Improve Access to Child Health Plus Insurance and to Mental and Behavioral Health Services for Children in Low-Income Households

Across the state, more than 146,000 families with children have a \$9 monthly premium contribution per child in the Child Health Plus insurance plan, creating a cost burden that leads tens of thousands of low-income households losing their coverage. To improve healthcare access and affordability for our vulnerable children, Governor Hochul will eliminate the \$9 premium for families between 160 and 222 percent of the federal poverty level (\$27,876 and \$38,676 for a household of two and between \$42,408 and \$58,836 for a household of four).

Additionally, the Governor will improve access to children's mental and behavioral health services by aligning Child Health Plus benefits with Medicaid benefits, including mental health and substance use services, home- and community-based services, evidence-based treatment for individuals diagnosed with serious mental illness, and residential rehabilitation for youth.

Together these actions will expand access and fulfill an unmet need that disproportionately impacts children in low-income communities and communities of color.

Ensure Vulnerable Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities Maintain Health Coverage as They Age or Become Disabled

Under current Medicaid coverage rules, income eligibility plunges from 138 percent of the federal poverty level (\$17,775 annually for an individual and \$24,040 annually for a couple) to roughly 87 percent (\$10,600 annually for an individual and \$15,600 annually for a couple) when a person turns 65 and becomes eligible for Medicare, forcing many seniors to lose Medicaid coverage. Others lose access to full Medicaid coverage if they become disabled. The combined result of these rules is lost coverage for an estimated 200,000 New Yorkers who need it most, when they need it most.

To address this concern, New York will expand Medicaid eligibility so that low-income New Yorkers age 65 and up, as well as those with disabilities, are able to maintain Medicaid eligibility after they become eligible for Medicare. This coverage expansion will eliminate the resource eligibility test and raise the income level to 138 percent of the federal poverty level for these populations for these populations. These changes will enable extremely low-income seniors and individuals with disabilities to easily maintain secondary Medicaid coverage when their Medicare eligibility begins — significantly reducing health disparities across the State, reducing unnecessary eligibility redeterminations, and increase administrative efficiencies.

Part I-E: Advancing Health Equity: Ensure All Mothers in New York Get the Care They Need

New York's maternal mortality rates have decreased significantly over the past 8 years, but the state still ranks just 28th¹³ in the U.S. in percentage of newborns with low birthweight (under 5 pounds, 8 ounces) and 42nd in percentage born preterm.

These health risks are experienced disproportionately by low-income individuals and communities of color. For example, the share of pregnant New Yorkers who receive no or late prenatal care is three times greater¹⁴ among Black mothers (10.7 percent) and two times greater among Hispanic mothers (6.5 percent) than white mothers (3.2 percent). Additionally, Black mothers experience a prevalence of low birthweight babies 5 percentage points higher than the state average, and a maternal mortality rate three times higher.

To improve maternal health outcomes, reduce racial disparities, and advance equity for mothers across the state, Governor Hochul will propose a set of robust and coordinated initiatives designed to expand access to holistic prenatal and postnatal care.

Expand Medicaid Coverage for Postpartum Care

The federal ARPA bill of 2021 allows states to extend postpartum coverage under Medicaid from 60 days to a full year — a significant extension of this critical care.¹⁵ New York will work with the Biden Administration to provide year-long Medicaid postpartum coverage for mothers, leading to more equitable health outcomes across the state.

Improve and Expand Access to Prenatal and Postnatal Care

Ensuring that all New York mothers get the prenatal and postnatal care they need requires enhanced coordination and access to a wider range of medical and behavioral health services. Governor Hochul will implement a holistic plan to improve care equity for new mothers across the state, including:

- Provide social work services delivered in clinic and non-clinic settings.
- Establish coverage for nutrition services by reimbursing registered dieticians for providing services to pregnant New Yorkers.

- Reimburse community health workers for delivering care coordination and other peer support services in maternal health settings.
- Increase availability of dyadic therapy, in which patient and baby receive services that promote positive parent-child interaction, including through an Office of Mental Health (OMH) and DOH partnership that will expand the New York State HealthySteps program and fully integrate behavioral health professionals into pediatric primary care well-child visits (described more below).
- Engage in other interventions in high-risk communities.
- Close gaps in physical infrastructure, such as fetal ultrasound equipment, and in human infrastructure, such as Maternal Fetal Medicine specialists who can assess and recommend treatment during pregnancy.
- Encourage innovation and use of digital health services within the maternal health care journey.

Expand Access to Midwifery Services Through Increased Reimbursement Rates

As a complement to the previous proposal, New York will increase reimbursement rates for midwifery services in an effort to expand access to this critical care and strengthen the midwife workforce. Additionally, to incentivize more midwives to accept lower-income patients, Medicaid reimbursement rate for midwife maternal services would be increased to better align with medical practitioners who also perform deliveries.

Part I-F: Advancing Health Equity: Enable All New Yorkers to Age with Dignity and Independence

New York leads the nation in meeting the care challenges facing our aging population. We became the first AARP Age-Friendly State in 2017¹⁶ and the first Age-Friendly Public Health System by the Trust for America's Health in 2021.¹⁷ But

even more action is needed for New York to maintain its place as a national model for aging care.

New York has the fourth-largest population of older adults in the U.S., with 3.2 million¹⁸ New Yorkers (16 percent of the population) over 65. There more than 160,000¹⁹ New Yorkers residing in long-term care facilities and hundreds of thousands are receiving home care. Long-term care spending accounts for 33 percent²⁰ of total state Medicaid spending — its largest cost driver. Now is the time to ensure that aging New Yorkers have access not only to essential health services but to appropriate living settings and programs that reduce isolation.

Governor Hochul has a comprehensive plan to ensure the health and well-being of aging New Yorkers, anchored by a State Master Plan for Aging. The Governor's plan will provide alternative settings for New Yorkers that want to age in place, improve the care provided in both homes and nursing facilities, and combat key issues facing seniors like social isolation and elder abuse.

Together, these actions will strengthen our commitment to ensuring that all New Yorkers can age with dignity and independence in environments that meet their needs.

Establish a State Master Plan for Aging

As a first step toward building a comprehensive roadmap for meeting the needs of aging New Yorkers, Governor Hochul will issue an Executive Order implementing a State Master Plan for Aging. This master plan will coordinate all State policy and programs, creating a blueprint of strategies to ensure that older New Yorkers can live fulfilling lives, in good health, with the freedom and independence to age in place for as long as possible. This plan will also address challenges related to communication, coordination, caregiving, long-term financing, and innovative care

models — all furthering the ability for more New Yorkers to age with dignity and independence.

Promote Alternatives to Institutional Settings for Seniors

Some aging New Yorkers would prefer to age in place but struggle to afford an independent living arrangement. To expand affordable housing availability for older New Yorkers with the services they need to live independently, as part of the Housing Plan (see Section V), Governor Hochul will create affordable and permanent supportive housing units for seniors who might otherwise need to reside in a nursing home or other institutional setting.

Additionally, to keep pace with this need as the state's population ages, capital funding will provide permanent senior supportive housing units annually and a larger number of affordable housing units available to seniors.

Improve the Quality of Care in Nursing Homes

Nursing homes provide essential support to more than 92,000 New Yorkers throughout the state, but there is a great deal of work to be done to ensure quality care for residents with dementia. To address this gap, New York State will establish clear certification criteria for “memory care” — a form of long-term care focusing on helping residents with memory issues or dementia. Currently, facilities can advertise offering specialized services such as memory care without having staffing with specialized knowledge of the care and treatment of residents with Alzheimer’s disease or dementia. Under this proposal, facilities will be required to include specific training requirements for staff and administrators, as well as resident programming requirements that seek to reduce cognitive decline, emphasize quality of care, and promote aging in place. Facilities without this certification would not be able to advertise to the public as providing “memory care” services to their residents.

Invest in Innovative Nursing Home Models

The Green House nursing home model re-imagines nursing home design — through the lens of creating actual homes instead of institutional settings. In the Green House model,²¹ facilities are designed to feel like a traditional home, with food made fresh on location, far less visually prominent medical equipment, and minimal administrative interactions — all with the goal of providing high-quality care in a setting that residents find more comfortable and familiar.

To provide New Yorkers with greater access to cutting-edge care, Governor Hochul will support nursing home conversions to the Green House model to understand the economics of this innovative model, while also investing in other innovative nursing home approaches.

Combat Social Isolation and Abuse of Older Residents

Roughly one-quarter²² of Americans over 65 suffer from social isolation, reducing quality of life and significantly increasing health risks related to dementia, heart failure, and premature death. To combat isolation, New York will connect more elderly New Yorkers with friends, family, and other social supports to:

- Use supportive services and new technology to combat social isolation and ensure information is readily available to older, rural, and low-income New Yorkers.
- Expand the current programming of New York State Office for the Aging to more New Yorkers, helping to subsidize wireless internet cost.
- Develop web-based advertising and education materials focused on reaching a broad base of groups and organizations that serve and interact with older adults.

Additionally, New York will establish a program to stop elder abuse and financial exploitation by establishing an Elder Abuse Financial Exploitation Prevention Program in the Department of Financial Services (DFS). This program will provide professional bill paying services to vulnerable older adults and help identify financial exploitation when it is occurring.

Strengthen the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program

Ombudsmen help residents of long-term care facilities understand how to exercise their rights to good care, but currently New York ranks 39th²³ among U.S. states in paid ombudsman staff per long-term care facility beds, limiting access to these important advocacy services. COVID-19 has presented unique challenges to the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program, and Governor Hochul will study the impacts of COVID on the program and the need for future reforms.

Part I-G: Support More New Yorkers with Stronger Addiction, Suicide, Mental Health, and Domestic Violence Services

The pandemic has occupied the bulk of public attention these past two years, but that has not meant that other critical public health crises have gone away. On the contrary, the economic stress and severe constraints of the pandemic have worsened some of these challenges.

Substance use rose in response to the pandemic as a coping mechanism, and New York State drug overdose deaths increased by 33 percent²⁴ during the first year of COVID-19. Roughly 1,700 New Yorkers die by suicide every year, and across the country, depression symptoms were three times as prevalent during the pandemic than before it.²⁵ Additionally, during the first 11 months of the pandemic, calls to the State's Domestic and Sexual Violence Hotline rose 34 percent over the year before. All the while, the opioid epidemic has continued to plague our state, with thousands of New Yorkers dying annually from overdoses in recent years.²⁶

Governor Hochul will initiate a far-reaching set of actions and evidence-based programs to help all New Yorkers struggling with addiction, suicide, mental health challenges, and domestic violence, focused on access and equity for those in underserved communities across the state.

Fight the Opioid Epidemic in New York State Using a Public Health Approach

Public health interventions such as harm-reduction services, which are designed to minimize the negative consequences of drug use, have shown promise in mitigating opioid addiction. But these types of programs have not been rolled out as widely as necessary to support New Yorkers seeking help. Additionally, people who use drugs obtain services through a patchwork of different agencies, often because traditional addiction treatment options provide inconsistent thresholds for care. The result can be incomplete or uncoordinated care that may not provide the holistic support a patient needs.

To make a push toward ending the opioid epidemic, the State will expand and enhance a public health-style program coordinated by DOH and the Office of Addiction Services and Supports (OASAS) that includes harm-reduction services, health monitoring, and evidence-based community interventions. Programs will include established initiatives such as expanded access to sterile syringes, naloxone, buprenorphine, and other medications used to treat opioid use.

The State will also create a Division of Harm Reduction within OASAS to develop and incorporate harm reduction principles and strategies across the OASAS system of care. This new division, in collaboration with the DOH's Office of Drug User Health, will implement harm-reduction initiatives that could include:

- Expanding naloxone and buprenorphine access by mandating pharmacies to maintain a stock of these medications.

- Investing in fentanyl test strips, opioid overdose prevention kits, safety kits, and resources to prevent individuals from overdosing while alone.
- Developing a public awareness campaign to prevent overdose deaths in public settings.
- Creating and implementing a medication-assisted treatment program for uninsured individuals.
- Expanding access to sterile syringes by allowing emergency departments and health departments to provide syringes to individuals who present with signs and symptoms of injection drug use.

Together, these coordinated efforts can help ensure New Yorkers get the most effective and most complementary treatment across the addiction lifespan.

Expand Mobile Treatment Services for Opioid Addiction

New York has made strides in combatting the opioid epidemic, including expanding insurance coverage requirements and protections, expanding opportunities for rapid access and crisis services for those suffering from an addiction, and investing in new and innovative ways to engage those in need of care. Governor Hochul will build on this progress and revise the opioid treatment program rules to allow for opioid treatment providers to implement a robust mobile methadone program as a way to reach unserved and underserved communities, further expanding access to life saving medications.

Under this proposal, OASAS will strengthen and modernize outpatient addiction programs, including opioid treatment programs (OTP), by taking the following actions:

- Removing the regulatory requirement that OTP locations must be in contiguous counties.
- Developing guidelines for providing mobile methadone.

- Retrofitting existing outpatient mobile treatment units.
- Purchasing additional units to provide mobile services.
- Investing in additional telehealth equipment for mobile service providers to expand service capability and access across the State.

Provide Individuals with Supportive Recovery Housing

For individuals recovering from substance use disorder, a lack of safe housing or drug-free environments can derail the recovery process, no matter how determined they are to end substance use or reduce harm from addiction. This proposal will direct OASAS to create a voluntary certification process for recovery-supportive housing that provides substance-free environments and mutual support for individuals engaged in the recovery process. Certification would involve inspection, record-keeping, and operational standards for recovery homes.

Enhance Suicide Prevention in Schools, Homes, and Communities

The pandemic increased mental health challenges across New York State and the country. Depression and anxiety increased, and crisis call volume surged by 35 percent,²⁷ compared to pre-pandemic levels. The effects of the pandemic have exacerbated existing mental health challenges among youth in particular. In New York, between March and July 2020, it is estimated that 4,200 children²⁸ lost a parent or caregiver to COVID-19, and early estimates show that there have been more than 6,600 deaths²⁹ by suicide nationally in children 10-24 during 2020.

To address the mental health crisis among youths and in communities, Governor Hochul will:

- *Provide Home-Based Crisis Intervention to More Families:* New York's Home-Based Crisis Intervention (HBCI) program provides short-term, intensive, in-home intervention services to a family in crisis as an alternative to admitting

their child into a psychiatric hospital. The HBCI Program serves families for a 4- to-6-week period with children between 5 to 17 years of age experiencing severe psychiatric crises. For this time frame, families have access to clinical teams 24/7 for any crisis that arises while they are enrolled in the program. To help even more New York families struggling with suicide, OMH will develop new HBCI teams and increase funding to existing HBCI teams to expand current caseloads and improve staff recruitment and retention. This expansion will enable HBCI programs to serve 2,640 families each year, doubling the current volume.

- *Establish a Mental Wellness Community Workforce:* New York State will build on prevention priorities identified for pandemic recovery by establishing a frontline workforce of credible messengers to engage communities on the ground, called the Mental Wellness Community Workforce. This workforce, a community corps of lay personnel trained in mental health, will be certified to provide quality care to New Yorkers who currently have little or no access to mental health care. Using a state-of-the-art Mental Wellness Everywhere Digital Platform, this new workforce will engage with community healthcare providers as well as places of worship, senior centers, and social service agencies to offer personalized treatment options for New Yorkers experiencing depression, anxiety, substance use, and suicide risk. An initial pilot will expand over time to provide timely access to mental health services for far more New Yorkers.

Integrate Mental Health Services into Pediatric Primary Care

New York's HealthySteps program is an evidence-based prevention program implemented in pediatric primary care which improves health and behavioral health outcomes by providing dyadic services that offer developmental support for a child and parent at the same time.³⁰ The program currently has 59 sites across the State, serving almost 100,000 children each year.

To promote healthier development for even more children across New York, OMH and DOH will partner to provide Medicaid reimbursement for dyadic services delivered in integrated primary care within New York State HealthySteps sites. Under this program, licensed behavioral health professionals will be fully integrated into pediatric primary care well-child visits.

Create the New York State Gender-Based Violence Training Institute

New York State currently relies on individual programs with limited resources to train advocates for domestic violence victims and requires no standardized training certification. Without a formal statewide training standard, there may be deficits in knowledge or best practices in programs across the state and victims may not receive the services they need. Smaller, culturally-specific programs and non-traditional advocates may not be certified at all under this patchwork approach and are therefore left out of opportunities to access certain funding streams or participate in conversations where their voices are desperately needed.

The Gender-Based Violence Training Institute — which will be developed within the Office for the Prevention of Domestic Violence in consultation with relevant, culturally-responsive community-based organizations and statewide advocacy organizations — will create a mandatory 40-hour training certification for domestic violence advocates and will offer train-the-trainer certification. It will also offer ongoing continuing education opportunities to ensure that New York’s domestic violence services system is trauma-informed, survivor-centered, and culturally responsive. Stronger care for gender-based violence victims starts with a stronger approach to training providers.

SECTION II

PROTECT PUBLIC SAFETY AND TAKE STRONG ACTION AGAINST GUN VIOLENCE

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, more than 800 New Yorkers died by guns each year, on average, with more than 2,500 annually shot and wounded.³¹ That was already too many lives lost and impacted by gun violence. Unfortunately, since the pandemic began, gun violence has increased significantly across the United States, and in New York State.

Nationally, while homicides are still below the peak of the 1990s, they increased in 2020 by 29 percent.³² Of these, 77 percent involved a firearm.³³ In New York State, gun violence surges erased a decade of progress in the fight to reduce and prevent firearm involved deaths and injuries. Firearm homicides returned to levels not seen since 2010 and violent crimes involving guns returned to 2015 levels, reflecting similar trends across the country.³⁴

While the pandemic has had a negative impact on public safety across the country, Governor Hochul is committed to addressing the concerns of New Yorkers and taking strong action against gun violence. Governor Hochul will make a major state investment in initiatives, new and old, that will strengthen the gun violence prevention efforts of law enforcement and community-based organizations. Through these actions, we will work to restore New Yorkers' sense of safety and community.

Part II-A: Stop Crime and Violence: Strengthen Proven Law Enforcement Strategies

Since taking office, Governor Hochul has taken important steps to combat gun violence. In October, she signed a package of bills to combat the sale of untraceable firearms, or ghost guns.³⁵ She also signed legislation to create a Firearm Violence

Research Institute,³⁶ which is tasked with developing science-backed solutions to ongoing gun violence challenges.

Building on these steps, Governor Hochul will continue taking practical, immediate actions to strengthen proven law-enforcement strategies against crime and violence. These initiatives will strengthen gun tracing efforts, support successful local law enforcement programs, and invest in law enforcement data analysis and intelligence networks — reducing gun violence and protecting the health and safety of all New Yorkers.

Triple Resources for State Police’s Crime Gun-Tracing Efforts

New York State has cutting-edge technology to identify firearm origins, straw purchasers, sales from recovered crime guns, and travel routes used by gun traffickers. But there remains a demand for a team of data analysts with the skills needed to deploy these tools most effectively toward preventing gun trafficking. To support law enforcement actions that shut down major gun traffickers, operations, and routes, Governor Hochul will triple the state’s gun violence intelligence resources by staffing the New York State Intelligence Center (NYSIC) with a team of analysts necessary to process and investigate crime guns across the state faster than before.

Form a Gun Tracing Consortium with Local Law Enforcement Agencies, and Neighboring States

Much of New York’s recent surge in gun violence is fueled by easily obtainable firearms and a rise in ghost guns, with most of these weapons trafficked into and throughout the state from other areas of the country. To take a holistic and proactive approach to regional law enforcement, Governor Hochul will direct the State Police to form a new Interstate Gun-Tracing Consortium to facilitate the exchange of intelligence between localities and neighboring states.

The consortium would include the New York State Police, local law enforcement agencies from across the state, and law enforcement agencies in neighboring states. Their efforts will focus on real-time intelligence exchange and operational coordination targeting gun interdiction.

While other coalitions have tried to attack this problem before, they typically focus on activity within a major city. This new task force will attack the root of the trafficking problem by stretching beyond city limits — and onto the highways and interstate lines where guns move. By combining forces, the states and localities in this coalition will leverage their individual efforts to greater effect.

Expand the Level and Scope of the State’s Direct Support to Local Law Enforcement

New York’s nationally recognized Gun Involved Violence Elimination (GIVE) initiative within the Division of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS) provides dedicated State funding to local law enforcement agencies within the 17 counties in which more than 80 percent of the state’s violent crime is committed outside of New York City. GIVE funding supports the hiring of officers and prosecutors and promotes the implementation of evidence-based law enforcement strategies, such as local intelligence-led policing focused on the small number of individuals responsible for a disproportionate share of violence within the community, and hyper-local efforts to direct policing resources and improve physical conditions in neighborhoods that have become hotspots for violent crime.

To continue supporting local law enforcement, Governor Hochul will increase funding for GIVE programs, enabling the launch of several new, critical initiatives to stop the surge of violence:

- Standing up a non-fatal shooting program to improve the often-abysmal clearance rate of these crimes, solving today’s shootings that cause injury before they become tomorrow’s fatal tragedies.
- Supporting law enforcement participation in youth engagement and community-based programs that promote positive skills.
- Implementing an alternative community supervision pilot program using the “Swift, Certain, and Fair,” model to reduce re-offenses and improve connections with employment.

Additionally, increased funding will support ongoing procedural justice and community trust-building technical assistance from DCJS between law enforcement, community-based organizations, and residents to ensure that our neighborhoods are safe for all New Yorkers.

Double State Police Partnerships with Local Law Enforcement

The use of Community Stabilization Units (CSU), where groups of the most experienced State Troopers partner with local law enforcement agencies, have proven to be an effective tool in combating community-specific crime problems across the state. CSUs currently exist in eight jurisdictions, with Newburgh, Poughkeepsie, and Rochester as leading models.

Governor Hochul will expand this effective approach to more communities across the state by increasing state funding for CSUs to double the number of partner jurisdictions to 16.

Invest in New York’s Crime Analysis Center Network

New York’s Crime Analysis Centers (CACs) collect and share criminal intelligence and data among over 350 state and local law enforcement agencies, serving as the backbone of efforts to deter, investigate, and solve crimes including murders,

shootings, robberies, hate crimes, and serial burglaries. New York's CAC network has become a central part of the state's crime reduction strategy. In 2020, the current network of 10 CACs assisted local law enforcement agencies across the state with more than 60,000 requests for information and research, helping New York become and remain the safest large state (over 10 million people) in the nation.³⁷

Despite these successes, the CAC network has been overtaxed by dramatic growth in terms of geographic coverage areas and demand for real-time services and intelligence products by the partner law enforcement agencies across more than 30 counties. Moreover, funding has been delivered through a patchwork of resources, including several federal sources that have declined in recent years.

To strengthen the work of the CAC network, Governor Hochul will establish a stable funding stream and increase current funding levels, enabling more proactive and effective crime analysis services that reflect today's crime trends. This investment will allow for new crime analysis technology, additional crime analysts, and enhanced investigative support to help police and prosecutors more effectively solve and prevent crime, and protect New Yorkers.

Additionally, each center will have dedicated crime gun and ballistic tracing equipment installed to allow local law enforcement to process evidence to solve and prevent firearm-involved violent crime, adding critical crime gun intelligence resources as an additional capability to the state's GIVE efforts (mentioned above).

Enrich Social Media Analysis to Identify Threats and Criminal Activity

The New York State Police use publicly available social media activity and posts to assist in identifying credible criminal activity happening in the state. But the pool of information is so large and rapidly changing that the State Police's current efforts only scratch the surface of what is possible to detect and interdict.

Governor Hochul will support enhancing the Social Media Analysis Unit at the NYSIC by staffing a team of analysts to perform daily analysis of publicly available social media activity — particularly that which pertains to school violence threats, gang activity, and illegal firearms — to tie information back to existing criminal investigations, initiate new investigations, and communicate information on threats to appropriate field personnel.

Establish Gun Intelligence Centers Across the State to Share Meaningful Crime Data

The Federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives has developed the most comprehensive and effective Crime Gun Intelligence Centers (CGIC) in the nation, one of which is already being used by the New York City Police Department. The centers use the National Integrated Ballistics Information Network to link crimes, identify groups involved in shootings, and pinpoint where illegal guns are coming from in a timely manner — providing investigators with actionable intelligence and assisting law enforcement in reducing gun violence.

Linking data across the state would enable law enforcement to pursue more cases against irresponsible gun dealers and straw purchasers. Therefore, Governor Hochul will establish a CGIC in every region of New York State, equipped with instruments that trace shell casings and qualified staff to collect and compare ballistic evidence. This capability will ensure the State Police will be able to effectively solve major crimes and disrupt interstate trafficking of illegal firearms.

Stop Cryptocurrency Crimes with New Software

There is a growing use of cryptocurrency among gun traffickers trying to evade law enforcement and New York's stringent gun laws, including a growing dark-web marketplaces for firearms and other contraband. Emerging tools would enable New York State Police to identify criminal transactions, including those involving the

purchase of illegal firearms for gun trafficking, and pursue the individuals and organizations involved.

Governor Hochul will fund the purchase of blockchain-analysis software to enhance the State's ability to proactively and reactively monitor cryptocurrency exchanges. The purchase of these tools will enable the State Police to support members of law enforcement who are increasingly responding to crimes involving cryptocurrency.

Modernize Forensic Examination by Linking Digital Devices to Crimes

In the past five years, the State Police's Computer Forensic Laboratory has seen a staggering 494 percent increase in the backlog of cases awaiting analysis. This surge in caseload — coupled with the increased storage size, complexity, and security features of personal digital devices — has highlighted the need for a significant increase in personnel and equipment capable of conducting timely and comprehensive forensic analysis to advance public safety.

To help this laboratory more effectively handle its skyrocketing caseload, Governor Hochul will expand Troop Computer Crime Units and fund additional equipment, software, and specialized onboarding.

Part II-B: Stop Crime and Violence: Strengthen Proven Community-Based Programs

When it comes to gun violence, research shows that community-based, public health-centered violence intervention programs have some of the strongest results in reducing gun crimes and homicides.³⁸ But these programs often do not receive the investments they need to scale up and save lives.

In late November, Governor Hochul sought to remedy that with a \$30 million³⁹ investment in community-based gun violence intervention programs — funding

efforts to outreach workers, violence interrupters, credible messengers, hospital-based interveners, and social workers in areas that have experienced a pandemic-driven surge in shootings.

To build on that foundation and accelerate community-based prevention and response efforts to gun violence across the state, Governor Hochul will expand and initiate new programs, including school-based interventions. The biggest impact of gun violence is felt by the community where it occurs. That is also where the solutions should start.

Triple Investment in Community-Based Gun Violence Response

Just as New York's recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic has been uneven across the state, so has the persistence of gun violence within our communities. One effective effort to curb the cycle of gun violence has been the SNUG street outreach program, which supports neighborhood-based programs that promote community outreach, family engagement, and intervention to steer young people away from gun violence. With the spike in gun crimes that followed the onset of the pandemic, the State increased funding for SNUG on an emergency basis from \$4.8 million to \$10.6 million.

To strengthen and expand the State's approach to community-based gun violence response, Governor Hochul will sustain that emergency increase in SNUG funding levels and increase funding by an additional 50 percent in the coming year.

This significant investment in New York's communities will:

- Expand hospital-based community gun violence specialists from just eight of the state's trauma centers to all 22 to address hospital admissions for firearm-involved injuries.

- Expand the state’s network of SNUG street outreach and community-based violence interruption programs to Niagara Falls, Utica, and Schenectady, all of which have experienced significant surges in gun violence since the onset of the pandemic.
- Pilot a new initiative to provide wraparound services within the SNUG network to increase participation in programming by helping meet the basic needs of New York’s most vulnerable young people.
- Provide skills-based job-readiness and work-placement training for at-risk youth who are involved in the state’s violence interruption work.
- Launch a first-in-the-nation program to recruit and retain outreach workers and overcome one of the primary obstacles to scaling community-based violence prevention efforts.

Additionally, Governor Hochul will sustain the pandemic-related increase in funding for New York City-based violence interruption and hospital-based responder programs.

Provide Pretrial Services to Promote Public Safety

Statewide pretrial reform was implemented without the necessary resources or coordination needed to help localities adopt new approaches to pretrial services that ensure public safety. Governor Hochul will directly address concerns about public safety by providing dedicated funding to support pretrial services for localities outside of New York City. This funding would implement a comprehensive continuum of pretrial services, including screening and assessments, supervision, a centralized case management system, and dedicated information sharing with the court system.

This proposal will also support additional staff within DCJS to support distribution and oversight of the pretrial services funding to 57 counties outside of New York City. This critical funding will be provided to probation departments and

community-based providers as they divert people away from costly, unnecessary detention and toward services that will assure their return to court and promote positive development.

In total, this investment will position New York to assess and serve more than 130,000 cases throughout the state each year.

Respond to Regional Needs in the Aftermath of Gun Violence

There is a need for new and innovative strategies that reach the people and places that have been hardest hit by the spike in gun violence, particularly New York's most vulnerable young people. Governor Hochul will establish a new initiative to fund innovative community empowerment and crime-reduction strategies that bring together all those impacted by gun violence: residents, local governments, community-based organizations, schools, educational institutions, and law enforcement agencies.

Governor Hochul will direct DCJS to identify up to 10 areas of New York that have experienced the greatest increase in shooting incidents, injuries, fatalities, and firearm-involved crimes, and seek comprehensive "whole-of-neighborhood" applications to support new partnerships and programs between government and community organizations aimed at repairing and rebuilding in the aftermath of violence, and serving the complex needs of communities victimized by crime involving guns. This community engagement process will also serve to better align different sources of state support to address gaps in, for instance, employment, education, public safety, health and mental healthcare, and housing.

Provide Additional Law Enforcement Training on the State’s Red Flag Law to Protect New Yorkers

In August 2019,⁴⁰ New York’s Red Flag Law took effect, allowing family members, law enforcement, and school officials to “flag” individuals likely to engage in conduct that would result in serious harm to themselves or others. Flagged individuals are reviewed by the courts to determine whether to temporarily seize firearms from individuals believed to pose a severe threat of harm to themselves or to others; and to prevent these individuals from purchasing, possessing, or attempting to purchase or possess any type of firearm, including handguns, rifles, or shotguns. To date, more than 1,100 orders⁴¹ have been issued, but regional and local disparities indicate that additional training would be helpful for potential petitioners, including law enforcement officials and domestic violence advocates.

To improve the use and implementation of this lifesaving law, Governor Hochul will direct State-led Red Flag Law trainings in each region of New York over the coming year to ensure this law is fully implemented.

SECTION III

INVEST IN NEW YORK'S PEOPLE

From the moment the COVID-19 pandemic first struck our state, New Yorkers have responded with all the toughness, conviction, and compassion needed to overcome this generational challenge. On the basis of this strength, we have made great strides in recovering our economic foundations. From the depths of the downturn to today, New York has recovered some 1.2 million jobs,⁴² and in early December, Governor Hochul announced an initiative to connect New Yorkers to 220,000 jobs⁴³ and signed legislation to increase New York State's support for recovering small businesses.⁴⁴

But we must invest even more in the recovery of everyday New Yorkers, because there is a long way to go. Our state's unemployment rate is at 6.6 percent⁴⁵ — more than two points higher than the national rate. Some 71 percent⁴⁶ of small businesses still report negative effects from the pandemic. As of July, earnings remained below pre-pandemic levels in seven of New York's 13 major job sectors.⁴⁷ As long as there are New Yorkers still struggling to recover, our job is not yet done.

To accelerate the recovery for more New Yorkers, Governor Hochul will provide meaningful tax relief for small businesses and middle-income households, ensure that our workers have access to both well-paying jobs and strong basic rights, strengthen re-entry programs to help the formerly incarcerated join the workforce, and protect New Yorkers from consumer or financial abuses.

Together this investment in New Yorkers can accelerate the recovery for everyone, everywhere across our great state.

Part III-A: Provide Meaningful Tax Relief for Small Businesses and the Middle Class

With New Yorkers facing the costs of inflation in the supermarket and at the pump, while still recovering from the economic challenges of the pandemic, one of the most meaningful things New York can do to support our people and our businesses is put money directly back in their pockets. To do that, Governor Hochul will provide a range of relief designed to help millions of middle-income New Yorkers and hundreds of thousands of small businesses — accelerating the road to recovery.

Provide \$100 Million of Relief for 195,000 Small Businesses

While the pandemic downturn impacted all of us, small businesses suffered especially hard. Federal support has helped, but as New York stares down yet another COVID-19 winter surge, we must do everything we can to support the small businesses that are vital to the health and well-being of our communities. To boost recovery across the state, Governor Hochul will provide \$100 million in tax relief for 195,000 small businesses, to help them keep their doors open and weather what the next few months bring.

This relief will come from increasing a tax return adjustment (known as a “subtraction modification”) that reduces a small business’s gross taxable income, as well as from widening eligibility to more entities. In simple terms, a subtraction modification allows a business entity to lower its gross income by an amount equal to a certain percentage of its net income, before calculating the amount of taxes owed. Current law allows for a 5 percent subtraction modification for sole proprietorships and farm businesses with incomes of less than \$250,000 — benefitting just 5,000 taxpayers each year.

The Governor will raise this modification and include other entities with New York-source gross income of up to \$1.5 million, covering some 195,000 small businesses in all — putting more money back in the hands of more hard-working New Yorkers.

Accelerate \$1.2 Billion in Middle-Class Tax Cuts for 6 Million New Yorkers

In 2018, New York State began phasing in a middle-class tax cut, which is scheduled to stretch out through 2025. That original timeline did not take into account the economic devastation brought on by the pandemic, and the many people who need help now in the face of rising inflation.

Rather than waiting for small, incremental benefits to take effect for middle-class taxpayers, Governor Hochul will accelerate their relief and start providing the full benefit of the tax cut two years earlier, fully phasing-in the 2018 middle-class tax cut beginning in the 2023 tax year (the earliest it can occur, because this change would be enacted mid-2022). Applying the full effective cut to 2023 will accelerate two years of tax cuts, providing \$1.2 billion in total relief for 6.1 million New Yorkers.

Deliver a \$1 Billion Property Tax Rebate for More Than 2 Million New York Families

As inflation rises and the economic impact of the pandemic lingers, Governor Hochul will provide much needed relief through a property tax rebate program that returns tax dollars to middle- and low-income households. More than 2 million New Yorkers will be eligible for the rebate, with low-income households and seniors receiving higher benefits. Eligible homeowners will receive their benefit in 2022, to the tune of \$1 billion.

Increase Existing Tax Credits and Create a New Credit to Support Food Production

Farm labor is among the fastest-growing costs of agricultural production in New York. To help farms meet this challenge, Governor Hochul will increase an existing workforce tax credit and create a new one, while also expanding an investment tax credit for equipment that would complement the workforce and address shortages. These actions include:

- *Increase the Farm Workforce Retention Tax Credit:* Farm owners and employers are currently eligible to receive a refundable tax credit of a fixed dollar amount per eligible farm employee through 2024. To help farms retain their workers, the State will double the yearly fixed dollar amount per eligible employee and extend the program to 2025.
- *Create a New Overtime Tax Credit:* The State will create a permanent refundable tax credit on overtime hours for any size farm in New York State, to offset increasing costs to farmers.
- *Increase the Investment Tax Credit:* The investment tax credit has been a powerful tool in the past to stimulate investments in new technology and equipment. New York will increase the existing investment tax credit at year's end for all state farms, allowing farmers to purchase new equipment that could further automate their farms in response to the declining agriculture workforce.

Together these efforts will help farms both support their workers and meet their food production goals.

Part III-B: Give New Yorkers Job Skills, Access, and Protections

New York's workforce has not yet recovered in full from the pandemic downturn. As of Fall 2021, New York's job deficit was three times greater than the national average, and higher by some measures than any other state.⁴⁸ Employers in some high-demand industries have seen a surge in open positions, while those in some essential sectors are struggling to retain and recruit top talent. More investments are needed to help workers and businesses alike.

To advance meaningful job opportunities and support industries across the state, Governor Hochul will overhaul the state's approach to workforce development: making sure it reflects the needs of each region, prepares New Yorkers for the jobs that are in high demand, and aligns with offerings in high schools and institutions of higher education. A new Office of Workforce and Economic Development at Empire State Development (ESD) will coordinate this effort statewide through the State's Regional Economic Development Councils (REDCs), and in conjunction with the Department of Labor (DOL), the State University of New York (SUNY), and the City University of New York (CUNY).

At the same time, the State will invest in a full spectrum of programs to unlock career opportunities that prepare more New Yorkers for the jobs of the future — with a particular focus on information technology, life sciences and advanced manufacturing, the green economy, and film production and post-production. These efforts will include both degree and non-degree educational opportunities, internships, and apprenticeship programs.

With diversity as our state's greatest strength, Governor Hochul will further establish New York as a model for inclusivity in the workforce, as well as enhance protections for the most vulnerable workers.

Overhaul the State's Workforce Development Efforts to Focus on Region-Specific Employment Needs

To meet the needs of workers and businesses, Governor Hochul will create the Office of Workforce and Economic Development to drive workforce development across the state. This effort will be managed by ESD and run through the State's REDCs, in conjunction with DOL, SUNY, and CUNY. The new Office will leverage ESD's relationships with employers throughout the state, and leverage ESD's standing as a trusted partner in the business community to help identify employer needs early and train New Yorkers to meet these needs.

Critically, the new Office will utilize the expertise of the REDCs, which possess the local knowledge of workforce needs, trends, and opportunities necessary to help guide investments throughout the state. To ensure flexibility to meet changing needs, each REDC will help determine workforce development funding on a real-time, continual basis (as opposed to an annual funding cycle) to generate a pipeline of new workers for regionally-significant industries, including in high-demand areas such as information technology, sciences and advanced manufacturing, green energy, and film production and post-production.

Regional pipeline programs will be designed in partnership with regional employers to align worker opportunities with industry needs. School districts and higher education institutions will be at the table, as well, to ensure the development of complementary learning initiatives at the high school and college levels. Programs that involve an industry or employer match will receive priority in funding decisions.

To make the most of every dollar, improve data collection, and incentivize all sides to get more New Yorkers working in high-demand areas, a component of funding will be tied to high job placement rates as evidenced by high-quality data.

Additionally, Governor Hochul will strengthen the Office of New Americans' (ONA) successful workforce development programming, which aims to support new Americans across the career path through a variety of initiatives. Two programs in particular have proven essential to ONA's immigrant support during the pandemic: Immigrants Can Code, which provides training in both basic digital literacy and advanced coding for low-income immigrants, and Professional Pathways, which helps place high-skilled immigrants in jobs that match their previous skills and experience. (See Section VIII for more on Governor Hochul's proposals to strengthen ONA.)

Help More New Yorkers Move Between Education and Career

Post-secondary education is crucial for economic success, with 70 percent⁴⁹ of new jobs requiring some post-secondary credential. But roughly 2.4 million⁵⁰ New Yorkers between ages 25 and 44 lack a post-secondary degree or credential, putting them at risk of being left behind as the job market continues to trend toward more skilled hires.

To make the state more responsive to these post-secondary workforce needs, Governor Hochul will implement a plan to make it easier for New Yorkers to move between education and career, providing students with pathways and assistance to earn credentials on their own time and in a cost-effective manner. Components of this plan include:

- Expand part-time Tuition Assistance Programs, allowing parents and dislocated workers to attend school without upending their lives, serving 75,000 students.
- Provide financial support for non-degree workforce training at CUNY and SUNY.
- Develop public-private funding partnerships to create new internship opportunities for SUNY and CUNY students.
- Establish a policy that would enable work experiences to count toward degree credits.
- Incentivize concurrent enrollment programs around credit achievement and matriculation.

More information on each of these initiatives can be found in Section VII.

Expand Access to Apprenticeships

Registered apprenticeships are an important tool for economic mobility, but not all New Yorkers are able to take advantage of such programs. Currently, the state has nearly 18,400 active apprentices in 975 registered apprenticeship programs,⁵¹ with 40 percent of programs in high-growth fields such as IT, healthcare, and advanced manufacturing. To help expand access to apprenticeships in these emerging fields, benefiting both workers seeking jobs and employers seeking to fill roles, Governor Hochul will propose the following actions:

- Increase funding for apprenticeship programs at SUNY and CUNY.
- Extend the Empire State Apprenticeship Tax Credit and further incentivize employers to hire disadvantaged youth.
- Support apprentices in high-growth industries, targeting underrepresented groups such as women and people of color.
- Create a pre-apprenticeship portal to help more New Yorkers find programs that are right for them.
- Support direct-entry pre-apprenticeships as well as organizations supporting pre-apprenticeships.
- Make qualified apprenticeship expenses eligible for spending out of college savings (529) accounts.

By expanding apprenticeship access — working closely with existing apprenticeship programs, labor groups and the New York State Apprenticeship and Training Council — the state can increase positive outcomes for both employers and workers alike.

Recruit the Next Generation of Public Servants

With more than a quarter of the New York State workforce eligible to retire within the next five years,⁵² it is imperative that we continue to attract the best and

brightest to public service careers so we can continue meeting the needs of those we serve. To fill this gap and build a robust pipeline of diverse new talent into the New York State workforce, Governor Hochul will:

- *Make Civil Service Exams More Accessible:* New Department of Civil Service (DCS) testing centers will be established at designated SUNY college campuses throughout the state to make it easier for students to enter into New York State service upon graduation.
- *Promote Diverse Hiring:* To help State agencies hire the best and brightest as quickly as possible, Governor Hochul will propose legislation to change Civil Service Law to accelerate the hiring of qualified diverse candidates to public service careers and streamline hiring practices. For example, expanding the use of continuous recruitment examinations for entry-level job titles will allow agencies to grow their pools of qualified candidates more quickly.
- *Improve Civil Service Exam Quality:* DCS will expand efforts to ensure that civil service exams are maintaining the highest standards of integrity and equity.

Expand the State’s Technology Talent Pipeline

Every day, New Yorkers engage with more and more digital government services, a trend that has accelerated since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. As the need for those services has grown, so has the need for technical talent to build, deliver, and improve those services. That is why it is paramount that New York State build a strong pipeline of tech talent to public service, working in partnership with New York State’s colleges and universities as well as the many prominent technology companies based in New York.

Governor Hochul will expand the tech talent pipeline by increasing exposure to technical roles in government service through internships, fellowships, and mid-career opportunities. A new fellowship program will build on the success of the Excelsior Service Fellowship Program, drawing candidates from schools across New York State, including from backgrounds historically underrepresented in technology, to provide graduates the opportunity to enter public service for two years right out of school. A new Digital SWAT Team program will also offer mid-career technologists the opportunity to spend an 18-month stint in government, working to accelerate the state's ability to deliver quality digital services for New Yorkers.

This initiative will not only ensure that New York has a diverse group of top talent, but will also allow the state to gain exposure to the newest technologies out there through close collaboration with our universities and companies.

Make New York a Model for the Employment of Workers with Disabilities

In recent years, only about one-third of working-age New Yorkers with disabilities held jobs — ranking 38th⁵³ out of U.S. states. To make New York a national leader in this area, Governor Hochul will work to expand job opportunities in high-growth areas for workers with disabilities. Her plan will:

- *Create an Office of the Chief Disability Officer:* Governor Hochul will build and staff an Office of the Chief Disability Officer (CDO) to address the multiple factors preventing more people with disabilities from finding meaningful employment. The CDO and staff will be charged with making specific, action-oriented recommendations around: ensuring businesses remain committed to employing people with disabilities and have the necessary toolkits to do so; reducing barriers faced by companies in hiring people with disabilities, and by workers in finding these roles; leveraging federal and state tax credits; updating the 2015 Employment First recommendations; making best

use of existing State-funded training and employment programs, as well as Adult Career and Continuing Education Services-Vocational Rehabilitation (ACCESS-VR) and other educational programs; and expanding New York State Commission for the Blind's Business Enterprise Program.

- *Commit New York State Government to Becoming a Model Employer:* To set an example for other states to follow and increase the number of workers with disabilities employed by New York's public sector, Governor Hochul will charge DCS with working with other State agencies and labor unions to improve the Civil Service 55-b/c programs, which authorize the State to designate up to 1,200 positions in the non-competitive class to be filled by qualified people with disabilities and up to 500 positions to be filled by qualified wartime veterans with disabilities. This program will be updated to allow for the transfer of non-competitive employees in the 55-b and 55-c programs into the competitive class to allow for more rapid career mobility. Additionally, key State agencies will create trainings for State employees to better support individuals with disabilities (as well as other coworkers); create a toolkit that helps local governments become Model Employers based on the State's experience; and receive reminders of the statutory priority for legally blind vendors to operate within New York State facilities.
- *Enhance the New York Employment Services System (NYESS):* This initiative will enhance NYESS, a unique partnership between the Office of Mental Health (OMH) and DOL that exists to support the employment services system in its entirety, regardless of disability sub-types or State agency affiliation.
- *Enhance Vocational, Educational, Employment, and Training Programs at OMH and the Office for People with Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD).*

Protect and Strengthen Workers' Rights

To ensure that our state's economic growth and recovery lifts up all workers, Governor Hochul has an action plan to protect working New Yorkers:

- *Ban Agreements That Limit Workers' Ability to Move and Work Freely:* Governor Hochul will propose legislation to eliminate non-compete agreements for workers making below the median wage in New York State and to explicitly ban all "no-poach" agreements under State antitrust law.
- *Increase Criminal Penalties for Employers Who Commit Wage Theft:* Governor Hochul will propose legislation to increase criminal penalties for employers who knowingly or intentionally commit wage theft violations to more closely align with penalties for other forms of theft — because wage theft is theft.
- *Modernize How Workers File Labor Law Claims to Be More Accessible to Today's Workforce:* DOL will improve the process for workers to make complaints about unpaid wages, discrimination, failure to provide State-mandated leave, and other violations of the labor law.

Part III-C: Launch "Jails to Jobs": A Program to Improve Re-Entry into the Workforce and Reduce Recidivism

Opportunities for successful re-entry and re-integration begin the moment an individual enters the state's criminal justice system. Despite New York's advancements in creating a fairer justice system, education remains a critical challenge for the nearly 31,000 people⁵⁴ in New York State prisons. Nationally, over 40 percent⁵⁵ of incarcerated people lack a high school diploma or equivalent; in New York, the figure is 36 percent. There is more we can do to ensure incarcerated individuals receive a high school diploma or GED to assist in securing a job post-incarceration.

The expansion of higher-education opportunities for incarcerated populations provides clear benefits by reducing recidivism, increasing post-release employment, and saving taxpayer money. Incarcerated people who participate in correctional education programs are 43 percent⁵⁶ less likely to reoffend and 13 percent more likely to obtain and retain employment after returning to their community. As a result of decreased recidivism, taxpayers save roughly \$5 for every \$1 invested in prison education.

Governor Hochul’s “Jails to Jobs” initiative will help incarcerated and formerly incarcerated New Yorkers get critical job skills and find work. The result will be reduced recidivism and increased community safety. This initiative includes the following proposals.

Refocus Parole Officers on Career Planning and Job Placement

To better support employment opportunities for parolees and further reduce recidivism, Governor Hochul will propose that, over the next year, the Department of Corrections and Community Supervision (DOCCS) and the Division of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS) collaborate to train a network of nearly 100 of the State’s parole officers and re-entry specialists on career planning and job placement. These trained professionals will be available throughout each of the 35 DOCCS parole field offices to help those facing difficulties in their re-entry to the workforce.

Going forward, DOCCS and DCJS will move to provide this evidence-based training, and other labor-focused development programs, toward a goal of ensuring that all of New York’s parole and probation professionals are prepared to support each individual’s return to their family and community. By developing and delivering comprehensive employment training, New York will lead the nation in permanently shifting the relationship between community supervision professionals and the formerly incarcerated individuals whom they support.

With this initiative, by 2023, nearly all of the state's 700 parole officers will have received dedicated workforce development training to better service justice-involved New Yorkers.

Enable Voluntary, Private-Sector, In-Prison Employment Opportunities that Pay a Good Wage

Governor Hochul will propose to amend the New York State Constitution to allow public-private partnerships that would enable hybrid work-release programs within prisons, creating private-sector engagements that provide critical job skills to incarcerated individuals, making re-entry more successful and expanding job opportunities. All in-prison work opportunities arising from these partnerships would be voluntary and all work would pay good wages. DOCCS will explore programs to encourage savings and financial literacy in conjunction with these opportunities.

Expand Vocational, Job Readiness, and Re-Entry Programs

To strengthen existing career programs, Governor Hochul will direct DOCCS to assess current vocational programming to determine appropriate standards and ensure that offerings equip incarcerated individuals with the skills they need to meet the demands of the current job market when they return to the community.

Furthermore, building on the success of a vocational program for automotive technicians, Governor Hochul will also direct DOCCS to launch a vocational program to train incarcerated individuals to obtain commercial driver's licenses.

Finally, Governor Hochul will take further steps to expand job-readiness and re-entry support, including expanding the Re-entry Computer Lab pilot to an additional five work-release facilities, and expanding the Work for Success Initiative — a

collaboration between DOCCS and DOL — to provide formerly incarcerated individuals with job training and referrals.

Restore the Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) for Incarcerated Individuals

In 1995, a New York State law prohibited incarcerated people from being eligible to receive state financial aid. This year, Governor Hochul will propose legislation reversing this ban and expanding educational opportunities within correctional facilities. This legislation will repeal the prohibition against using TAP in prisons; stipulate that universities contracting with DOCCS provide career counseling services for incarcerated students, and offer degrees with meaningful career paths; and engage businesses to participate in career fairs inside prisons.

Allow for Educational Release as an Earned, Re-Entry Opportunity

State law currently allows for up to 14 hours per day of educational release for educational, vocational, or related purposes; however, the majority of incarcerated individuals enrolled in college do not qualify due to the nature of their crime.

To remedy this, Governor Hochul will propose legislation to expand those eligible by allowing for incarcerated individuals who qualify for Limited Credit Time Allowance (LCTA) to participate in educational release, and to expedite the awarding of a six-month LCTA credit against their sentence for this cohort.

Pass the Clean Slate Act

For the 2.3 million⁵⁷ New Yorkers with a conviction, the stigma of a criminal record stifles access to opportunities such as employment and housing. To improve opportunities for released individuals, Governor Hochul will push to pass the Clean Slate Act, providing for certain felony records to be sealed after seven years, and

misdemeanor records to be sealed after three years, following the completion of a sentence.

To be eligible for records sealing, an individual would have to have completed their prison sentence and community supervision; not have been convicted of a sex crime; and not since have acquired subsequent convictions in New York State or have pending charges during the waiting period. Reasonable exceptions will be made for appropriate categories of employment.

Pilot a New Approach to Transitional Housing for Post-Incarceration Individuals

Parolees are far more likely to have a successful transition back into their community if they find stable housing quickly. A significant number of incarcerated individuals released by DOCCS are unable to find an appropriate residence, and thus end up in the homeless shelter system. Helping parolees avoid the shelter system would save taxpayer dollars and increase public safety while improving long-term outcomes for the parolee.

Governor Hochul will create a pilot program to secure suitable residences for parolees who might otherwise have been released into the shelter system. This pilot would leverage a residential treatment facility set up to provide parolees with stable housing for 90 days as they pursue a job and a permanent home. Once a parolee successfully secures an approved housing location, the head of that location would be eligible to receive a temporary stipend to help offset household costs for a 12-week period.

A residential treatment facility can be a launching pad to a stable home — and a stronger opportunity for a successful re-entry into the community.

Eliminate Outdated Supervision Fees to Reduce Barriers for Individuals Returning to Society After Incarceration

Under New York State’s current supervision fee statute, DOCCS is required to collect a supervision fee of \$30.00 per month for each person over the age of 18 on parole and post-release supervision. But the parolee population has limited income and employment opportunities, and parolees often struggle to pay these fees, resulting in a low collection rate.

To facilitate re-entry for more than 30,000 parolees, Governor Hochul will propose eliminating these outdated supervision fees, reducing the financial burden on parolees.

Fully Staff the Parole Board and Prohibit Outside Employment for Board Members

The Executive Law permits the Board of Parole to have up to 19 members, each appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Senate for a six-year term. However, the parole board currently comprises just 15 members. Governor Hochul will nominate individuals to fill the four additional seats, increasing the board’s capacity to hear cases.

Additionally, to further increase the board’s capacity and ensure that board members’ sole professional focus is on hearing cases, Governor Hochul will prohibit Parole Board Members from outside employment.

Facilitate Access to ID Cards and Other Vital Records to Enhance Opportunities for Released Persons

Incarcerated individuals often struggle to provide the documents needed to obtain a DMV Non-Driver ID card. To facilitate access to documentation needed post-incarceration that would assist in the issuance of a DMV Non-Driver ID card, Governor Hochul will propose legislation to permit a sentence and commitment or a

certificate of conviction to be deemed authorization for DOCCS to obtain a certified birth certificate or transcript of birth on behalf of an incarcerated individual for the purpose of providing State identification upon release.

Governor Hochul will also expand the successful pilot program established by DOCCS and DMV to process Non-Driver IDs for parolees to include a pilot program that allows for the issuance prior to the release of incarcerated individuals.

Part III-D: Support the Agriculture Workforce and Improve the Food Supply Chain

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused great strains for New York’s agriculture sector. Nearly half of our state’s farm workers are foreign workers, and as crossing borders has become even more difficult during the pandemic — further complicated by the national focus on immigration issues — farms have suffered severe worker shortages leading to declines in production. At the same time, the pandemic also underscored the importance of local food production and supply chains on food resiliency.

To support this vital sector, Governor Hochul will take a range of actions designed to strengthen the agricultural workforce and solidify food production, while also ensuring that New York’s farm work supports state goals for climate change and social equity. These efforts also include the proposals to increase existing tax credits and create new ones for food production mentioned in Part III-A.

Enhance Agribusiness Child Development Centers to Support Farm Workers

Production agriculture requires intensive work, particularly during the growing and harvesting seasons. As the COVID-19 pandemic caused daycares to temporarily close their doors — including Agri-Business Child Development (ABCD) Centers — essential farm workers faced the same difficult choices as other New Yorkers when

it came time to balancing work and childcare. Disproportionally, women stepped out of the agricultural workforce to care for their children, especially women of color.

New York will increase support for ABCD Centers statewide to continue to provide the highest-quality early childhood education and social services to farm workers and other eligible families with infants, toddlers, and preschoolers.

Additionally, capital investments in ABCD Centers will create safer environments and give the Centers more capacity to serve more children of essential workers. New York will also invest in increased family programming at these Centers.

Improve the School Lunch Program by Transferring It into the Department of Agriculture and Markets

For 10 years, the U.S. Department of Agriculture has allowed schools to purchase from local farms for its Farm-to-School Program, better supporting local food production and workers. But the Office of the New York State Comptroller has found that almost two-thirds of school districts already participating in the Farm-to-School Program do not even know about that provision.⁵⁸

To better connect schools and farmers and support local production, the State will transfer the administration of the National School Lunch Program from the State Education Department (SED) to the Department of Agriculture and Markets (AGM).

AGM will work with the Department of Health (DOH) to ensure that nutrition standards are met, and with the Office of General Services to develop guidelines specific to school food procurement. Housing the program at AGM will also help streamline State nutrition programs and leverage existing partnerships between AGM and other agencies and entities invested in this work.

Build Local Food Systems to Ensure a Resilient Supply Chain

COVID-19 brought to light weaknesses in the local food supply chain, including difficulty for farmers' markets in adapting to an increasingly online marketplace and high costs of transporting food. Governor Hochul will take immediate actions to create a food system that can not only withstand a pandemic but also is accessible to all New Yorkers.

To ensure a more resilient food supply chain, the State will re-fund the Farmers' Market Resiliency Grant Program and establish a working group to connect upstate and downstate New York on food procurement and distribution. Grant funding will give farmers and small businesses an opportunity to build resiliency into their markets, including pivoting to online sales and delivery and investing in infrastructure to make local food accessible to more consumers. Convening experts to strengthen the connection between upstate and downstate will facilitate easier delivery of fresh, local, nutritious foods to those New Yorkers who need it most.

Fund the "Nourish New York" Initiative to Feed New Yorkers and Support Farmers

In November, Governor Hochul signed legislation⁵⁹ making the Nourish New York Program permanent. Launched amid the severe supply chain disruptions brought on by the pandemic, this vital program supports both local farmers and underserved communities by purchasing surplus food supply and rerouting it to State food banks, providing an additional income stream for farmers while feeding families in need.

To date, Nourish New York has helped New York's network of food banks and emergency food providers purchase more than 35 million pounds of food from local farmers and delivered more than 29 million meals to communities across the state, with nearly 4,200 farms benefitting from the initiative.

To continue supporting farmers and feeding residents, Governor Hochul will fund the Nourish New York program annually. Through the collaboration of the AGM and DOH, the emergency food system will be provided additional funding to continue the purchase of New York State food from farmers and processors.

Expand the Climate Resilient Farming Program to Better Prepare Farmers for Climate Change

There is increasing demand for climate mitigation, resilience, and adaptation options from New York's 33,400 farms.⁶⁰ New York State has provided funding through the Climate Resilient Farming (CRF) Program to assist 200 New York farms in reducing their operational impact on the environment and addressing the impacts of extreme weather events resulting from climate change. But the CRF grant program has been oversubscribed during its last two rounds by approximately 50 percent.

To help farms adapt to climate change, Governor Hochul will increase funding for the CRF program and its associated supporting initiatives. This action will advance New York's efforts to reduce agricultural greenhouse gases and advance on-farm and community-wide resiliency measures.

Additionally, expanded CRF funding can help access key opportunities for mitigation, resilience, and adaptation beyond the program's current offerings. These opportunities have emerged through evolving applied research funded through the CRF budget and conducted by the state's land grant college, Cornell University.

Establish the BIPOC Farmer Engagement and Outreach Program to Better Support Diversity and Equity in New York Agriculture

Recent agricultural surveys have shown increases in the participation of woman and Hispanic farmers, but a decline in Black farmers in New York.⁶¹ Consistent with our state's efforts to address the underrepresentation of minority groups in many

industries, and to dismantle barriers to social mobility, a long-term approach is needed to ensure diverse farmers are thriving in New York.

To better support diversity and equity in New York agriculture, Governor Hochul will establish the Black, Indigenous, and other People-of-Color (BIPOC) Farmer Engagement and Outreach Program, supporting the unique needs of BIPOC-identifying farmers and producers across the state. The program's initiatives will include:

- Taking input and feedback from the Diversity and Racial Equity Working Group⁶² established in 2020 at AGM, as well as other external stakeholders.
- Helping to build an ongoing and sustainable relationship between farmers of color and AGM.
- Providing a direct phone number and email address to connect with AGM staff to help navigate the various service providers and resources available to underrepresented groups in agriculture.

This first step will help expand farming opportunities to more New Yorkers, especially those in historically marginalized groups.

Expand SNAP Access to New York State Farms

New York will take a series of actions to remove barriers in connecting the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) beneficiaries with more healthy, locally produced food options. The State will become a national leader in facilitating SNAP EBT purchases direct from New York farmers online, clearing a major access hurdle. Additionally, SNAP recipients will receive a special FreshConnect benefit toward purchasing a food subscription from a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) farm. These initiatives will assist underserved members of the community in accessing wholesome fresh food, while also supporting farmers across the state.

Create the New York State Grown & Certified Producers Infrastructure, Technology, Research, and Development Grant Program

The Department of Agriculture and Markets has previously operated an Infrastructure Grant Program for the New York State Grown & Certified Producers (the state's food certification program). Governor Hochul will expand this grant program to include technology research and development alongside infrastructure, helping producers adopt state-of-the-art practices and explore new and innovative products that better meet consumer demand.

Farmers would be able to use this grant money to invest in farm infrastructure, purchase new technology and equipment, and conduct research to aid in the development of new products to be marketed under the New York State Grown & Certified program. This expansion will help our agricultural producers and processors adapt for a more resilient food system.

Fund the Urban Farms and Community Gardens Grant Program

COVID-19 brought to light weaknesses in the local food supply chain, including the difficulty New Yorkers face when trying to access food in food deserts and traditionally underserved communities. Additional action is needed to create a food system that can not only withstand a pandemic but is accessible to all New Yorkers. Governor Hochul will fund the Urban Farms and Community Gardens Grant Program to help make local food accessible to more residents, including those in food deserts and underserved communities, and to encourage more urban farming.

Continue Leading the Nation in Hemp Production

Following the Federal Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018 that significantly changed federal regulation for hemp cultivation in the U.S., New York State now has

a USDA-approved Hemp Program Plan in place. AGM has developed program regulations to add clarity and certainty for hemp growers, and added program staff to better serve the regulated community. Additionally, to meet new federal requirements for increased sampling and testing of hemp crops, AGM will be training and certifying private sampling agents to take regulatory samples, ensuring compliance with the federal standard for hemp of not more than 0.3 percent THC.

To bolster the increased interest in the use of hemp for grain and fiber applications, New York State will establish a grain and fiber working group at AGM to coordinate the activities of state, federal, and industry partners on workforce development and training needs, sampling and testing, and research and market opportunities. Additionally, New York State will continue supporting the work of Cornell University in developing new commercial cultivars in grain, fiber, and cannabidiol (CBD), as well as in developing new processing technologies for industrial hemp.

Part III-E: Protect New York's Consumers and Improve Financial Health

The recovery has shown that rebuilding New York requires improving the long-term financial health and resilience of all New Yorkers, especially for those living in the historically underserved communities that were disproportionately impacted by the pandemic. Too many New Yorkers are burdened with debt, including student debt and medical debt. Unable to immediately pay off these debts, they often face abusive and punitive practices that lead to increased and undeserved financial pressure.

Ensuring financial opportunity requires both protecting consumers from unfair and deceptive practices, and supporting more equitable practices and programs for wealth creation and financial health for all New Yorkers. COVID-19 has shown us that unexpected events will arise and New Yorkers must have the financial security to weather these storms, as well as access to safe financial products and tools to financially thrive.

Governor Hochul has a plan to protect New Yorkers against fraud and abuse and to promote financial security for all New Yorkers.

Automate Debt Forgiveness for State Employees

The Public Service Loan Forgiveness (PSLF) Program offers New York State employees student loan forgiveness after 10 years of qualifying service. Until recently, the implementation of the PSLF Program has been dismal. More than 98 percent of applicants have been denied the financial relief they were promised.⁶³ In collaboration with the federal government, Governor Hochul will work to automate the application process as much as possible to increase participation, minimize paperwork, and eliminate the mistakes that slow approvals.

Governor Hochul will propose legislation to amend the Public Officers Law so the State may share records of employees with the U.S. Department of Education (DOE) to enroll them in the PSLF Program. U.S. DOE is currently developing a program to automate loan forgiveness, and this legal change would lay the groundwork for State participation in the federal program. Governor Hochul will work with the Office of the New York State Comptroller and relevant federal partners to participate in this program to the fullest.

Once launched, the student protection unit of the Department of Financial Services (DFS) will work with the Governor's Office of Employee Relations to educate State employers about the streamlined application process, making it easier for them to enroll their workforce.

Stop Transcript Withholding from SUNY/CUNY

Schools withhold transcripts as a debt-collection mechanism for students or graduates with outstanding accounts. As a result, thousands of New Yorkers are unable to obtain their transcripts from higher education institutions across the

state, because they owe small amounts of money, such as tuition fees, library fines, or parking tickets. Transcript withholding is a harmful debt-collection practice that prevents students — particularly low-income students — from being able to transfer credits, finish their degrees, and obtain jobs that could help them pay their balances.

Governor Hochul will propose legislation to prohibit higher education institutions from withholding an official transcript from a current or former student on the grounds that the student owes a debt. Governor Hochul will direct the SUNY and CUNY systems to immediately stop withholding transcripts due to unpaid bills. Notably, CUNY announced a temporary hold on the practice in August 2021.

Make New York State Higher Education Services Corporation Loan Forgiveness Awards Tax Exempt

Student loans forgiven under the Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program are exempt from federal and state income tax, as are other similar Federal programs. But awards provided by the New York State Higher Education Services Corporation (HESC) as part of its loan forgiveness program are not currently excluded from tax. These programs provide awards for graduates working in certain professions, such as social workers, farmers, and legal services. More than 2,000 New Yorkers receive awards through these programs. Moving forward, New York State will exclude HESC Loan Forgiveness programs from State income tax in order to relieve students of the burden of paying state income tax on the value of these awards.

Protect Consumers from Healthcare Provider Misinformation

Surprise medical bills create crushing financial and mental stresses for people just as they are recovering. Many New Yorkers try to do the right thing — wading through confusing websites to check that their provider is covered by their insurance before seeking care — only to learn they were mistaken and get hit with

huge out-of-network fees. Building on federal legislation, Governor Hochul will adopt a new regulation to protect consumers against misinformation that can lead to unexpected costs in the delivery of healthcare.

These protections will ensure that New Yorkers are not charged surprise out-of-network costs when a healthcare provider is incorrectly listed as in-network in the insurer's provider directory, an insurer provides incorrect information about a provider's network participation status in response to a request from a consumer, or the insurer fails to respond to a consumer's request for such information.

Create the Pharmacy Benefits Bureau to Lower the Cost of Prescription Drugs

In December 2021, Governor Hochul signed into law the most comprehensive regulatory regime for pharmacy benefit managers (PBMs) in the country. PBMs are key intermediaries in the prescription drug supply chain that have long operated without regulatory oversight or disclosure of their business practices or conflicts of interest. While they are hired by insurance providers to negotiate down the costs of drugs from manufacturers and pharmacies, they often pocket these savings instead of passing them to consumers. This law will establish a new PBM licensing and e-registration program to shine a light on this industry.

To build on this landmark reform, Governor Hochul will create a new Pharmacy Benefits Bureau in the Department of Financial Services (DFS) to lead efforts to lower drug prices, the number one driver of insurance premium increases.

The new Bureau will begin licensing PBMs and will issue comprehensive regulations to ensure transparency and accountability for PBM practices. The Bureau will also hire a new compliance team to investigate PBM business practices and review complaints of misconduct. Additionally, this team will expand DFS's ongoing efforts to investigate significant spikes in prescription drug prices and to require drug

manufacturers — or whoever is responsible for the price increase — to show a reasonable justification for sudden increases.

With this new team, New York will bring a multi-pronged approach to attacking high drug prices both at the manufacturer level and at the dispensing level.

Strengthen the Statewide Office of Financial Inclusion and Empowerment

The Statewide Office of Financial Inclusion and Empowerment⁶⁴ (SOFIE) was created in 2021 to protect and empower all New York consumers and advance economic justice across the state. But to fully realize its mission to New Yorkers, SOFIE needs more resources. Accordingly, Governor Hochul will not only fully staff and fund SOFIE but also strengthen the office — expanding access to safe and affordable banking services and financial products, connecting New Yorkers with local resources, and supporting policies for economic stability and prosperity.

SOFIE initiatives will include:

- *Research and Innovation:* Conduct consumer research to assess consumer financial health and access in New York State, and identify supportive strategies, products, or necessary regulatory changes to strengthen financial resilience.
- *Foster Inclusive Financial Services:* Fund pilots for inclusive services, including coordinating with ESD on the Community Development Financial Institutions Fund.
- *Consumer Education and Empowerment:* Engage with community organizations to lead new consumer financial education and outreach programs for underserved and vulnerable communities. The Office will also connect New Yorkers to financial support and recovery programs available

across New York State government, such as Homeowner Assistance Fund grants available to homeowners who fell behind on mortgage payments, property taxes, or water or sewer; as well as to high-quality nonprofit providers available in their communities.

Enhance the UI Benefit Banking Program to Help New Yorkers Receive Their Unemployment Insurance Benefits

During the COVID-19 pandemic, unemployment rose steeply, and more New Yorkers than ever filed for unemployment insurance (UI) or federal Pandemic Unemployment Assistance. Direct Deposit is the preferred option for many of the customers receiving benefits, but this option requires a customer to have a traditional bank account. Roughly 25 percent⁶⁵ of New York State households do not have bank accounts or seldom use one, and rely on costly non-bank services for their financial activities, with higher rates among minority and lower-income households.

To provide more flexibility, Governor Hochul will direct DOL to open a competitive process for a bank to offer multiple banking options for New Yorkers to access their unemployment benefits. Under this proposal, recipients will be able to choose how they receive benefits, including direct deposit to an existing bank account, a new bank account to receive direct deposit, a pre-paid debit card, or digital payment apps.

The enhanced banking program will expand access to bank accounts and give New Yorkers the choice for faster, easier, and secure ways to get much-needed funds.

Invest in Effective Student Debt Assistance Programs

Today, nearly 2.4 million New Yorkers have outstanding student loans totaling more than \$90 billion combined. Among our state's recent graduates, 45 percent of young

adults (18-35 year olds) have outstanding student loan debt, and the number of older student loan borrowers (60+ years old) has quadrupled since 2005.⁶⁶

To better support New Yorkers facing high debt burdens, Governor Hochul will invest in effective student debt assistance programs, focused on helping New Yorkers navigate the student loan repayment system. With this investment, Governor Hochul will help ensure even more New Yorkers can finally say, “I am student debt free.”

SECTION IV

INVEST IN NEW YORK'S COMMUNITIES

The major investments being made in New York's infrastructure and economic revitalization today will chart a course for the safety, mobility, prosperity, and health of New Yorkers tomorrow. Smart use of public funding should facilitate development and growth, while supporting historically disadvantaged communities through initiatives to enhance equity in access to well-paying jobs, transportation, and education.

Governor Hochul will invest in comprehensive infrastructure projects and economic development programs with benefits for every region. These initiatives will reconnect communities long severed, promote multi-modal connectivity, create new world-class green spaces, and facilitate opportunities for economic growth.

All of these efforts will be supported through an unprecedented investment in broadband to close the digital divide and connect more New York communities with next-generation healthcare and the high-paying jobs and industries of the future.

Part IV-A: Enact a New Transportation Plan That Prioritizes Critical Projects Throughout the State

New York is home to some of the most iconic transportation infrastructure in the world, from the Brooklyn Bridge and Grand Central Terminal in New York City, to the Genesee Arch Bridge in Livingston County, to the Broad Street Bridge in the City of Rochester. The State has bold plans to move forward with projects big and small that will continue to strengthen the competitiveness of New York's diverse economic regions, transform low- and moderate-income communities that have long been divided by transportation infrastructure and burdened by vehicle emissions, and enhance the safety of and access to the transportation network for motorists, bicyclists, pedestrians, and users of all abilities and ages.

Despite historic State investments in our infrastructure, New York’s renewal and modernization needs continue to outpace the work that has been done. These needs have been exacerbated by the immediate and longer-term impacts of climate change. The increased intensity and frequency of extreme weather events have resulted in record-setting rain and flooding. Moving forward, New York must take a more aggressive stance on mitigating the impacts of climate change on our communities and prioritize investments in the resiliency and hardening of our state and local roads and bridges, public transportation systems, passenger and freight rail transit systems, and other transportation infrastructure.

To address these priorities, and with the passage of a new five-year federal transportation authorization bill, Governor Hochul will introduce a new five-year capital plan for the New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT). The new plan represents a generational opportunity to enhance safety, improve reliability, and promote climate smart polices while advancing mobility alternatives. It will prioritize and refocus investments on State and local roads and bridges in smaller municipalities throughout New York, make our state’s communities more resilient to extreme weather events, and provide strategic investments to help reconnect neighborhoods and facilitate regional economic growth.

What follows is a non-exhaustive list of some of the big transportation infrastructure projects happening across the state — both those that are currently under way and those that will begin soon.

Transportation and Infrastructure Projects Currently Under Way

Revitalize the South Bronx by Reconstructing the Bruckner-Sheridan Interchange at Hunts Point

This project, currently in construction by NYSDOT, will transform neighborhoods in the South Bronx by correcting the planning mistakes of the past, protecting health,

and enhancing safety. The construction of the new highway interchange, entrance, and exit ramps, along with the rehabilitation of the Bruckner Viaduct, will reduce commercial truck traffic in local residential areas; improve mobility, operations, and safety; and help mitigate poor air quality in the South Bronx, one of the communities with the highest asthma rates in the nation.

This project will also support the sustained growth of the Hunts Point Food Distribution Center — which provides up to 60 percent of the produce⁶⁷ consumed by New York City residents and visitors — by providing direct access to the campus. The Hunts Point Distribution Center employs more than 6,000 workers. In addition to new direct access, this project will upgrade or construct 15 new intersections; install new or upgraded Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) curbs, medians, sidewalks, crosswalks and traffic signal improvements; and construct a new 1.5-mile shared-use path, providing a connection to the 138th Street bike path heading to Randall’s Island, Manhattan, and Bronx River Greenway. All phases of this project are scheduled to be completed in the fall of 2025.

Reimagine the Van Wyck Expressway into a Gateway Travel Corridor

Access to and from John F. Kennedy International Airport (JFK) is critically important to the New York metropolitan region, and the nation, for both travelers and freight-goods movement. This project, under construction by NYSDOT, expands capacity and improves reliability along the Van Wyck Expressway corridor from the Kew Gardens Interchange to the JFK airport through the construction of new managed-use lanes in both directions and the reconfiguration of entrance and exit ramps that will eliminate back-ups impacting the main travel lanes.

This New York State investment at JFK will support the anticipated growth of more than 75 million passengers by 2030. This overall growth will make roadway congestion — as well as transit access to and from JFK — even more challenging

than it is today. Access to JFK is a major driving force in the regional economy, generating \$15 billion in wages and nearly 285,000 jobs.

Roadway improvements on the Van Wyck Expressway and Kew Gardens Interchange are critical to not only easing access to and from JFK airport, but also the economic redevelopment of the surrounding communities. All phases of this project are scheduled to be completed in the fall of 2025.

Modernize the Kew Gardens Interchange

As part of the bold vision to enhance access to the new JFK airport and facilitate global competitiveness, New York State is renewing and modernizing the disparate network of roadways that supports the airport as well as surrounding communities. The Kew Gardens Interchange is one the region's most complex roadway connections, intersecting between the Grand Central Parkway, the Van Wyck Expressway, the Jackie Robinson Parkway, and Union Turnpike.

The Interchange is also one of the region's most heavily utilized roadways, serving more than 200,000 vehicles daily. The NYSDOT is administering a \$700 million program of operational enhancements along the interchange. The four phases of this project include replacing and reconfiguring ramps and bridges, eliminating stop signs, constructing new acceleration and deceleration lanes, and constructing new and widening existing connector ramps between the expressway and the parkways. When the fourth phase is completed in 2022, the project will provide greater capacity and decrease congestion, resulting in fewer incidents, faster travel times for commuters, and less truck traffic on local roadways.

Complete the Albany Skyway

Consistent with the Governor's priority to revitalize downtowns, reconnect communities, and enhance mobility alternatives, the NYSDOT has completed

construction of the Albany Skyway. The Albany Skyway converted an underutilized interstate exit ramp (I-787 to Clinton Street) into an iconic linear park with a landscape promenade, event spaces, and an accessible shared-use path. The new Albany Skyway provides critical connections between Downtown Albany, the Arbor Hill and Sheridan Hollow neighborhoods, Albany’s warehouse district, and Albany Riverfront Park at the Corning Preserve.

Deliver the LIRR Third Track Project Under Budget and On-Schedule by the End of 2022

The Long Island Rail Road's (LIRR) Third Track Project, a critical infrastructure improvement for the future of Long Island and the greater New York metropolitan region, will reduce train congestion and delays that have long frustrated hundreds of thousands of commuters. New York State is committed to delivering this enormous transportation improvement on time and under budget. To date, eight out of eight grade crossings have been eliminated, six out of seven substandard bridges have been fixed, and six passenger rail stations are being upgraded and brought into compliance with ADA standards. Miles of sound attenuation and retaining walls have been built, and storm resilient features, new power substations, and new signal systems have been added. Residents and commuters are already reaping the benefits of the completed project elements — with the rest targeted for completion by the end of 2022.

New Transportation and Infrastructure Priorities

Spur Further Investment in the North Country and Adirondacks Through ORDA

First created after the 1980 Winter Games at Lake Placid, the New York Olympic Regional Development Authority (ORDA) continues to drive economic growth in the North Country and Adirondacks, working closely with local businesses to support the tourism and recreational sports industries. The State will provide additional

support to expand use and enjoyment of outdoor recreational facilities in the Southern Adirondacks, with investments going toward development of the North Creek Ski Bowl at Gore Mountain, amplifying year-round park amenities that include mountain biking, hiking, and sports fields. Plans include a new ADA-compliant recreation center and a new chairlift designed for 12-month use.

Replace the Livingston Avenue Railroad Bridge in Albany

The Livingston Avenue Bridge provides a critical link for passenger rail service from the Northeast Corridor to Albany-Rensselaer. The rail bridge has deteriorated to the point where the current structure limits trains crossing to one at a time and at speeds of 15 miles per hour. The movable swing bridge mechanisms are failing, and the structure has not been closing properly. The project will replace the existing, Civil War-era bridge with a new, modern structure capable of supporting higher-speed passenger rail, freight rail, maritime transport, and bicycle-pedestrian access.

Accelerate Conversion of Route 17 into I-86 in Orange and Sullivan Counties

Strategic investments in the Mid-Hudson Valley have resulted in the expansion of Woodbury Common and the construction of Legoland and the Resorts World Catskills Casino. Over the past several years, projects have been completed by NYSDOT to upgrade sections of Route 17, including reconstruction of the interchange at Exit 131, where Route 17 meets Interstate 87 and Route 32 (Woodbury Common), and reconstruction of Exits 122 and 125 (Legoland) to meet interstate standards. To facilitate future economic competitiveness and alleviate congestion within the region, the State will begin an environmental review to assess the conversion of the full Route 17 corridor in Orange and Sullivan counties to Interstate 86.

Reconfigure the Oakdale Merge in Suffolk County to Improve Capacity

Oakdale Merge is where Sunrise Highway (Route 27) and Montauk Highway (Route 27A) and other roadways converge. The merge can no longer accommodate the approximately 126,000 vehicles that traverse the area daily. The current configuration of this major interchange has resulted in a high-crash area, induced idling, recurring delays, and harmful emissions spewing into the adjacent communities. The State will commence environmental review on this project.

Renew and Modernize Our State's Roads and Bridges

The primary objectives of our state's integrated network of roads and bridges are to support and enhance safety, mobility, and economic competitiveness. In recent years, our transportation infrastructure has been subject to the increasing frequency of extreme weather conditions, caused by climate change, that have resulted in closures, damages, and destruction to the system. To mitigate the impacts of climate change and the increased intensity and frequency of extreme weather on our roads and bridges, the State will prioritize investments in infrastructure resilience.

Governor Hochul is enhancing the funding for the state and local "PAVE NY" programs by an additional \$1 billion, and is directing that actions be taken to reduce embedded carbon through project delivery. The Governor will also increase the statewide "Bridge NY" program by an additional \$1 billion in the next five-year capital plan, which will serve to rehabilitate or replace structures that are susceptible to recurring flooding or foundation scour.

Elevate the Annsville Circle in Westchester County

To enhance the resiliency and reduce the risk of current recurring flooding, the State will commence a project to elevate the Annsville Circle and raise the approaches above of the 100-year flood elevation. This critical travel corridor in the Mid-

Hudson Region carries Route 6 over the Putnam Creek and serves as a lifeline corridor, providing access to the New York Army National Guard Military Installation at Camp Smith and serves as a key trans-Hudson River crossing via the Bear Mountain Bridge.

Part IV-B: Reconnect Neighborhoods, Particularly in Communities of Color

The highway expansions of the post-World War II era ripped through communities of color across the country, tearing apart the fabric of these neighborhoods in ways that still need repairing today. People lost their homes and their businesses; social connections were replaced by speeding cars and vehicle emissions. New York State was not immune to this destructive path, which hit low-income and minority communities disproportionately hard, from the Bronx downstate to Buffalo and Syracuse upstate, and many places in between.

Governor Hochul is committed to repairing the damage of transportation mistakes from decades ago. Instead of loud, polluting highways, these projects will prioritize walking, cycling, active streets, and green spaces designed to tie together communities and small businesses. New York must use its infrastructure opportunities of today to revitalize communities torn apart by infrastructure decisions of the past.

Convert the Existing Inner Loop North Freeway into a Community Boulevard in the City of Rochester

The Inner Loop North project will complete the removal of the Inner Loop freeway in the City of Rochester, building upon the successful completion of the Inner Loop East project in 2017, which raised and reconnected a two-thirds of a mile, below-grade expressway into an at-grade boulevard. Specifically, the completed Inner Loop East phase converted 8 to 12 lanes of expressway and frontage roads into a single two-lane low-speed street between South Clinton Avenue and East Main Street; eliminated three bridges and retaining walls; freed up approximately six acres of

land for new development; enhanced pedestrian and bicyclist safety and mobility; and removed a physical barrier to downtown Rochester.

The new Inner Loop North raising project will fully reconnect severed communities within downtown Rochester; provide direct links to the Genesee River and the High Falls District; connect and expand upon the investments from the ROC the Riverway program; promote multi-modal connectivity; create new world-class green spaces; and facilitate opportunities for economic development, including new infill development. NYSDOT in partnership with the City of Rochester will commence an environmental review.

Reconnect and Restore Neighborhoods Across the Kensington Expressway in Buffalo

The construction of Route 33 (Kensington Expressway) in the 1950s and 1960s resulted in the removal of a tree-lined boulevard with a park-like neighborhood setting (Humboldt Parkway). There is a strong community desire to recreate the character of the former parkway and provide a transportation facility that is more compatible with surrounding land uses, reconnecting residential neighborhoods on either side of the Humboldt Parkway, several churches, Martin Luther King, Jr. Park, and the Buffalo Museum of Science.

This project would reconnect and restore the east-west neighborhoods across the depressed section of the Kensington Expressway corridor (between Best Street and East Ferry Street), and re-establish the green space originally provided by the Humboldt Parkway without compromising the long-term capacity provided by the expressway.

Cover Portions of the Cross-Bronx Expressway to Reconnect Neighborhoods and Increase Open Space

The Cross-Bronx Expressway has divided communities in the Bronx since its construction in 1948. As a major commercial shipping corridor, the expressway brings 175,000 trucks⁶⁸ a day into this area, harming air quality for more than 250,000 residents in the adjacent vicinity. The long-awaited effort to build public amenities over the Cross-Bronx Expressway would reconnect communities severed by construction of the viaduct, create new open public spaces, enhance bicycle and pedestrian safety, improve safety along local streets, and reduce current adverse impacts of noise pollution, air pollution,⁶⁹ and heat pollution.

The State is committed to partnering with the City of New York to study the feasibility of decking sections of the Expressway to achieve these goals. This study represents an important step toward removing physical and economic barriers to residents of the Bronx.

Reconnect Syracuse Neighborhoods Divided by I-81

The Interstate 81 (I-81) project area serves as an essential travel corridor for the Central New York Region, especially the downtown Syracuse area, and has been highlighted by both President Biden and Secretary Buttigieg as reflective of the Administration's priorities on equity, economic opportunity, and transforming neighborhoods left behind.⁷⁰

This project will address the I-81 geometric, structural, and safety concerns of the viaduct by replacing the elevated structure with a community grid that would disperse traffic along local north-south streets. It will create a new high-speed business loop and reconnect neighborhoods severed by construction of the interstate, thereby creating opportunities for mixed-use residential and commercial development. The project would also construct safe pedestrian and bicycle access for users of all ages and abilities within the downtown core.

Building on the I-81 project, Connecting the New 15th Ward is a plan to reimagine the adjacent 118-acre East Adams neighborhood, where over 1,000 units of public housing are currently located. The revitalization project would create a mixed-use, mixed-income neighborhood where families — especially children — can thrive and have genuine opportunities for successful futures.

Part IV-C: Invest in Commercial Corridors and Waterfronts

We have seen extraordinary transformations occur in downtowns and waterfronts around the state when creative planning meets public and philanthropic support. Governor Hochul is committed to bringing about more such transformations, particularly in historically disadvantaged communities. These are but a few of the opportunities she will pursue to expand small business activity, restore vibrancy to commercial corridors, and revive waterfront spaces to be more open and accessible to all.

Improve East Side Commercial and Residential Infrastructure in Buffalo

Recent State investments have helped to revitalize the East Side of Buffalo, and additional infrastructure upgrades would further improve the neighborhood for residents while attracting more businesses. These streetscape projects include new asphalt pavement, sidewalk and curbing replacement, pedestrian improvements (including ADA-accessible ramps and audible pedestrian crossing signals), bicycle improvements (including upgrades based on the Buffalo Bicycle Master Plan), new street lighting and trees, traffic calming measures, upgraded traffic signal components, and new amenities (such as benches, bike racks, and trash receptacles).

Advance ROC the Riverway Phase 2

The ROC the Riverway project is a comprehensive initiative to revitalize the Genesee River corridor in downtown Rochester, with the goal of spurring private investment and attracting businesses while providing lively public spaces and active waterside walking-cycling routes for the local community. Phase 1, which launched in 2018, included 13 projects.⁷¹ Governor Hochul will support Phase 2, which includes the following components:

- *Rochester High Falls State Park*: This project will create a new State Park in downtown Rochester at High Falls, mostly within the Genesee River gorge that has been restricted from public access for generations. The new park will have a phased opening over the next five years, following successful remediation of various contaminated parcels.
- *Rochester Riverside Hotel & Convention Center Expansion*: This project will re-open the closed former Riverside Hotel on Main Street as a renovated mixed-use facility that will include updated meeting space to be operated by the attached Rochester Riverside Convention Center.
- *High Falls Visitor Center*: A \$2.5 million commitment⁷² of New York State funding announced in 2021 will allow the City of Rochester to retain ownership of the historic Rochester Water Works building at High Falls and renovate it as an improved public visitor center that could eventually allow elevator access to the river gorge level and benefit the new High Falls State Park.
- *Aqueduct Reimagined*: The State remains committed to Aqueduct Reimagined, the largest ROC the Riverway project, which envisions a central gathering place for the entire community. Funding includes the original \$4.5 million committed in ROC the Riverway Phase 1 and another \$5 million

announced in September to begin construction on the initial infrastructure phases as part of the Constellation Brands headquarters relocation to downtown.⁷³

- *Rochester Downtown Partnership:* A new public-private entity called the Rochester Downtown Partnership (RDP), created in December 2021, will be a management entity for public waterfront spaces, as recommended by the community advisory board that helped write the ROC the Riverway Vision Plan. The new RDP will also lead the effort in partnership with City Council, property owners, residents and other stakeholders to create a new Business Improvement District for downtown Rochester.

Improve the Utica Harbor Point Waterfront

Significant marina-area improvements to the Utica Harbor Point waterfront would advance economic development in the Mohawk Valley. Projects include the creation of an attractive public promenade; design and construction of multiple soccer and softball multi-use fields, including associated lighting and parking; and design of a pedestrian bridge to connect the recreational side of the harbor with the Adirondack Bank Center and the Nexus Center sports complex. These upgrades will unlock significant opportunities for marina-front restaurants and entertainment.

Redevelop the Outer Harbor Along the Buffalo Waterfront

Since 2013, the Erie Canal Harbor Development Corporation (ECHDC) and Empire State Development (ESD) have completed several capital improvements to increase public access to Buffalo's Outer Harbor, which boasts more than 200 acres of waterfront recreational space. Construction recently began on a \$13 million outdoor pavilion at the southern end of the Outer Harbor,⁷⁴ renovating a long-abandoned warehouse into an event center that reclaims seven acres of property for public access with scenic lake views. The project will also enhance the habitat with diverse

plantings and green spaces designed to support migrating and nesting birds. Construction is expected to be completed by Fall of 2023.

Construction will begin later this year on a \$15 million ecological restoration at the northern end of the Outer Harbor, transforming an unused slip into a wetland and high-quality, underwater habitat that supports both aquatic and bird species. The Erie Canal Harbor Development Corporation (ECHDC) partnered with the United States Army Corps of Engineers, who are contributing \$10 million toward the project, to enhance the sustainability of the Lake Erie ecosystem. The pavilion and wetland habitat are part of a comprehensive plan developed over five years in close collaboration with the community and local stakeholders.

Strengthen Connections to the Niagara Falls Waterfront

Investing in high-impact projects throughout Niagara Falls that strengthen important connections to the waterfront will upgrade community anchors and enhance the visitor experience, resulting in a higher quality of life and a meaningful economic impact. Areas of focus could include additional connections to the city's world-class waterfront that provide residents and visitors new ways to experience it both actively and passively, or potential investments in strategic sites that have close proximity to the waterfront, sites that build upon previous investments, or sites that have substantial pedestrian flow. Leveraging these high-impact projects will continue to distinguish Niagara Falls as a place that understands and celebrates its own unique strengths.

Complete the Westchester RiverWalk

Currently, there is a gap in the 51-mile Westchester RiverWalk of nearly 1 mile. The proposal would provide funding to the Scenic Hudson organization to close the gap, providing a direct pedestrian link under the Governor Mario M. Cuomo Bridge shared-use path and the Tarrytown Metro-North Station. This project will create

more riverfront access and connect people with nearby historic sites including Sunnyside, Lyndhurst, and Philipsburg Manor.

Reimagine New York's Statewide Canal System

The Erie Canal was the envy of the nation when it opened in 1825, spurring young cities across the U.S. to pursue canal projects of their own. The Reimagine the Canals Initiative aims to usher Erie into a 21st century system capable of supporting regional economic development and providing a recreation and tourism outlet for New Yorkers across the state.⁷⁵ In its first year, the initiative redeployed water management gates to extend fishing season in Western New York, began design work on a pedestrian bridge that will connect SUNY Brockport to the Empire State Trail in Monroe County, and advanced designs for a new whitewater course in Cayuga.⁷⁶ Further investment will continue to improve quality of life and drive economic growth in communities alongside New York's canals.

Part IV-D: Invest in Health and Clean Tech Research Infrastructure

Health and energy technology are two of the fastest-growing sectors in the world, delivering not just important technological breakthroughs but also strong economic foundations and good-paying jobs for regions and communities. With some of the world's leading research institutions and the nation's strongest climate commitments, New York is well-positioned to capitalize on these industries with the right investments.

To build on these assets, Governor Hochul will support health and clean tech projects with the potential to transform regional economies across the state. Examples include a center for battery research and manufacturing at Binghamton, a public health campus in Albany, an artificial intelligence hub in Long Island, and a biomedical lab in Utica. These and other investments will ensure that New York

remains at the forefront of high-growth industries — helping our communities grow alongside them.

Create a World-Class Battery Research and Manufacturing Center at Binghamton University

To help New Yorkers advance their careers in a leading, high-paying clean-tech industry, Governor Hochul will establish BATTERY-NY, a Technology Development and Manufacturing Center hosted by Binghamton University. The Center will be led by 2019 Nobel Laureate⁷⁷ in Chemistry, Binghamton University’s Distinguished Professor M. Stanley Whittingham, in partnership with a Chief Operating Officer from the battery industry and New York Battery and Energy Storage Technology Consortium (NY-BEST), an organization that works to position New York as a global leader in energy storage technology.

The Center will support the Southern Tier economy by developing the advanced manufacturing of batteries for clean energy technologies that will transform the transportation, military, and energy sectors. The Center will also establish a robust manufacturing infrastructure to support multiple industries and their supply chains.

Rebuild the Wadsworth Center in Albany into a World-Class Campus

The Wadsworth Center in Albany, a public health research laboratory of the New York State Department of Health (DOH), played an essential role in helping New York battle COVID-19. New York State is committed to supporting the rebuilding of this Center, ensuring that these vital DOH facilities can prepare to fight future public health challenges on behalf of New Yorkers. The Dormitory Authority of the State of New York (DASNY) is currently updating the plans to reflect lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Develop the AI Industry Through a Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory and Stony Brook University Partnership

Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory and Stony Brook University are partnering to launch an initiative that combines neuroscience and artificial intelligence to form a field called Neuro AI, pioneering developments of machine learning advances catalyzed by new insights into brain functions. An investment by New York State — with funds from the Transformative Investment Program — could leverage as much as \$250 million in private and federal dollars and provide the scientific basis for new technology spinoff companies in the region.

Expand the Masonic Medical Research Institute Laboratory in East Utica

A new, state-of-the-art, 32,000-square-foot laboratory facility connecting to the current lab space on the Masonic Medical Research Institute campus in East Utica is needed to double the research life sciences laboratory and establish a biomedical incubator to accelerate commercialization of basic research, supporting more than \$25 million in investments made over the past three years. The project will improve research for advancements in areas such as heart disease, diabetes, and autism. The expansion would be greatly beneficial to cardiac care at the nearby Mohawk Valley Health System campus, as well as for the surrounding area in general.

Part IV-E: Expand Transit Networks and Eliminate Rail Deserts in New York City

New York City's public transportation system is second to none in the U.S., providing a sustainable and affordable trip option to millions of people every day, and serving as the economic backbone of communities across the entire metro area. But this system needs further investments to keep up with the dynamic needs of a hybrid workforce, to reduce the vehicle pollution that comes with more driving, and most critically, to ensure that it provides equitable service to disadvantaged communities.

Reliable rail transit should be more readily available to communities throughout the city.

Governor Hochul is committed to expanding transit networks across New York City and reducing rail transit deserts — connecting more New Yorkers to the job and educational opportunities they need to get ahead. This effort is anchored by the creation of a transformational new "Interborough Express" project, decades in the making, that will serve nearly 1 million people a day, along with critical infrastructure projects that will enable the region to thrive in the future.

Advance the Transformative "Interborough Express" to Enhance Regional Mobility and Serve Nearly 1 Million New Yorkers

Governor Hochul is committed to a generational investment in regional mobility for working New Yorkers. A new Interborough Express line along a 14-mile existing freight right-of-way from Bay Ridge, Brooklyn, to Jackson Heights, Queens could be that investment. Governor Hochul is directing the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) to commence environmental review and identify the best transit option for the corridor (heavy rail, light rail, or bus rapid transit).

This historic project would improve transit service and job access for underserved communities in Brooklyn and Queens, serving a corridor that is currently home to 900,000 residents and 260,000 jobs, with expected growth of at least 41,000 people and 15,000 jobs in the next 25 years.

Stronger rapid transit in Brooklyn and Queens is long overdue. Both boroughs have exploded with residents in recent years, and these communities rely heavily on public transportation, with 57 percent of households in Brooklyn and 36 percent in Queens not owning cars.⁷⁸ For hundreds of thousands of people in the Interborough Express right-of-way, crossing from neighborhood to neighborhood is slow and tedious because existing subway lines are oriented toward Manhattan. Yet many

new work opportunities, schools, and services are within the outer boroughs themselves.

The Interborough Express would leverage an existing freight right-of-way to add capacity and provide new ways to travel between Brooklyn and Queens and also provide residents with new fast new reliable connections to Manhattan. The corridor would connect to up to 17 subway lines, in addition to the LIRR, expanding access to jobs for the 85,000 or so daily commuters from these areas who work in Manhattan. It would also serve roughly 129,000 residents who make daily trips within or across Brooklyn and Queens — currently relying on buses that get caught in traffic and often run late.

The Interborough Express would build on the expansion of outer-borough connectivity that is already in the works with four new Metro-North stations being opened in the Bronx (see below for more details).

Some core project benefits include:

- *Faster Commutes:* A new service would provide end-to-end travel time of less than 40 minutes, providing significant time savings for interborough Brooklyn and Queens trips compared with existing transit options.
- *Better Service:* The Interborough Express could attract some 74,000 to 88,000 weekday riders, attracting more than 2 million new annual trips to public transit in support of the State's goals for environmentally friendly transportation.
- *Greater Job Access:* The planned line would connect residents and workers to the LIRR and up to 17 subway lines, significantly expanding access to jobs and services across the metro area.

- *Greater Equity:* The Interborough Express supports the State’s goals for greater transportation equity by providing new service where 71 percent of residents are minorities and 33 percent are below 1.5 times the federal poverty line.
- *Economic Development:* In addition to jobs, the new line will connect large centers of retail in Queens and Brooklyn, including the Jackson Heights and Middle Village shopping hubs, supporting small businesses and providing a foundation for more economic development.
- *Accelerated Project Completion:* Because the Interborough Express will be built on an existing freight right-of-way, the project can be completed much faster than if it were starting from scratch — while still preserving the rail corridor for freight use.

Governor Hochul is also directing the Port Authority to complete environmental review for the cross harbor rail freight tunnel. Cross harbor rail freight would dramatically reduce truck congestion regionally and expand goods movement facilities — fortifying supply chains still struggling to recover from the pandemic. Transportation planners believe that cross harbor rail freight and the Interborough Express can work together in concert, which could be a game-changer for the region.

Together, these projects represent an unprecedented opportunity for New York to create a vast borough-to-borough transit and freight network, expanding economic opportunities for New Yorkers and communities that have gone underinvested in and underserved for far too long.

Build Phase 2 of the Second Avenue Subway for Residents of Upper Manhattan

In late November, Governor Hochul pushed for Phase 2 of the Second Avenue Subway line to get under way, recognizing this critical opportunity to provide underserved communities in East Harlem with the high-quality transportation infrastructure they deserve and the job access they need to support their families that has been promised to them since the 1940s.⁷⁹

Phase 1 of the long-awaited Second Avenue Subway line opened in 2017 — representing New York City’s biggest subway expansion in 50 years. Pre-pandemic, the line carried some 200,000 riders a day, connecting Manhattan’s Upper East Side with the rest of the system. But the Phase 2 expansion into East Harlem is equally critical and cannot wait as long as Phase 1 did to advance.

The 1.5-mile expansion for Phase 2 will add three additional ADA-accessible stations, extending service from 96th Street up to 125th Street. Once complete, the new line will be able to serve 100,000 more riders a day, providing faster and greater access to jobs, healthcare services, and education opportunities for residents of Central and East Harlem that rely heavily on public transportation. Currently, some 70 percent of residents in this part of the city use public transit to get to work, a far higher share than the citywide average of 55 percent. The Phase 2 expansion also includes a connection to Metro-North Railroad, providing access to jobs in Westchester and Connecticut.

Phase 2 of the Second Avenue Subway is eligible for federal funding through the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, which provides \$23 billion in new grants for transit expansion. The MTA has submitted a grant request that includes new station construction.

Open Four New Metro-North Stations in the Bronx to Expand Job Access

Just a few weeks ago, Governor Hochul announced⁸⁰ that the MTA awarded the design-build contract for the Penn Station Access Project, providing direct Metro-North commuter rail service from the Bronx, Westchester, and Connecticut to Penn Station and Manhattan’s west side. This milestone is an important step toward significantly shorter commute times for residents of the East Bronx, who currently have no rail service at all — and a more equitable transportation system that expands job opportunities for more New Yorkers.

The Penn Station Access project will create four new, ADA-accessible Metro-North commuter railroad stations in the vicinity of Co-op City, Morris Park, Parkchester/Van Nest, and Hunts Point — serving nearly 250,000 residents who live within a half mile of these stations. The new service will save East Bronx riders roughly 100 minutes round trip to Penn Station and 2.5 hours round trip to Connecticut. Existing Metro-North commuters traveling to the west side will also get a much faster trip, saving up to 40 minutes per day when they no longer need to transfer at Grand Central.

Additionally, the project will rehabilitate four bridges, reconfigure Metro-North’s rail yard in New Rochelle, and modernize critical signal, power, and communication infrastructure. The project will use Amtrak’s existing Hell Gate Line to access Penn Station, minimizing impacts on the surrounding community.

Penn Station Access is yet another example of Governor Hochul making sure all New Yorkers have the sustainable, equitable, and modern transportation system they deserve.

Advance the Gateway Project to Double Commuter Capacity

The Gateway Program, dubbed the “the nation’s most urgent infrastructure project,”⁸¹ will build a new two-track rail tunnel beneath the Hudson River, allowing

closure of the existing, 110-year-old tunnel — badly damaged during Superstorm Sandy — for a complete renovation. New York has been eagerly awaiting the Gateway project for years. Now that the Gateway project has obtained final construction permit,⁸² Governor Hochul will make sure it finally moves forward, including working in close partnership with New Jersey, Amtrak, and the federal government.

The current Hudson River tunnel carries some 200,000 travelers every weekday. The need for repairs has grown increasingly urgent, but without an alternative route, shutting down the tunnel would be an economic disaster for New York — and the entire country. If a shutdown were to occur, roughly half a million regional commuters would have longer and more crowded work trips, and the disruption to businesses would cost the national economy an estimated \$16 billion over four years.⁸³

Once both tunnels are open, together with other components of the Gateway Program, capacity can be doubled on this critical and overburdened route — the most traveled intercity rail route in the U.S. — supporting economic growth across New York and the entire Northeast Corridor, while improving resiliency against severe weather events in the future.

Create a Commuter-First Penn Station and Revitalize the Surrounding Community

In November,⁸⁴ Governor Hochul unveiled her vision for a reimagined Penn Station that puts commuters first and a revitalized surrounding neighborhood that delivers what the community needs. As the Governor put it last fall: The era of neglecting our Penn Station commuters and the neighboring community is over.

The existing Penn Station is the Western Hemisphere's busiest transit hub, serving 600,000 passengers⁸⁵ a day — more than LaGuardia, JFK, and Newark airports

combined. The majority of these travelers, some 60 percent, are New Yorkers riding the subway or the LIRR for work and recreation.

The reconstructed Penn Station will create a double-height, light-filled train hall that more than doubles passenger space to some 250,000 feet, eliminating the cramped and crowded passageways New York commuters put up with today. The reconstructed station will also have nearly double the number of entrances from 12 to 20, further improving circulation and trip connections. These capacity upgrades are essential, as the Gateway Program (mentioned above) will double rail service into the station in the years ahead.

Equally important, Governor Hochul's new neighborhood plan significantly expands community and public realm benefits compared with previous plans, reflecting extensive engagement with community stakeholders local elected officials and other civic leaders. The plan adds roughly 8 acres of public space, including a 30,000-square-foot plaza on par with Rockefeller Plaza. Critically, the plan requires community spaces that prioritize social services for the neighborhood, with a focus on people experiencing homelessness, and calls for up to 540 permanently affordable residential units — giving more New Yorkers a chance to benefit from this vital public investment.

Last but not least, the Governor's plan accelerates project completion by enabling reconstruction of Penn to proceed at the same time as the Gateway Program and the station expansion.

Support Congestion Pricing in Manhattan to Reduce Traffic and Generate Funding for Transit

Governor Hochul strongly supports congestion pricing for New York and is committed to making it a reality. Congestion pricing will charge drivers entering the Manhattan business core, as a means of reducing traffic and also creating much

needed revenue for the entire public transportation system. That sustainability — both environmental and financial — is needed now more than ever. Transit ridership remains significantly down from its pre-pandemic levels, while car traffic and vehicle pollution are up.

Congestion pricing has the potential to improve access to jobs across the metro area, protect our environment from vehicle emissions, save New Yorkers time in traffic, and support economic growth far into the future.

Part IV-F: Promote Economic Development That Strengthens Leading Industries and Revitalizes Communities

New York State's economy is the third largest⁸⁶ in the U.S., behind that of California and Texas, filled with a robust set of high-growth industries that include financial services, healthcare, professional and business services, retail trade, manufacturing, and education. In 2020, New York had a GDP of \$1.7 trillion,⁸⁷ making it one of the largest economies in the world.

While the diversity of our economy makes us resilient in difficult times, we must continue to rebuild from the economic downturn brought on during the COVID-19 pandemic and help secure the continued economic growth of the Empire State. As the labor market continues to experience shortages, now is the time to make proactive and meaningful investments in our state's future — and to ensure that these opportunities extend to all New Yorkers and create a more equitable recovery.

To advance economic opportunities for more New Yorkers and help secure the continued growth of the Empire State, Governor Hochul is proposing a comprehensive set of statewide programs, anchored around capital investments designed to strengthen our leading industries, prepare for success in emerging ones, and revitalize our communities.

Launch a Billion-Dollar Plan to Assist Small Businesses

Small businesses are the heart of the New York economy, accounting for 98 percent⁸⁸ of all businesses statewide. Supporting our small-business community is critical to the health of our state and local economies, as well as our tourism economy and our main streets, and remains a priority of Governor Hochul.

As a former small business owner, Governor Hochul understands the challenges facing small businesses, even in the best of times. Governor Hochul is also acutely aware of how the pandemic has tested small businesses throughout New York, and what is needed in this moment to support the recovery of our small businesses. Nobody has visited more small businesses during their time in public office than Governor Hochul. The Governor has listened to the stories of small business owners in every corner of the state, has assessed their needs, and has identified the ways New York can lead small businesses through this challenging time.

To help small businesses at a critical moment, Governor Hochul is proposing a nearly billion-dollar plan for New York's small businesses, including targeted programs strategically designed to respond to small business needs, and to ensure that disadvantaged, minority-owned, women-owned, veteran-owned small businesses prosper throughout the state. Governor Hochul's billion-dollar plan for small businesses consists of the following programs:

- *Funding for Small Businesses of the Future:* This initiative will support venture capital and venture debt awards to fast-growing, venture-backed startups that either locate to, or remain and grow in, New York State. This funding will assist emerging small businesses in the innovation sector, including minority- and women-owned companies often overlooked by private-sector venture investments. Through this program, New York State will become a hub of innovation and small business growth.

- *A Small Business COVID Capital Investment Tax Credit:* This initiative will provide a tax credit to small businesses that took on COVID-related capital expenses, including retrofits, renovations, machinery, and equipment related to COVID safety enhancements.
- *Permanently Legalize the Sale of To-Go Drinks for Bars and Restaurants:* To-go drinks were a critical revenue stream for New York's bars and restaurants during the pandemic, helping many small businesses across the state pay their rents or mortgages. Governor Hochul will permanently allow for the sale of to-go drinks for off-premises consumption to continue supporting the recovery of bars and restaurants.
- *Seed Funding for Small Businesses:* This initiative will provide flexible grants to early-stage small businesses to help those that recently opened get off the ground, despite the COVID-19 pandemic. Priority will be given to socially and economically disadvantaged small business owners.
- *A Small Business Lending Initiative:* This initiative will provide reduced interest rate and accessible loans to expanding small businesses. It will seek to address disparities in the traditional loan market, which oftentimes precludes small businesses, particularly socially and economically disadvantaged small businesses, from accessing loans to grow their businesses or take on larger government contracts.
- *An Excelsior Contracting Opportunities Initiative:* This initiative will provide State-backed funding and technical assistance to position small businesses — particularly socially and economically disadvantaged businesses — to secure federally funded contracts related to the \$1.2 trillion federal Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA). This initiative will also include the establishment of an interagency Excelsior Contracting Opportunities Council

— including ESD, NYSDOT, the Thruway Authority, MTA, and the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey — to identify strategies to encourage greater minority- and women-owned small business participation in forthcoming federally funded infrastructure projects across the state.

This comprehensive initiative will ensure that small businesses in all regions of New York have access to the opportunities and resources needed to grow.

Revitalize and Spur Economic Growth Across Downtowns

Governor Hochul is committed to reviving New York State’s downtowns, large and small, and recognizes that the strength of the State lies in its partnerships with local governments. By working together to create economically, socially, and environmentally healthy community centers through downtown revitalization, we can make life better for New Yorkers and help secure the long-term well-being of the state.

To further revitalize our communities, Governor Hochul is proposing a sixth round⁸⁹ of the Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI), a cornerstone of the State’s economic development policy, which transforms downtown neighborhoods into vibrant centers of activity that offer a high quality of life and attract redevelopment, businesses, jobs, and economic and housing diversity. To support efficient execution of these projects, the communities will have the option to utilize DASNY’s planning, design, procurement, construction, and closeout management services.

Revitalize and Spur Economic Growth Across Small Rural Communities

Governor Hochul knows the value of hamlets and villages as the connection that ties our rural communities together. The successful DRI demonstrates that New York State’s plan-then-build approach to downtown revitalization works, but more needs to be done to revitalize the burgeoning hamlets and villages of the state. To support

a more equitable recovery across New York's rural communities, the State will create and invest in the NY Forward program, designed to advance the renaissance of our smaller downtowns.

New York's hamlets and villages serve as commercial and social centers, and support our agricultural, recreational, and tourism economies. They too have suffered from the remnants of obsolete industries and aging infrastructure, failed urban renewal, and a lack of modern housing. Recognizing the distinct needs of smaller communities and their niche historical and cultural assets, NY Forward will provide a streamlined plan-to-implement process tailored to more rural and smaller communities.

Like the DRI program, NY Forward communities will be selected in partnership with the Regional Economic Development Councils (REDCs), and the Department of State (DOS) will lead the community through an abbreviated planning process to develop a slate of readily implementable projects. The State's investment in shovel-ready projects that demonstrate their ability to accelerate revitalization will strengthen the competitiveness of future community projects, overcoming barriers and closing the gap between the trajectory of New York State's small communities and larger urban centers.

Make Strategic Shovel-Ready Investments for High-Growth Tech Sites

New York State has been successful in attracting large private-sector employers, such as GLOBALFOUNDRIES, Wolfspeed (Cree), Alstom, Barilla, Regeneron Pharmaceuticals, and Plug Power, thanks to investments in long-term infrastructure and site-readiness. But more investment is needed to maintain job-creating, business-expansion opportunities.

Additionally, there is a shortage of shovel-ready sites around the country, making the need for New York to invest in sites greater than ever, with billions of dollars in

federal infrastructure investment in the pipeline. To jumpstart New York's shovel-readiness and increase the state's attractiveness to large employers, ESD will allocate funding to develop sites that will attract high-tech manufacturing, particularly semiconductor manufacturing, warehousing, distribution and logistics businesses to the state.

These investments will develop sites to make New York State a more competitive place to locate and expand a business, helping New York usher in a new era of market-ready infrastructure.

Bring a New National Semiconductor Technology Center and Additional Chip Fabrication Plants to New York State

New York is one of the top semiconductor industry employers in the nation. With 88 semiconductor establishments statewide, the industry has a \$4.7 billion annual wage impact, supporting more than 34,000 direct — and typically high-wage — jobs.⁹⁰ As Governor Hochul noted in November, New York has invested hundreds of millions of dollars in preparing shovel-ready chip sites.⁹¹

To build on our lead in this fast-growing industry and help create thousands of high-quality jobs, Governor Hochul will propose funding to support site-readiness investments to encourage semiconductor manufacturers to locate and grow in New York State. This funding — via the State's shovel-ready fund (described above) — would make New York an even stronger location to house a National Semiconductor Technology Center and additional chip fabrication plants.

These investments will help New York develop an in-state semiconductor supply chain that dramatically improves our economic resiliency and reduces U.S. reliance on overseas products — a critical lesson learned following the COVID-19 pandemic.

Renew Funding for and Expand the “Restore New York Communities” Blight Removal Initiative

Established back in 2006-07, the Restore New York Communities program supported municipal efforts to demolish, deconstruct, rehabilitate, or reconstruct vacant, abandoned, condemned, or surplus properties.

To renew the State’s commitment to rehabilitating blighted areas, New York will invest new funds in a revitalized Restore New York program, which has been successful in jumpstarting local economies and investing in the future of New York’s communities. Prior rounds of the Restore New York program have resulted in the removal and restoration of dozens of sites statewide. Under Governor Hochul’s leadership, this program will be enhanced to target disadvantaged communities, and to address not only urban but also rural areas, which are too often overlooked in such revitalization initiatives.

Repurpose Closed Prisons to Drive Economic Growth and Close Service Gaps

In November,⁹² Governor Hochul announced that New York will be closing six under-capacity state prisons that are no longer necessary given declines in the incarcerated population. This action — which will result in no workers losing their jobs — not only saves taxpayers millions of dollars but also creates the opportunity to transform these facilities in more creative and productive ways.

To deliver on these goals, Governor Hochul will form a commission to analyze prison redevelopment opportunities that serve the state’s economic needs and recommend a clear and credible plan of action.

The commission will include leadership from State agencies as well as foundations, regional leaders and stakeholders, and economic development experts from across the state and the country. In developing an action plan, this cross-cutting group should identify key goals that support New York State priorities, such as good-

paying job growth, job training for high-growth industries, and small business support. The commission should also consider factors like site conditions, surrounding land use, redevelopment costs, local workforce trends, and regional economic development strategies.

This commission will work to help New York turn empty prison cells into opportunities for more communities to thrive.

Provide Critical State Funding for Arts and Culture

In 2018, New York’s arts and culture economy generated more than \$114 billion, providing jobs for over 460,000 workers.⁹³ But the COVID-19 pandemic has levied immense challenges on the sector, which is contending with 21 months of revenue loss and significant workforce reduction. Beyond economic impact, a thriving arts and culture sector has overwhelmingly positive health and social benefits for a diverse population, including children, the elderly, veterans, and justice-involved individuals.

Expansive funding is essential to revitalize the arts and culture industry and reestablish New York State’s commitment to being the arts and cultural capital of the world. Governor Hochul will provide additional funds for arts recovery and capital improvements related to COVID-19 impacts on top of the agency’s annual base funding of the New York State Council on the Arts (NYSCA). NYSCA funding drives local economies, and the development of main street businesses across all 62 counties. This investment reflects the pivotal role of New York’s creative sector and its capacity to propel the economic growth and health of all New Yorkers.

Standardize and Centralize Venture Competitions

ESD funds a series of successful “venture competitions” to connect startups with investors and help new innovation-sector businesses across the state access

funding. After years of operation, the results from these competitions are clear: this program successfully connects early-stage businesses with much-needed resources and technical assistance, in areas of strategic interest to build the New York State innovation economy. But each program is currently operating independently, and there is no unified structure across all ESD-supported venture competitions.

After analyzing best practices from each competition, New York State now has the opportunity to retool and enhance this important program. Additionally, with funding for many of the State's venture competitions expiring soon, there is opportunity to standardize investment terms to prepare the competitions for financial sustainability.

Governor Hochul will launch an Innovation Venture Competition Initiative to support innovation businesses. Under a new, unified application process, ESD would oversee eight venture- or innovation-focused pitch events every year, resulting in a self-sustaining, robust pipeline of businesses accessing New York State assets, supporting greater economic impact and increased attraction of promising young companies and thinkers to New York State.

By creating a unified structure and utilizing best practices, ESD can further support the innovation sector, and connect innovators to funding and support resources while setting these competitions up to become more self-reliant in the future.

Part IV-G: Bring Affordable Broadband to New Yorkers and Transform the State's Digital Infrastructure with over \$1 Billion in New Investments

Governor Hochul's ConnectALL initiative will be the largest-ever investment in New York's digital infrastructure, transforming it so all New Yorkers have affordable, reliable broadband statewide. Catalyzing over \$1 billion in new public and private investments, ConnectALL will provide affordable broadband access to New Yorkers

in rural and urban areas statewide and continue New York State's leadership on connectivity.

In 2015, New York State made an initial \$500 million investment with the New NY Broadband program⁹⁴ — the largest state broadband investment in the nation at the time. Working through public-private partnerships, the program deployed more than 21,000 miles of fiber, providing access to 256,000 homes, businesses, and community institutions.

Nonetheless, the COVID-19 pandemic exposed that high-speed broadband remains too costly for many New Yorkers. Affordability is an especially steep barrier, often driven by lack of competition and consumer choice. Today, the average basic broadband subscription costs more than \$50 a month,⁹⁵ and nearly one-third of New Yorkers have only one provider option.⁹⁶ Furthermore, equity remains an issue with Black and Hispanic households in New York more likely not to have a subscription than white households.⁹⁷

Closing this remaining digital divide is critical, because having universal access to high-speed broadband in our digital economy is as essential as having heat, clean water, and reliable electricity. Connectivity helps New Yorkers go to school, work remotely, find a job, start a business, access healthcare, and communicate with loved ones. Further investment in this vital public infrastructure will not only strengthen the progress of our State's initial investment, it will boost economic growth and local innovation far into the future.

To improve broadband access and affordability for all New Yorkers, Governor Hochul will launch the ConnectALL initiative — a historic investment of over \$1 billion into connectivity infrastructure that will position New York State residents and businesses to succeed in a 21st century economy. This investment includes a State investment of up to \$300 million, boosted by \$345 million in federal funding as well as hundreds of millions of dollars in additional federal funds from the IIJA.

This initiative will be driven by a new Statewide ConnectALL office and will involve a dozen programs across three key areas of focus: capital investments, affordability and equity, and leveraging state assets, thus providing the nation's most comprehensive and innovative approach to closing the digital divide. The ConnectALL initiative will include efforts such as:

- *Broadband Assessment and Interactive Map:* The Public Service Commission is creating the New York's first-ever, in-depth interactive broadband map detailing the availability and reliability of high-speed broadband infrastructure statewide. Consumers will have the ability to search for providers in their area and see what plans are available for their address — a first-in-the-nation feature. Through field-verified research and with the help of internet service providers, the interactive map will demonstrate not only those areas meeting the State's definition of served — download speeds of greater than 100 Mbps — but most importantly where the unserved and underserved broadband areas remain.⁹⁸
- *Local Connectivity Planning Grant Program:* This program will provide grants to municipalities and non-profit organizations for local broadband planning.
- *21st Century Municipal Infrastructure Investment Program:* This program will provide grants to municipalities and other entities to plan, engineer, and construct open and accessible broadband infrastructure.
- *Rural Broadband Grant Program:* This program will provide matching grants — plus hundreds of millions of forthcoming dollars from the IIJA — to support rural broadband access, including last-mile connections and middle-mile projects.

- *Connectivity Innovation Fund Program:* This program will provide competitive grants to entities across the state to plan and construct creative, innovative, and new solutions that meet local connectivity needs. The State's leading broadband experts will advise on these strategic and innovative investments to ensure the state leads the 21st-century connected economy.
- *Affordability Program:* IJA provides over \$14 billion to support a permanent \$30 a month broadband subsidy for low-income households. Increasing enrollment in this program — which lags below 30 percent of eligible households in New York — will be an objective of the ConnectALL initiative and digital equity programming.
- *Affordable Housing Connectivity Program:* Homes and Community Renewal (HCR) will include affordable internet in its overall housing plan.
- *Digital Equity Program:* Levering significant IJA funding, ESD will lead the development of a statewide Digital Equity Plan in coordination with other state and local government agencies as well as private and not-for-profit organizations.
- *A Build-Free Initiative for Rural Broadband Deployment:* Governor Hochul will eliminate state fees for rural deployments where population density is too low to generate sufficient revenue to cover operating costs. Specifically, the State will exempt ConnectALL projects from use and occupancy fee for fiber in the State right-of-way, reducing costs for program participants.
- *Streamline Make-Ready Processes:* Governor Hochul will direct the Department of Public Service (DPS) to streamline the current make-ready process.

- *Standardize Right-of-Way Access for Cellular and Establish Clear Timelines:* Governor Hochul will establish clear timelines for cellular deployments on state land and rights-of-way with simple and standardized forms and processes.
- *Leverage Existing State Fiber Assets:* The State will conduct a pilot to leverage existing State fiber assets to support middle-mile broadband.
- *Implement a Cellular Siting Guide for Local Governments:* Governor Hochul will have ESD provide local governments with model siting requirements and master-lease agreements that can be adopted to facilitate cellular infrastructure deployments.
- *Address Barriers to Serving Multiple-Dwelling Units:* Governor Hochul will direct the DPS to review current regulations on agreements between broadband providers and landlords in apartment buildings to see if additional regulations or limitations are needed.

SECTION V

MAKE NEW YORK'S HOUSING SYSTEM MORE AFFORDABLE, EQUITABLE, AND STABLE

The uneven economic recovery has underscored the many structural problems facing our state's economy, the housing supply in particular. Housing costs have skyrocketed, with the median sales price rising 32 percent⁹⁹ since the start of 2020. Rising homeownership costs are a major barrier to entry for non-owners seeking opportunities for economic advancement and generational wealth-building. Ownership aside, far too many New Yorkers are struggling to pay rent: over half of renters¹⁰⁰ in the state pay more than 30 percent of their income in rent, meaning they are rent burdened.

Improving housing affordability, equity, and stability is a complex challenge that requires an all-levers approach. Governor Hochul will propose just that: a sweeping set of actions designed to fortify New York's affordable housing stock, promote broader affordability by expanding the housing supply, preserve access and equity for disadvantaged groups, and attack the root causes of homelessness and housing instability.

New York is home to all of us. That is why our State must do even better to provide homes for *all* of us.

Part V-A: Launch A New, Comprehensive 5-Year Housing Plan

The pandemic laid bare the connection between housing and health, as well as the structural inequities baked into housing across New York State. To advance the recovery in an equitable way and improve housing security for all New Yorkers, Governor Hochul will initiate a new, \$25 billion, five-year Housing Plan to create and preserve 100,000 affordable homes in both urban and rural communities, including 10,000 homes with support services for vulnerable populations, and electrify an

additional 50,000 homes as part of the State’s plan to electrify 1 million homes and make another 1 million electrification-ready.

Governor Hochul’s Housing Plan will be designed using a four-part framework of economic recovery, social justice, climate action, and digital connectivity. This approach will help ensure that the plan addresses the community health disparities exposed during the pandemic, expands housing access in historically underinvested areas and for low- and moderate-income households, supports statewide goals for clean energy and green jobs, and bridges the digital divide.

The plan will draw on existing New York State programs and create new ones, including the following.

Create and Preserve 100,000 Low-Income Rental and Co-Operative Housing Units in Both Urban and Rural Communities

Reflecting the need and demand for low-income rental housing across the state, New York will create and preserve 100,000 units of low-income housing in both urban and rural communities. Funds will be targeted to both preserve existing housing and promote new construction — including rental and homeownership opportunities.

The multi-faceted housing plan includes a broad range of programs designed to address the diverse challenges faced by New Yorkers seeking housing. The plan includes programs to spur construction of housing that serves low-income residents, funds that go toward the preservation of existing housing that serves low- and moderate-income families, focused programs for rural areas and seniors, and funds targeted at addressing historical racial inequities in homeownership.

Create and Preserve 10,000 Supportive Housing Units

Governor Hochul’s Housing Plan embraces a “housing first” approach critical to ensuring that people experiencing homelessness have access to stable housing. This plan will create 7,000 units of supportive housing and preserve 3,000 units over the next five years — providing 10,000 units in all to further prevent homelessness and serve vulnerable and at-risk populations, including homeless veterans and their families; victims of domestic violence; elderly seniors; young adults with histories of incarceration, homelessness, or foster care; chronically homeless individuals and families; individuals with intellectual or development disabilities; individuals re-entering the community from prison; and people living with HIV or AIDS, serious mental illness, and/or substance use disorders.

Build and Preserve Senior Housing Across the State

Housing designed and designated for senior residents helps preserve dignity for older New Yorkers, enabling them to age in place. Governor Hochul’s housing plan will invest \$300 million in the new construction and preservation of senior housing across the state by making significant capital improvements in the buildings and extending affordability to maintain this important supply of housing. Separately, as described in Section I, the State will also support improvements for existing nursing home facilities and encourage the development of innovative new models that provide even greater comfort and independence.

Weatherize and Electrify New York’s Housing Stock

As described in Section VI, the State will implement measures to support the creation of 2 million electrified or electrification-ready homes by 2030. The Housing Plan includes \$250 million (in addition to federal funds) to support this goal, with a target of 50,000 units directly funded to be electrified through the plan. This and other key initiatives will move the state toward our ambitious Climate Act goals.

As part of the Housing Plan, Governor Hochul will invest in other initiatives to weatherize and electrify New York’s housing stock. Projects will promote all-electric, high-performance equipment for heating; high-performance, airtight building envelopes that maintain interior temperatures to reduce the need for space heating and air-conditioning; alternative energy sources, such as geothermal heat pumps, onsite solar panels, and heat recovery ventilation; and other energy-efficient best practices.

Pilot a Program to Create Affordable Homeownership Projects That Prioritize Resident Control and Permanent Affordability

Affordable homeownership opportunities have become critically scarce, particularly in markets where home prices continue to skyrocket. At the same time, speculative investment in the real estate market, which has intensified in the single-family home sphere during the pandemic, continues to limit the availability of quality housing stock that is affordable to local residents in many markets across New York State. There is also a growing desire in communities across New York to take more control over their housing environments.

There are three primary goals of community-controlled housing: insulating housing from market forces, promoting equality and cohesion among neighbors, and enabling residents to exercise shared control over their housing. This pilot will solicit projects through a competitive Request for Proposals process and will allow for a variety of ownership models including, but not limited to: limited equity coops (Mitchell-Lama model), shared equity housing, and community land trusts.

All applications will need projects to be permanently affordable; to include a clear mechanism for residents of the housing project to be involved in the governance structure and long-term operation of the housing projects; and to be designed to serve to low-and-moderate income households in the community in which they are located. The intent of this pilot program is to expand the number of permanently

affordable, community-controlled units within New York State. A successful pilot program could lead to the creation of a large-scale program in the future, expanding affordable homeownership options for even more New Yorkers.

Spur Innovation in Affordable Housing

Housing production has tended to stick to tried-and-true models, without creatively reimagining approaches to construction technology when it can most make a difference. While intense market forces have squeezed many middle- and low-income New Yorkers out of the homeownership market, many communities still seek to gain more control over their housing stock. More globally, the speed at which any housing gets created — particularly affordable housing — continues to keep housing costs far higher than households can afford.

To address these growing challenges, Governor Hochul will initiate a pilot program for affordable housing innovation, supporting projects that take a dramatic new approach to construction in an effort to reduce costs. Innovative construction projects for the pilot could include approaches such as modular net-zero housing production, multi-family buildings using mass timber framing, and construction utilizing 3D printing, among others.

Improve the Housing Stock of Rural Rental Properties

Governor Hochul's Housing Plan will provide funding through several programs that serve rural communities across the state. Programs will preserve and improve multifamily rental buildings; support farm worker housing; and preserve and invest in the manufactured and mobile home stock statewide (especially in rural areas), protecting valuable affordable housing for New York's rural residents.

Part V-B: Promote Housing Affordability by Expanding the Housing Supply

Housing costs continue to rise throughout the state, exacerbated by a dramatically inadequate housing supply, which leads to local and regional problems in affordable housing delivery. For example, since 2012, the New York City metro area has failed to build at least 150,000 units¹⁰¹ relative to job growth as compared to the rate in previous decades; in rural counties, more than 15,000 units¹⁰² were taken out of the housing stock over that time period. This shortage is largely the result of outdated laws, programs, and land use barriers that prevent the development of new housing.

To help reduce housing costs across the state, Governor Hochul will propose a set of legislative actions and targeted interventions that encourage development of housing supply in areas with high need and capacity, especially in areas near public transportation; that incentivize the creation of affordable rental housing in a cost-efficient way; and that allow for flexible conversions of existing commercial spaces into residential housing.

These proposals will make New York a more desirable and affordable place to live by expanding access to well-resourced areas and a more sustainable place to live — consistent with our Climate Act — by increasing density and access to transit.

Encourage the Creation of Safe Accessory Dwelling Units

Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) — which include backyard cottages, attics, garages, and basements — can provide an affordable multi-generational housing option that helps families live closer together. But current land use restrictions prevent homeowners in some communities from building ADUs. To permit these vital options and help reduce housing costs, Governor Hochul will propose legislation to require municipalities to allow a minimum of one ADU on owner-occupied residentially zoned lots.

This legislation would allow municipalities to set minimum and maximum size requirements that both meet safety standards but will not prevent reasonable new

construction. For example, municipalities cannot set minimum sizes too large and maximum sizes too small in order to limit implementation. In New York City, this legislation will require the creation of an amnesty program to legalize existing ADUs, with an expectation that they be brought into compliance with key building code requirements to ensure resident safety, but also provide some flexibility for the City to exempt some units from specific Multiple Dwelling Law (MDL) provisions without further New York State legislation.

Governor Hochul's Housing Plan described above includes capital funding for municipalities or non-profits to assist in the legalization or creation of new ADUs.

Spur Transit-Oriented Development

There are roughly 120 municipalities¹⁰³ across New York with access to commuter or long-distance rail stations connected to the Amtrak, Metro-North, or Long Island Rail Road (LIRR) transit systems. Some 3.2 million New Yorkers in those areas live within a half-mile of those stations, including roughly 1.4 million in New York City, 1 million in Long Island, 450,000 in Westchester County, 160,000 in the Hudson Valley, and 200,000 upstate.¹⁰⁴

Encouraging development that allows even more people to live near these stops will create more climate-friendly communities and improve access to jobs, schools, and open spaces. But currently, at least 30 existing stations are surrounded by zoning that prohibits multi-family housing, with additional stations limiting development to smaller-scale housing despite being located in peak commuter zones that can sustain greater density.

To spur transit-oriented development, Governor Hochul will propose legislation to foster multifamily construction in zones drawn by municipalities around rail transit stops within commuting distance to New York City. The State will provide assistance

to municipalities for drafting the ordinance changes, easing the burden on smaller municipalities.

This action will expand housing options and job access for New Yorkers while reducing their need to own a car and minimizing traffic impacts.

Give the City of New York Authority to Encourage Densification

Existing New York State law limits the maximum density of *residential* floor area ratio (FAR) in New York City to 12.0, even though it does not limit the overall allowable floor area that may comprise other uses. Governor Hochul will propose a repeal of this antiquated limitation on the City's authority, and give the City the autonomy it should have to allow for denser residential development where appropriate.

Ease Restrictions on Converting Hotels and Offices to Residential Uses

The ongoing shortage of housing in New York, combined with the post-pandemic rise of remote work that has emptied out offices and hotels, has given rise to the need for more flexible zoning rules that make it easier for buildings to convert commercial spaces into residential ones as needs change over time. Governor Hochul will propose legislation to facilitate conversions in the following manner:

- *Hotel Conversions:* Any Class B hotel located within (or within 800 feet of) a residential zoning district can use the existing certificate of occupancy for permanent residences, as long as the units are subject to applicable rent stabilization laws and agreements. Alterations must follow regulations for Class B hotels.
- *Office Conversions:* As noted above, Governor Hochul will remove the 12.0 maximum residential FAR in New York City, facilitating the conversion of

office buildings to residential use (while also supporting housing production). Additionally, until December 2027, office-to-residential conversions of buildings constructed before 1980 or any applicable buildings located south of 60th Street in Manhattan may be allowed. The legislation will also ease conversion through waivers of specific regulations.

End the 421-a Tax Abatement and Establish a New Program That More Effectively Uses Public Dollars to Drive Affordability

There is a critical need for affordable and market-rate rental housing in New York City. Real estate tax abatements have historically driven the development of new rental units across the city with 200,000 apartments¹⁰⁵ currently covered by the 421-a program. Since 2010, nearly half¹⁰⁶ of all new residential units built in New York City took advantage of this program, which has spurred housing construction and the creation of thousands of affordable units.

With 421-a set to expire in 2022, there is an opportunity to enact a different kind of abatement program that can continue to incentivize rental housing construction across New York City while creating permanent and deeper affordability and spending taxpayer money more efficiently.

Governor Hochul will propose a new tax abatement that aims to achieve these goals:

- Create deeper affordability that services lower income households than 421-a.
- Create longer-term affordability to provide more stability for low-income households.
- Ensure long-term availability of affordable rental units in neighborhoods across the city.
- Restructure the tax abatement to ensure maximum efficiency of taxpayer dollars.

- Align with city and state climate goals by requiring carbon-neutral technologies, electrification, and electrification-ready building systems.
- Allow flexibility to enable construction of financially viable smaller buildings.
- Create an all-affordable homeownership option to promote low- and moderate-income homeownership opportunities across the city.

Part V-C: Expand Housing Access and Equity to Keep More New Yorkers in Homes

America has a long history of housing injustice, from redlining to racial covenants to urban renewal, with patterns of discrimination that persist today. Many current instances of housing instability across New York have their roots in unfair practices that stifle housing access and opportunity for low-income or minority households in underserved communities. These structural barriers impact all of us, from the households facing eviction or homelessness to the taxpayer programs that might never be needed if more New Yorkers had stable homes.

To expand housing access and equity, Governor Hochul will propose initiatives designed to address unfair practices and improve housing stability for more New Yorkers, including those with weak credit histories, prior involvement in the criminal legal system, those vulnerable to eviction, and disaster victims. She will also make financing more accessible and available to owners of manufactured homes. Together these actions can help New York show a better way forward on housing justice.

Improve Housing Access for Renters with Justice Involvement or Negative Credit Histories

New Yorkers who have been involved in the justice system or who have negative credit histories face regular discrimination over rental housing access. Routine landlord screening for prospective tenants includes credit and criminal background

checks, and frequently leads to rejection for applicants whose credit scores fall below a certain threshold or show negative histories, and for applicants who have a conviction or arrest — regardless of conviction nature, length of time since it occurred, or age at the time of the offense. These screening processes exacerbate housing insecurity and disproportionately harm New York’s most vulnerable residents, including people of color and domestic violence survivors.

To improve housing access and equity, Governor Hochul will propose two pieces of legislation designed to protect New Yorkers at risk of discrimination based on conviction or credit status.

- *A Credit to New York:* This legislation will prohibit residential landlords from automatically denying applicants on the basis of credit history or score if the applicant can demonstrate: (1) evidence of on-time, in-full rental payments for the 12 months preceding the application or 12 months preceding March 2020, (2) that they receive one or more rental subsidies that will pay their rent in full directly to the landlord, or (3) that the negative credit history or poor credit score is solely due to unpaid student loan or medical debt. If the landlord intends to deny an applicant because of their credit score or history, they must notify the applicant in writing and give the applicant five days to provide evidence of the above.
- *Fair Chance Housing:* This legislation will eliminate a private landlord’s ability to automatically reject individuals with justice involvement and will require housing providers to conduct individualized assessments that account for the circumstances of a conviction and evidence of rehabilitation while still ensuring the safety and welfare of existing residents.

Create an Eviction Prevention Legal Assistance Program to Improve Housing Stability

With a statewide eviction moratorium set to end in January 2022, a spike in new evictions is anticipated.¹⁰⁷ Housing tenants outside New York City are particularly vulnerable to eviction due to a lack of free legal representation. In Rochester and Albany, 33 percent of renter-occupied households are severely rent burdened; in Syracuse and Buffalo, 30 percent.¹⁰⁸

New York City established a Right to Counsel in 2017 and provides free legal services to tenants facing eviction in housing court. Data shows that the overwhelming majority of tenants with legal representation are successful in their proceedings, with 84 percent¹⁰⁹ able to remain in their homes. Such programs not only reduce housing instability for vulnerable New Yorkers but also reduce costs associated with homelessness support programs.

The Eviction Prevention Legal Assistance Program will provide free legal assistance to upstate renters who currently cannot afford counsel in eviction proceedings. The funding would apply to renters facing eviction with incomes at or below 200 percent of the federal poverty line and would be provided by local legal service providers, such as the Legal Aid Society of Northeastern New York, Legal Services of Central New York, Legal Assistance of Western New York, and other organizations.

Additionally, this initiative will expand the Fair Housing Testing program to provide additional fair housing testing and education throughout the state, including in counties not previously served by local fair housing organizations. This expansion will allow counties to respond to many more complaints and to proactively conduct testing on suspected systemic discrimination, in support of the New York State's larger anti-discrimination initiatives.

Make Financing More Accessible and Affordable for Manufactured Homes

Manufactured homes provide an affordable housing alternative for hundreds of thousands of low- and middle-income New Yorkers. However, New York law prevents owners of manufactured homes from obtaining traditional mortgages, making purchasing more complicated and financing more expensive. Governor Hochul will work with the Legislature to make affordable mortgage financing available to these homeowners.

Create a Permanent Disaster Recovery and Resiliency Unit to Help Rebuild Homes

New York State is a national leader in disaster recovery and resiliency thanks to our innovative approach following Superstorm Sandy. In 2013 we established the Governor’s Office of Storm Recovery (GOSR) as a centralized agency charged with planning, coordinating, and implementing recovery programs, but GOSR’s federal funding expires in 2023, right as the risk of severe weather events continues to grow. Hurricane Ida’s unexpected devastation on the state — impacting more than 1,200 homes and causing \$50 million in damage to public infrastructure¹¹⁰ — underscores the need for a permanent recovery and resiliency program.

Governor Hochul will create a permanent New York State Disaster Recovery and Resiliency Unit housed in Homes and Community Renewal (HCR), preserving and building on the expertise and experience gained by GOSR since 2013. This permanent unit will facilitate administration of federal funds to meet recovery needs efficiently and empowered to use State funding to bridge any gaps between federal restrictions and New York’s needs. The unit’s core focus will include:

- Scaling recovery efforts and coordinating resiliency initiatives for both major and small disasters throughout the state.
- Coordinating initial response and long-term recovery not covered by Federal Emergency Management Agency or State emergency response agencies.

- Identifying needs, deploying resources quickly and equitably, and tracking funding to all agencies after a storm.
- Managing a portfolio of pre- and post-disaster programs, particularly those focused on homeowner rebuilding efforts, resiliency upgrades for homeowners and communities, and voluntary buyout sites.
- Leveraging GOSR's expertise in data management to build online applications.

Part V-D : Direct Action to Meet the Homelessness Crisis

New York is a national leader in providing temporary shelter for people experiencing homelessness, resulting in a very low percentage of individuals living unhoused. Of the roughly 91,000¹¹¹ homeless individuals statewide, only 5 percent live on the street or in places not meant for habitation. By contrast, in California, over 70 percent of homeless individuals live on the streets.¹¹² Nonetheless, the disruption caused by COVID-19 caused a rise in the visible New York street homeless population, raising public awareness about the homelessness crisis and the need for effective government action to address it.

While individuals living on the street are often portrayed as the face of homelessness, most people who experience homelessness do so as a result of limited financial resources or affordable housing options. In that light, the number of homeless individuals is expected to increase in 2022, due to lost wages resulting from the economic fallout of the pandemic, as well as the end of the eviction moratorium.

Governor Hochul will propose a comprehensive strategy designed to address street homelessness and to prevent homelessness in the first place. These initiatives will take aim at the root causes of homelessness: lack of stable and affordable housing, unmet treatment needs for mental health or substance abuse, and poverty that forces people to choose between stable housing and other basic needs.

Across these efforts, the State will partner with local leaders to meet the needs of individuals and families experiencing homelessness and to provide the support and opportunities all New Yorkers deserve.

Create and Preserve 10,000 Supportive Housing Units

As described above, in Part V-A, Governor Hochul’s Housing Plan will create 7,000 units of supportive housing and preserve 3,000 units over the next five years — providing 10,000 units in all to further prevent homelessness and serve vulnerable and at-risk populations, including homeless veterans and their families; victims of domestic violence; elderly seniors; young adults with histories of incarceration, homelessness, or foster care; chronically homeless individuals and families; individuals with intellectual or development disabilities; individuals re-entering the community from prison; and people living with HIV or AIDS, serious mental illness, and/or substance use disorders.

Establish Safe Options Support (SOS) Teams to Move People from Street Homelessness to Shelter and Housing

There are roughly 3,900 individuals¹¹³ residing on the streets in New York City, by far the greatest presence of people experiencing homelessness across the state, and also one of the most challenging groups to support with social interventions and stable housing. To directly support these New Yorkers who need it most, Governor Hochul will work with New York City to establish new Safe Options Support (SOS) teams capable of reaching thousands of homeless individuals.

The SOS teams will embrace an evidence-based approach called Critical-Time Intervention, which deploys a team of trained mental health practitioners working with emergency shelters, outreach providers, and permanent supportive housing providers to transition individuals living on the street into stable housing. Studies

have found that homeless individuals working with these teams had only one-third the number of homeless nights compared to a control group and that the impact of the teams' work persisted for nine months after the intervention.

This approach has been previously piloted in New York City, and Governor Hochul will now significantly expand the number of teams operating in New York City, as well as the number of homeless outreach specialists responding to needs throughout New York State. The State-run SOS teams will collaborate and coordinate with New York City-run first-line outreach teams to engage street homeless individuals and help secure placement into housing programs with wraparound social services.

Launch a Targeted Plan to Support Populations at Risk of Homelessness

Making progress on a challenge as complex as homelessness requires a comprehensive set of programs and interventions — starting with efforts to prevent those at risk of homelessness from experiencing it in the first place. To support the New Yorkers most in need of housing stability, Governor Hochul will:

- *Increase Housing Funding for Runaway and Homeless Youth:* To address the post-pandemic need for runaway and homeless youth services, Governor Hochul will provide a significant investment to support the expansion of crisis and transitional living beds. This will provide needed support for LGBTQ youths, who are 120 percent more likely to experience homelessness than other youth populations.
- *Address Healthcare Issues Early for Vulnerable Youth:* Currently, homeless youth who are still under legal guardianship of their parents cannot consent to their own treatment, which often means they must go without that treatment (or prescriptions) or must wait for minor illnesses to become major ones to access emergency care. Governor Hochul will advance

legislation to create a pathway for homeless youth to consent to basic and preventive healthcare services, which can help support this vulnerable group while resulting in cost savings for the State.

- *Provide Immediate Mental Health Telemedicine Access for Homeless Persons Encountered by Law Enforcement and Outreach Workers:* Building off New York's existing Office of Mental Health (OMH) Mobile Access Program, the State will equip law enforcement and outreach workers with tablets and other technology resources to expand the use of telemedicine to connect the street homeless population with mental health professionals in Comprehensive Psychiatric Emergency Programs (CPEPs).

Address Poverty to Prevent Homelessness Statewide

To support New Yorkers who do not have the stable income necessary to obtain adequate housing or remain in stable housing, Governor Hochul will take actions to reduce poverty and help prevent homelessness statewide, including:

- Increasing the amount a Public Assistance recipient can earn and the amount they can save before losing eligibility.
- Eliminating the 45-day waiting period for Safety Net Assistance benefits for individuals not eligible for Public Assistance.

SECTION VI

MAKE NEW YORK A NATIONAL LEADER IN CLIMATE ACTION AND GREEN JOBS

The 2019 Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act (Climate Act) is the nation's most ambitious state climate law. The Climate Act requires that New York reaches 70 percent renewable electricity and 40 percent economy-wide greenhouse gas reduction by 2030, zero-emissions electricity by 2040, and net-zero greenhouse gas emissions economy-wide by 2050.¹¹⁴

To oversee the efforts required to meet these aggressive commitments, the Climate Act created the Climate Action Council, which issued a draft Scoping Plan on December 30, 2021. The draft Scoping Plan, which lays out sector-by-sector strategies to achieve the Climate Act's targets, is now available for public review and comment and is on track for final adoption by 2023.

As the Climate Action Council continues the vital work of implementing the Climate Act, New York State must waste no time turning those commitments into realities. That is why Governor Hochul has made climate action central to her agenda for 2022. In her first months in office, the Governor has advanced important climate initiatives, with major announcements tied to accelerating renewable energy deployment, expanding access to jobs in the new green economy, decarbonizing homes and neighborhoods, and requiring all new passenger vehicles sold in New York to be zero-emissions by 2035. But when it comes to protecting our climate and creating green jobs, there is an urgent need to do more.

Now is the time to build on our momentum and implement a comprehensive vision for climate progress. Governor Hochul's plans around renewable energy, green buildings, clean transportation, and environmental conservation will ensure that our state builds upon its national leadership role in both climate action and the

clean energy economy, creating good-paying jobs and protecting the health and future of all New Yorkers.

Part VI-A: Accelerate the Renewable Energy Economy to Protect Climate Health and Create Jobs

Under the Climate Act, New York must generate 70 percent of its electricity from renewable sources by 2030. Reaching this statewide goal will require a major build-out of renewable energy infrastructure.

Governor Hochul has already taken big, important steps to get New York closer to its renewable goals. During Climate Week of 2021, the Governor announced two renewable energy and transmission mega-projects — the State’s largest in 50 years.¹¹⁵ Governor Hochul also announced the expansion of the NY-Sun Program to achieve at least 10 gigawatts of distributed solar energy by 2030 and create 6,000 new solar jobs. But given the magnitude of the climate crisis, more must be done — now.¹¹⁶

In 2022, Governor Hochul will implement an ambitious renewable energy and jobs agenda commensurate with the task at hand. This sweeping set of actions is anchored by the State’s next offshore wind solicitation and a new nation-leading \$500 million investment to develop our state’s offshore wind port infrastructure and supply chain that will create 2,000 jobs. Governor Hochul’s vision for building an integrated, decarbonized energy system also includes a set of policies to grow clean energy storage, phase out polluting power plants, animate the market for green hydrogen, and ensure quality green job creation.

Critically, these proposals are designed to support equity and environmental justice, ensuring that the State’s renewable energy future invests in and creates opportunities for all New Yorkers in alignment with Climate Act requirements.

Strengthen New York’s Offshore Wind Leadership and Make a Nation-Leading \$500 Million Investment in Offshore Wind Manufacturing and Supply Chain

The Climate Act requires our state to generate at least 9 gigawatts of offshore wind by 2035 — the largest offshore wind target in the U.S. and enough to power 6 million homes. Reaching that goal requires significant investment in the New York Bight, a critical offshore wind corridor situated between Long Island and New Jersey. With swift and strong action, New York can responsibly harness this natural resource to serve one of the world’s most robust renewable energy markets.

To sustain New York’s national leadership in offshore wind energy — generating even more high-quality green jobs for residents while leading the fight against climate change — Governor Hochul will direct several actions in 2022, anchored by a massive investment in our state’s clean energy future:

- *Invest \$500 Million in Critical Offshore Wind Infrastructure:* New York will invest up to \$500 million in the ports, manufacturing, and supply chain infrastructure needed to advance its offshore wind industry, leveraging private capital to deliver more than \$2 billion in economic activity while creating more than 2,000 good-paying green jobs. This investment will ensure that New York has the strongest offshore wind energy market along the Eastern Seaboard, enabling us to be the offshore wind supply chain hub for other projects up and down the coast.
- *Procure Enough Wind Energy to Power at Least 1.5 Million Homes:* The New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) will launch its next offshore wind procurement in 2022, which is expected to result in at least 2 gigawatts of new projects — enough to power 1.5 million homes. NYSERDA will couple this procurement with the \$500 million offshore wind infrastructure investment to obtain maximum leverage for New York.

- *Initiate Planning for an Offshore Wind Transmission Network to Power 4 Million New York City Homes:* To realize an offshore wind grid able to deliver at least 6 gigawatts of offshore wind energy directly into New York City — enough to power nearly 4 million homes — while minimizing onshore and ocean floor impacts, State agencies will conduct a New York State Cable Corridor Study to identify strategic offshore wind cable corridors and access key points of interconnection to the grid.
- *Launch the Offshore Wind Master Plan 2.0 Deep Water:* Building on the success of New York’s award-winning Offshore Wind Master Plan, NYSERDA will initiate a new Master Plan 2.0: Deep Water to unlock the next frontier of offshore wind development, working with the Department of State (DOS) to coordinate with stakeholders and federal authorities.

Alongside these bold new actions, New York will begin construction on the state’s first offshore wind project, the South Fork Wind Farm, in early 2022. Serving Long Island, South Fork Wind Farm will be one of the first large-scale offshore wind farms to power-on in the U.S.¹¹⁷ New York State will also continue to advance the other four offshore wind projects currently under development.

Altogether, these five projects in active development will support more than 6,800 direct high-paying jobs, a combined economic impact of \$12.1 billion statewide, and more than 4.3 gigawatts of energy — enough to power nearly 3 million New York homes, representing half of New York’s 2035 goal.

These actions ensure New York will strengthen its national leadership on offshore wind — creating thousands of high-quality jobs and positioning all New Yorkers to prosper in the low-carbon economy while also fighting climate change.

Power One-Third of New York City with Wind, Solar, and Hydro

Two of the largest renewable energy infrastructure projects in New York's history — Clean Path NY and Champlain Hudson Power Express — are now well underway, enough to power one-third of New York City with wind, solar, and hydropower.¹¹⁸ These projects have the potential to create 10,000 family-sustaining jobs statewide and bring \$8.2 billion in economic development investments, including support to environmental justice communities to help accelerate the state's economic recovery from COVID-19.

When combined with New York's deployment of clean energy across the state as well as offshore wind, these projects are expected to reduce New York City's fossil fuel use for electricity by more than 80 percent in 2030. These projects help us turn the page on New York City's long-standing dependence on fossil fuels, ensuring millions of New Yorkers — especially those living in our most vulnerable communities — can have the promise of cleaner air and a healthier future.

Double Energy Storage Deployment to at Least 6 Gigawatts by 2030

As New York generates significantly more renewable energy, and as New Yorkers likewise increase their energy use by adopting electric vehicles and clean heating systems, our state will need to intensify efforts for energy storage. Energy storage enables New York's renewable energy future, providing a pathway to supplant fossil-fueled generators that disproportionately affect disadvantaged communities, while ensuring a clean, reliable and resilient electric grid.

To meet this challenge, Governor Hochul will direct the Department of Public Service (DPS) and NYSERDA to update New York State's Energy Storage Roadmap to double deployment, reaching at least 6 gigawatts of energy storage by 2030 — the largest target in the nation, backed by needed market reforms and cost-effective procurement mechanisms to capture the full benefits of energy storage.

The updated Energy Storage Roadmap will identify research and development needs to accelerate technology innovation, particularly for long-duration energy storage. It will also outline ways to incentivize the private market to produce sufficient storage capacity to meet New York's ambitious clean energy targets.

Make New York State a Green Hydrogen Hub

Green hydrogen is a cutting-edge climate technology with the potential to accelerate New York's transition into a net-zero economy and create good-paying jobs across the state. Made from renewable energy right here in New York, green hydrogen releases zero greenhouse gas emissions when used in a fuel cell, yet it is strong enough to power a forklift, long-distance semi-truck, or even entire neighborhoods via a microgrid.

Governor Hochul will direct NYSERDA, the New York Power Authority (NYPA), and Empire State Development to make New York State a Green Hydrogen Hub, advancing the adoption of this promising technology and competing for nearly \$10 billion in federal funding for green hydrogen research and development under the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA).¹¹⁹

New York will put forward a set of proposals to secure one of four Federal Infrastructure Green Hydrogen Hubs worth billions in federal funding, including but not limited to a Hub proposal that brings together multiple New York Regional Hubs, targeted to include New York City, Long Island, Buffalo, Central New York, Northern New York, Albany, and Auburn into one overall proposal. The proposal will demonstrate a minimum of \$1 billion in private and public non-federal funding.

Additionally, Governor Hochul will direct actions that further support development of the green hydrogen industry while investing in our communities:

- *Develop Regulatory Framework:* DPS, the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC), and NYSERDA in collaboration with other agencies will develop a green hydrogen framework to measure emissions reduction and health benefits and will evaluate and develop codes and standards to ensure the safe operation of green hydrogen. By December 2022, these agencies will deliver recommended actions to the Governor's office for further action to ensure the safe, reliable, and equitable development of New York's green hydrogen economy.
- *Green Hydrogen Microgrids:* NYSERDA will develop, as a key element of future federal funding proposals, a program to support locally owned green hydrogen-powered microgrid solutions, which can help underserved communities replace polluting backup generators with clean, low-cost fuel cells for backup power during outages.
- *Hydrogen Innovation Funding:* Release \$27 million in NYSERDA Hydrogen Innovation funding to support product development, pilots, and demonstrations through competitive solicitations that will assure commercial readiness, safety, cost reduction, and reliability improvements. Funding will be released in the second quarter of 2022 to align with federal opportunity releases, and awards will prioritize projects leveraging federal and private cost share.
- *District Heating and Cooling:* NYSERDA will propose a green hydrogen demonstration (study and/or engineering assessments) for district heating and cooling.
- *Industry Collaboration:* NYSERDA will expand on existing investments and bring together utilities, renewable energy companies, car and truck

manufacturers, and current users of hydrogen, including chip fabrication, methanol production, and warehouse material handling.

- *Prize Program:* NYSERDA will launch a Green Hydrogen Prize Program as part of its Federal Infrastructure Green Hydrogen Hubs proposal to support green hydrogen firms seeking to expand in New York State.

With green hydrogen — proudly Made in New York — our state can power more neighborhoods with clean energy day and night, while creating yet more jobs in a high-growth industry.

Phase Out New York City’s Most-Polluting Fossil-Fuel Facilities

Downstate New York, including New York City, is heavily reliant on fossil fuels for energy production, making the greening of the downstate grid key to achieving our climate ambitions.¹²⁰ Among the city’s ongoing challenges is its reliance on “peaker plants” that spring into action when power demand peaks above the average usage. Today, peaker plants are powered by fossil fuels and negatively impact air quality for the surrounding — often underserved — communities.

Progress is underway. In September 2021,¹²¹ Governor Hochul announced two clean energy mega-projects — Clean Path NY and Champlain Hudson Power Express — that will power more than one-third of New York City with renewable energy.

To build on that success, Governor Hochul is directing NYSERDA in its 2022 offshore wind procurement to provide additional scoring credit for projects that propose to repurpose existing downstate fossil-based electric generation infrastructure and utilize energy storage to enhance future system reliability. Also, in the enhanced Energy Storage Roadmap, DPS and NYSERDA are directed to focus storage deployments in a manner that furthers the state’s efforts in eliminating the most polluting fossil fuel facilities and coordinates with existing utility and New York

Independent System Operator (NYISO) planning processes. These approaches will contribute cost effectively to the phase-out of peaker plants and maintain system reliability while helping to ensure a just transition for the existing workforce.

Governor Hochul will further direct NYSERDA, DPS, and DEC to develop a blueprint to guide the retirement and redevelopment of New York's oldest and most-polluting fossil fuel facilities and their sites by 2030.

This directive from Governor Hochul demonstrates that New York is committed to renewable development that directly supplants dirty, fossil fuel power plants, especially in communities that have historically been subjected to the negative health effects of fossil fuel-based electric generation.

Achieve Net-Zero in State Investment Portfolios by 2040

For New York to back up its talk about climate action, we need to put our money where our mouth is. That is why Governor Hochul will direct New York State authorities, public benefit corporations, and the State Insurance Fund — totaling roughly \$40 billion in assets — to achieve net-zero in their investment portfolios by 2040 and scale up investment in renewable energy and other sustainable solutions. Comptroller DiNapoli deserves enormous credit for leading the way with a 2040 net-zero goal for the New York State Common Retirement Fund,¹²² and this proposal would apply the same to the state's remaining investments — giving New York State the most aggressive timeline in the nation.

To support that effort, Governor Hochul will take other actions toward more environmentally sustainable finance practices:

- *Green Bonds:* Governor Hochul will direct all State authorities to prioritize relevant bonds as Green, Social, or Sustainable in lieu of non-labeled bonds.

- *Climate Risk Disclosure:* Governor Hochul will direct agencies and authorities to encourage contractors to disclose climate-related business risks as part of the procurement process. This transparency will help the state identify and mitigate our exposure to climate-related risks, such as supply-chain disruptions.

Governor Hochul will further direct authorities subject to these new commitments to deliver concrete action plans for implementation by Climate Week NYC in September 2022 and collaborate with other states in the U.S. Climate Alliance to share best practices and broaden impact. New York is already the financial capital of the world. We can make it the sustainable finance capital of the future.

Create High-Quality Solar Jobs for More New Yorkers

Previously, solar projects in New York were only subject to prevailing wage requirements or project labor agreements if they were 5 megawatts or more. To create more good-paying green jobs for more New Yorkers, NYSERDA and DPS announced in December 2021¹²³ a plan to lower this threshold to solar projects as low as 1 megawatt, as part of the State's Solar Roadmap to achieve Governor Hochul's expanded distributed solar target of 10 gigawatts by 2030.

Part VI-B: Decarbonize New York's Buildings

Buildings cause more than a third¹²⁴ of New York's climate pollution. The state's 7.3 million households and 370,000 commercial and institutional buildings overwhelmingly still burn fossil fuels for heating, cooling, hot water, and other uses. The speed and scale of building efficiency upgrades and electrification must accelerate dramatically to achieve New York's goals set out in the Climate Act.

Governor Hochul will propose a set of actions designed to decarbonize New York's building stock, anchored by a plan to achieve 2 million climate-friendly electrified or

electrification-ready homes by 2030 as well as legislation to ensure that all new building construction is zero-emissions by 2027. These actions will prioritize access for all New Yorkers, recognizing the disproportionate impact of pollution on historically disadvantaged communities.

Achieve 2 Million Electrified or Electrification-Ready Homes by 2030

Building electrification and related upgrades improve interior comfort, reduce exposure to air pollution, and support local jobs. But right now, only about 20,000 New York homes install modern heat pumps for heating and cooling each year. While New York is making progress through programs like NYS Clean Heat, more must be done to cut emissions in our buildings.

To accelerate green buildings in New York, Governor Hochul is setting an unprecedented commitment of a minimum 1 million electrified homes and up to 1 million electrification-ready homes by 2030, and ensuring that more than 800,000 of these homes will be low- to moderate-income households. This target will be anchored by a robust legislative and policy agenda, including:

- Raising the current rate of electrification of approximately 20,000 homes per year more than tenfold by the end of the decade.
- Electrifying low-income homes supported through the housing capital plan.
- Requiring zero on-site greenhouse gas emissions for new construction no later than 2027 (see below).
- Upgrading New York's appliance efficiency standards, reducing energy use while saving New Yorkers billions of dollars in utility costs.
- Mandating energy benchmarking for large buildings, making it easier to track energy-efficiency improvements over time.
- Convening the finance, mortgage and banking industries to help align private capital with this important housing sustainability goal.

- Providing the training programs necessary to ensure that New York has a skilled workforce to deliver these services.
- Proposing legislation to level the playing field for clean energy alternatives and end the obligation to serve customers with natural gas that currently exists in state law, tailored to maintain affordability for New York's most vulnerable customers.
- Directing NYSERDA, Housing and Community Renewal (HCR), DPS, and DOS to deliver an executable plan in 2022, with a funding proposal and strategies to leverage private capital.

As part of this proposal, Governor Hochul will also direct DPS to ensure that gas utilities minimize investments in costly new gas infrastructure, analyze the most equitable and cost-effective strategy for retirement or repurposing of existing infrastructure, promote alternatives to minimize gas demand, and engage members of disadvantaged communities fully and fairly in the gas transition.

Commit to Zero On-Site Greenhouse Gas Emissions for New Construction No Later Than 2027 and Enact Nation-Leading Building Codes Legislation

Governor Hochul will put forward a nation-leading legislative proposal for new construction building codes that will:

- Require new construction statewide to have zero on-site greenhouse gas emissions no later than 2027, consistent with the Climate Act.
- Incorporate achievement of New York State's greenhouse gas reduction objectives in developing the new construction code.
- Update building code cost-effectiveness criteria to account for the full lifetime of installed equipment.
- Expand the New York State Fire Prevention and Building Code Council to include the President and CEO of NYSERDA and the DEC Commissioner.

With this innovative legislative package, New York State will adopt an energy code at the forefront of climate change mitigation, building efficiency, and energy savings. The new 2027 zero on-site emission target for new construction sends an unmistakable signal to the New York market, the nation, and the world that the future of buildings must be decarbonized.

To help the market get ready for this change, Governor Hochul announced a \$30 million program in December¹²⁵ to accelerate the development of decarbonized all-electric homes and neighborhoods. This supplements New York's pioneering efforts through Buildings of Excellence, which is supporting the development of new carbon-neutral multifamily buildings and has more than three dozen multifamily buildings under development and construction across the state.

Bring Green Energy Solutions to Over 1,000 Public Schools

During Climate Week in 2021, Governor Hochul announced a \$59 million Clean Green Schools initiative¹²⁶ designed to bring environmental sustainability into some 500 to 600 schools, benefitting more than 360,000 students. To build on that momentum, Governor Hochul will announce an expansion of this Clean Green Schools program to reach every public school located in a disadvantaged community, as defined by the Climate Act and Climate Justice Working Group.

Through investment of "Clean Water, Clean Air and Green Jobs Environmental Bond Act" funding, the enhanced Clean Green Schools initiative will serve more than 1,000 public schools, benefitting nearly 1 million students. The program will drive significant infrastructure upgrades, such as geothermal heating and cooling, solar, green roofs, indoor air quality/ventilation, electric school bus charging, and more, creating thousands of high-quality green jobs across more than 200 school construction projects.

This vital investment will not only boost the state’s economy but advance climate justice by bringing clean energy and a healthier indoor environment to under-resourced public schools.

Harden Infrastructure and Improve Reliability for Emergency Services Statewide

No one should ever have to deal with a power outage, but for New York’s first responders, energy infrastructure reliability can be an urgent matter of life and death. To ensure that police and fire departments have operational readiness at all times, Governor Hochul is directing NYPA to harden infrastructure and improve reliability for emergency services throughout the state.

In 2022, NYPA will undertake the following work at police and fire departments:

- Commence resilience installations — including solar, storage, backup generators, and energy-efficiency measures — at a minimum of three sites.
- Install six solar installations.
- Complete LED lighting retrofits in 100 precincts.
- Identify five model first-responder facilities and conduct resiliency studies to determine best practices and technical requirements to be used as a blueprint for other facilities across the state.

With this foundation in place, future programs will expand this effort to even more fire and police stations, ensuring that first responders can continue to serve New Yorkers at our moments of greatest need.

Beyond 2022, NYPA will focus on police precincts and the 450 fire stations in New York State to provide solar/storage and energy efficiency improvements. NYPA will develop a resiliency roadmap for first responders and publish its learnings and best practices for the benefit of other statewide facilities.

Create 3 Virtual Power Plants Using State Government Buildings as a Proving Ground

A virtual power plant is a network of energy resources (such as solar panels, batteries, decentralized generation, EV infrastructure, and smart electric meters) that operate independently but can be managed as a group, providing much-needed flexibility to respond to changes in energy demand on short notice. While still rare in the U.S., virtual power plants are starting to gain traction as a promising component of a robust clean energy system.

To help New York lead in this emerging area, Governor Hochul is directing NYPA and the Office of General Services to design at least three virtual power plants in 2022 using state government assets. The State would invest in cutting-edge battery storage, leverage existing renewable resources and land, and test new approaches to electric vehicle-to-grid integration that can be centrally controlled and managed for use during extreme weather events and to avoid reliance on fossil-based resources.

The lessons learned from this initial effort in 2022 will provide valuable insight into promising technology configurations and compensation mechanisms that can be applied in 2023 and beyond to unlock the potential for more community-wide, affordable, and resilient electric systems. Intelligent energy usage will be critical to achieving the statutory goals of New York's Climate Act.

Begin Construction on Major Retrofit Showcase Projects in 2022

Over the last two years, NYSERDA's Empire Building Challenge¹²⁷ has partnered with leading real estate owners, who collectively control 130 million square feet of building space, to develop pathways toward greening the state's existing building stock. Governor Hochul is unveiling the first four showcase retrofit projects that

have emerged from this public-private partnership — demonstrating how all buildings, even those over 100 stories tall and nearly 100 years old, can become green buildings.

These four showcase projects will be the Empire State Building, the Hudson Square Portfolio, the Heritage Complex, and Whitney Young Manor. Critically, the Heritage and Whitney Young facilities provide over 700 units of affordable housing and are located in disadvantaged communities, illustrating how building decarbonization can and should extend to all New Yorkers.

Part VI-C: Accelerate New York’s Adoption of Electric, Zero-Emissions Vehicles

Transportation is among the leading cause of greenhouse gas emissions in New York State, accounting for some 28 percent of statewide emissions.¹²⁸ The pandemic has only worsened this situation, as more people have left public transportation in favor of personal automobiles. The result is an urgent need for wider adoption of electric vehicles (EVs) across households, truck fleets, and public transit agencies alike.

Governor Hochul has taken critical steps¹²⁹ to accelerate New York’s EV future, promoting regulations that reduce air pollution from trucks and require manufacturers to sell zero-emissions vehicles, and signing legislation requiring *all* new passenger vehicles sold in New York to be zero-emissions by 2035. In December 2021, Governor Hochul signed legislation¹³⁰ that will allow the Public Service Commission to address electricity rates for fast charging to enable greater private investment in this essential service for electric passenger cars, trucks, and buses. But even more must be done to ensure that New Yorkers have access to affordable EVs and that communities have the charging infrastructure they need to support this transition.

To ensure all New Yorkers benefit from this next-generation automotive technology, Governor Hochul will expand EV access and affordability, charging infrastructure,

and job opportunities across the state. And New York will lead by example with a concrete plan to electrify the state fleet. As the automotive industry changes, New York must be ready to change with it.

Invest \$1 Billion to Support EV Adoption and Infrastructure

To meet our state's Climate Act goals, New York must increase the share of EV sales significantly by 2030 — across the board. For light-duty vehicles (standard cars), sales must rise from 4 percent in 2021 to more than 90 percent by 2030. For medium- and heavy-duty vehicles (such as trucks), sales must go from less than 1 percent to at least 40 percent over the same period.¹³¹

New York will deploy \$175 million over five years for EV charging stations through federal formula funds, with a focus on fast charging for light-duty vehicles along highway corridors. These funds build on \$600 million for the EV charging make-ready program over the next four years and NYPA's up to \$250 million EVolve NY program. This \$1 billion-plus in funding will enable New York to put forward winning proposals to capture its share of \$2.5 billion in additional competitive federal funding for EVs.

To induce even greater private investment, Governor Hochul is directing NYSERDA and DPS to implement a sweeping set of actions to accelerate EV deployment and charging infrastructure build-out. NYSERDA and DPS will:

- Make the process for installing EV charging stations easier and more attractive by simplifying and harmonizing the state's EV charging incentive programs, encouraging business models that offer turnkey installations, streamlining the interconnection and permitting process, and offering additional guidance and assistance to potential EV charging station owners.
- Expand the EV make-ready program for trucks and buses so utilities can help fleets power these vehicles of the future and provide fleets with expanded

technical assistance on cost-effective approaches to electrification and charging.

- Engage transit agencies in developing tools and resources to support 100 percent zero-emissions bus transit and secure cost-effective, clean, resilient, and intelligent bus charging and supporting infrastructure. NYSERDA will conduct a request for information in partnership with New York State transit authorities to explore options for innovative as-a-service models that leverage private capital to support New York's zero-emission bus market.

New York State will also advance replicable showcase projects for clean transportation in disadvantaged communities. As a result of the first phase of the \$85 million New York Clean Transportation Prizes, NYSERDA will provide planning grants to 17 awardees to refine their proposals and engage further with the communities in which awardees are proposing to work, in preparation for a pitch event and grand prize awardee selection in 2022. Awardees will receive up to \$200,000 in support for their team and their community engagement partners.

Up to 10 of these finalists will receive a \$7-10 million grand prize to implement their clean transportation solution. Additionally, NYSERDA will establish a fellowship program for all grand prize awardees, which will be used to further workforce development within the clean energy space in these communities.

Electrify the State Fleet by 2035

In September 2021,¹³² Governor Hochul signed legislation that requires all new passenger vehicles sold in New York to be zero-emissions by 2035. To build on that effort in support of New York's Climate Act commitments, Governor Hochul will electrify the state's light-duty fleet by 2035, matching President Biden's commitment to electrify the federal light-duty fleet that same year.¹³³

With this bold action, New York will deliver on its U.S. Climate Alliance COP26 commitment. Requiring state fleet purchases to be zero-emissions vehicles will drive demand for the EV economy, further generating new jobs opportunities for New Yorkers.

Achieve 100% Electric School Buses by 2035

There are roughly 50,000 school buses¹³⁴ on streets in New York State, polluting the communities they operate in with harmful emissions. It is estimated that fully electrifying school buses in New York City alone would be the equivalent of taking nearly 650,000 passenger vehicles off the road.

To improve air quality for New York State's children while also working toward our Climate Act goals, Governor Hochul will propose legislation to require that, by 2027, all new school bus purchases will be zero-emissions, and by 2035, all school buses on the road will be zero-emissions.

Critically, this legislation will ensure that the State provides school aid toward installing electric bus infrastructure, including charging stations, and purchasing or leasing electric buses. Additionally, this legislation will enable school districts to contract for buses for longer than the current five-year limitation, which will expand the ability of school districts to meet this goal.

Under the federal Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, the Environmental Protection Agency is making \$5 billion available over five years for a competitive program for electric and other low-emission school buses. EPA funds will be distributed through annual competitive programs. NYSERDA, NYPA, and the State Education Department (SED) will work with schools to apply and deliver winning proposals for electric bus funding.

To further advance New York’s green hydrogen industry (described above), Governor Hochul will direct NYSERDA to update the New York Truck Voucher Incentive Program¹³⁵ to include only zero-emissions battery and green hydrogen fuel cell powered vehicles as part of the school bus electrification program. NYSERDA will also work to leverage a combination of federal funding and Bond Act money to accelerate school districts converting their bus fleets.

Transform Hunts Point into a Clean Distribution Hub

The Hunts Point Food Market in the Bronx is the largest food distribution center in the U.S., but it is also heavily polluted, with more than 15,000 diesel trucks¹³⁶ entering the facility every day. Governor Hochul will direct an inter-agency team led by NYSERDA and NYPA to develop solutions to transform Hunts Point Food Market into a Clean Distribution Hub that is quieter, cleaner, and healthier for the entire community.

This targeted initiative will address transportation, electrical infrastructure, and facility needs and upgrades; identify the biggest emitters of pollution; and work with key public and private industry stakeholders on strategies to expedite critical grid upgrades and operational improvements.

New York’s communities should not have to choose between economic activity and clean air. The Hunts Point Clean Distribution Hub will provide an example showing how to have both.

Part VI-D: Protect New York’s Environment and Improve Our Community Spaces

New Yorkers have long appreciated the damage that climate change is doing to the environment, but 2021 was an unforgettable reminder of what that change means for us at a community or even individual level. From severe heat waves,¹³⁷ to the air-

quality impact here from wildfires out west,¹³⁸ to the destruction of Hurricane Ida, climate change is not an abstract notion — it is right at our doors.

As extreme weather events continue to rise into the future, New York faces more immediate challenges to protecting our natural surroundings and our people. The pandemic underscored the connection between place and health that extends into pollution, which has a disproportionate impact on disadvantaged communities. COVID-19 drove record use of our parks and shared spaces¹³⁹ — and with it soaring maintenance needs.

To protect the health of New Yorkers and the environment, Governor Hochul will plan a set of actions designed to invest in the communities at greatest risk from climate change, in the local programs needed to improve sustainability and resiliency, and in the parks and nature preserves enjoyed by us all.

Increase Funding for the Clean Water, Clean Air and Green Jobs Environmental Bond Act to \$4 Billion

To demonstrate New York’s ongoing commitment to the environment, Governor Hochul has proposed a \$1 billion¹⁴⁰ increase to the “Clean Water, Clean Air and Green Jobs Environmental Bond Act,” which will bring its total to \$4 billion. The Bond Act will be on the ballot in November 2022, which if approved by the public would boost funding streams for climate change mitigation, restoration and flood risk reduction projects, and other environmental protection programs.

Expand Community Air Monitoring Statewide to Improve Air Quality

Disadvantaged communities are often disproportionately impacted by poor air quality, given their proximity to industrial emissions, power plants, transportation infrastructure, ports, terminals, and other pollution sources. To help identify areas of greatest impact and plan targeted interventions, Governor Hochul is launching a

first-of-its-kind, comprehensive air monitoring program in disadvantaged communities across the state and has finalized the necessary agreements to begin monitoring air quality.

In consultation with the state's Climate Justice Working Group and community leaders, DEC will identify 10 areas to deploy hyper-local monitoring technology to collect air-quality data. Priority locations will include multiple disadvantaged communities historically burdened by industrial pollution both upstate and downstate. Governor Hochul will also double the state's investment in the Air Monitoring Capacity Building Grants to improve the ability of community groups working on the ground in these areas to contribute to the development of this critical program.

Measuring hyper-local pollution is a necessary first step toward effective community solutions. Over time, this initiative will also serve to catalyze new investments and innovations in carbon-reduction and air-quality solutions, helping to ensure they are developed in collaboration with the community and focused in the appropriate areas that need them most.

Develop an Extreme Heat Action Plan to Protect Disadvantaged Communities

Among hazardous events, extreme heat is the number one cause of death¹⁴¹ in the United States, killing more people annually than storms and floods and disproportionately impacting people of color. But currently, New York State does not have a comprehensive, interagency plan to protect New Yorkers from extreme heat, especially those in vulnerable communities.

Governor Hochul will direct DEC and NYSERDA to develop an Extreme Heat Action Plan to address heat in disadvantaged communities, areas of employment, and recreational zones across the state. This initiative will survey, analyze, collate, and scale existing high heat-related initiatives designed to mitigate neighborhood

climate impacts associated with extreme heat, including shade structures, cool roofs, cool pavements, parks, and spray pads.

Critically, the Action Plan will help coordinate interagency investments to ensure that priority assistance goes to disadvantaged communities on the front lines of heat exposure.

Improve the Brownfield Cleanup Program and Promote Redevelopment

New York State has issued over 500 Certificates of Completion in connection with redevelopment through the Brownfield Cleanup Program (BCP), signifying the completion of remediation of contaminated properties. The program encourages private-sector cleanup and redevelopment of brownfield sites across New York State to revitalize economically and environmentally blighted communities.

To invest in the future of disadvantaged communities, Governor Hochul will extend the BCP, which is set to expire at the end of 2022. The Governor will also expand the tangible property tax credit eligibility for some disadvantaged and low-income communities, as well as renewable energy facility sites, in an effort to focus BCP-driven redevelopment in these areas and to help meet the state's ambitious climate goals.

Additionally, Governor Hochul will grow the Brownfield Opportunity Area (BOA) program to allow for funds to be used for more pre-development activities, including demolition, asbestos removal, site preparation, legal and financial services, renewable energy feasibility studies, and impact analyses. Through this expanded initiative, New York State will help identify and prepare sites of various scales that are appropriate for renewable energy siting and other beneficial uses, further investing in communities that have been neglected far too long.

Require Producers, Not Taxpayers, to Cover the Cost of Recycling

Recycling remains a critical issue for municipalities and for climate change, with the entire waste industry accounting for an estimated 12 percent of the state’s greenhouse gas emissions.¹⁴² The weakened market has also put a serious strain on the New York’s recycling system, exacerbated by China’s 2018 decision¹⁴³ to stop importing recyclable materials. Municipalities cannot handle or afford this burden, and as a result, more waste ends up in landfills, which means more greenhouse gas emissions. The state has also seen our recycling rate decrease since 2012, which is cause for concern when there are over 7 million tons¹⁴⁴ of paper and packing waste generated on an annual basis.

To address our growing recycling problem, Governor Hochul will propose a fundamental shift in the way recyclable materials are thought of, produced, and managed in New York. The State will institute an “extended producer responsibility” (EPR) program for packing and paper products, an environmental protection strategy that requires producers — not taxpayers — to cover the cost of recycling. With EPR, producers become financially responsible for their products through the entire product lifecycle, incentivizing them to reduce waste, invest in recycling infrastructure, make products that are easier to recycle, and support a circular economy.

This landmark proposal will help New York reduce its emissions and stabilize the recycling market while supporting our struggling municipalities.

Reduce Toxics in Packaging

To reduce the harmful impact of toxics in packaging and promote sustainability, Governor Hochul will propose legislation to reduce the presence of toxic and environmentally persistent chemicals in packaging and paper products. The law will expand the current Hazardous Packaging rules by restricting two long-lasting chemicals — per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances and phthalates — in all packaging

categories, as well as allow for restriction of other toxic substances. This action will not only protect the environment but also incentivize the creation of more recyclable packaging that promotes a circular economy.

Safeguard the State’s Water Resources

Clean water is our most vital resource, and its safety cannot be compromised. To secure New York’s water resources — both now and far into the future — Governor Hochul will support critical water infrastructure projects across the state.

The State will take additional actions to further safeguard our water supplies:

- *Provide School Districts with Funding to Improve Wastewater and Stormwater Infrastructure:* Governor Hochul will propose legislation to include school districts in the definition of a municipality, making them eligible for the Clean Water State Revolving Fund.
- *Protect Wetlands That Clean Our Water Naturally:* Wetlands provide a natural approach to flood protection and clean water, saving us money on hard infrastructure. Governor Hochul will propose legislation to expand New York’s wetlands program by improving mapping requirements and enhancing regulations around smaller wetlands.
- *Safeguard Long Island’s Aquifer and Water Sources:* The State University of New York (SUNY) will expand SUNY Stony Brook Center for Clean Water Technology research to include waste water treatment technology and create the Suffolk County Wastewater Management District — both with the goal of protecting Long Island’s critical aquifer system.
- *Combat Harmful Algal Blooms (HABs) and Support Localities:* Wastewater runoff contains large amounts of nitrogen, which is a major contributor to

the formation of HABs. To address this issue, the Governor will dedicate grants for septic system replacements, since replacing inadequate septic systems can greatly reduce the amount of wastewater-related nutrients that end up in a stream or lake. Rather than just treating HABs once they have formed, these grants will enable a proactive approach to mitigating these environmental hazards before they start.

Strengthen Green Procurement Standards for State Agencies

Governor Hochul will develop the nation's first green purchasing program for local governments. The State will prepare model green procurement language to be provided to local governments, helping them update their purchasing policies in ways that reflect strong climate commitments.

To lead by example, Governor Hochul will issue a new Executive Order on green procurement in state government. This new EO will provide concrete targets for green procurements, ensuring agency compliance with these directives and providing the public with transparent goals to measure our state's progress.

This new order will also ensure agencies and authorities will have a sustainability coordinator that focuses on its goals and policies — spreading the “lead by example” approach across all of state government.

Protect New York's Forest Preserve Lands in the Catskills and the Adirondacks

The Adirondacks and Catskills are unique and vital resources for New York. But since they are managed as wild forest lands, the Adirondacks and Catskills are even more susceptible to damage and deterioration from increased use.

To preserve these state gems, Governor Hochul will leverage the Environmental Protection Fund to invest in helping New Yorkers enjoy the Adirondacks and

Catskills responsibly. This investment will allow for critical actions designed to address overuse through comprehensive planning for the future, including trail safety and climate resiliency. It will also support stewards to engage visitors and the community to ensure that all of us can benefit from these shared natural resources.

These actions will ensure the Adirondacks and Catskills are preserved as wild forest lands while still allowing visitors to enjoy their stunning beauty for years to come.

Enhance Our State Park System

New York has already committed \$110 million for core State Park improvements, including funding to invest in ongoing projects. Governor Hochul will build on that initiative and dedicate increased capital funding to rebuild the capacity of our parks, while also investing in new projects that will bring outdoor activities and recreation to communities across our unique and beautiful state.

SECTION VII

REBUILD NEW YORK'S SCHOOL SYSTEM AND REIMAGINE HIGHER EDUCATION

The pandemic created an unprecedented disruption to education in New York State, with the potential to reverberate across our economy for years and limit opportunities for an entire generation of students unless we take action. On average, the pandemic left K-12 students five months behind¹⁴⁵ on math and four months on reading, widening existing disparities. The pandemic also accelerated a vast teacher shortage that was already facing a steep retirement cliff in the coming years, making any recovery of this learning deficit that much harder.

In October,¹⁴⁶ Governor Hochul announced that New York State will finally deliver on the promise of the Campaign for Fiscal Equity and phase-in full funding of Foundation Aid to New York school districts by the 2023-24 school year. This will mean billions in additional support for the districts across the state. And it happens right as the federal government is considering a massive investment in childcare and universal pre-kindergarten for three- and four-year-olds.¹⁴⁷ New Yorkers need federal action on these issues, and Governor Hochul is focused on working with Majority Leader Schumer, Senator Gillibrand, and the entire Congressional delegation to implement a comprehensive program of early childhood education in New York State. In the event the federal government does not step in, Governor Hochul has a plan to meaningfully expand the availability of childcare to New York's working families.

Far more must also be done to help New York's young people recover from the pandemic and get on a path to success. We must solve the teacher shortage and help our students through the academic and social-emotional challenges of the pandemic. Governor Hochul's plans focus on these twin challenges.

And to put all of our students on track for college or career, Governor Hochul has a vision to transform the State University of New York (SUNY) into the nation's top public university system. Our higher education system must innovate to address structural challenges, focus on meeting the regional needs of today's workforce, and reach new levels of institutional excellence if we want to give our students every possible opportunity and put them at the greatest competitive advantage.

Part VII-A: Increase Support for Educators and Children

New York is facing a looming workforce crisis in our schools — one that has been worsened by the pandemic but also predates it — that requires strong and immediate action. Not only is enrollment in state teacher education programs down 53 percent since 2009, but one-third of current teachers are projected to retire in the next five years.¹⁴⁸ These trends mean that New York needs approximately 180,000 new teachers over the next decade to meet our workforce needs.

The shortage extends beyond teachers. Even prior to the pandemic, there was a shortage of school counselors that has only grown since 2019. There is a critical shortage in school psychology, both in terms of practitioners and in the availability of graduate education programs and faculty needed to train the future school psychology workforce. Guidance counselors, more essential than ever given the social-emotional challenges and uncertainty our students are facing, are in short supply. And the number of school bus drivers in New York is 15 to 20 percent below full staffing levels.¹⁴⁹

To meet this crisis head on, Governor Hochul will take immediate actions to recruit and retain teachers, accelerate the teacher certification process, and create a robust pipeline of future educators to ensure this shortage never again threatens the opportunities for New York State families and children. And to support those opportunities long into the future, Governor Hochul is also dramatically increasing

funding for K-12 education, generally, and will step in to expand childcare accessibility in the event the federal government does not act to do so.

Provide Incentives to Attract More Teachers and School Workers

As an immediate step to shore up teacher shortages, Governor Hochul will provide two incentives to attract additional teachers and school professionals into New York's schools:

- *Waive the Income Cap for Certain Retirees:* There are 169,000 retired New York State Teachers,¹⁵⁰ many of whom could come back and teach but for limits placed on their earned income as retirees. This cap serves as a disincentive to return to work, and we have likewise lost thousands of school counselors, social workers, nurses, and bus drivers to retirement. There is a strong economic incentive for retirement, because they cannot receive pension payments if they are also receiving school income in excess of \$35,000. Governor Hochul will incentivize teachers and other school workers to rejoin the workforce by temporarily waiving the \$35,000 income limit for certain retirees.
- *Expand the Alternative Teacher Certification:* Governor Hochul proposes to expand alternative teacher certification programs, such as the New York City Teaching Collaborative, to make it easier and more appealing for professionals in other careers to become teachers. Aspiring teachers would apprentice in high-need school districts while pursuing a master's degree in their field. Participants would also receive a stipend.

Accelerate the Teacher Certification Process

It can often take a long time for qualified teachers to receive the certification that enables them to start working in classrooms, due to both administrative and

ministerial challenges. To better streamline the state’s teacher certification process, Governor Hochul will accelerate the teacher approval process through two actions, ensuring that qualified teachers can enter the classroom without bureaucratic delays:

- *Provide Additional Staff for the State Education Department (SED):* Governor Hochul will invest in SED’s teacher certification office to reduce review time for teacher certification applications. This funding will enable SED to shorten the time from application to final certification of teacher candidates who can be approved to teach in New York immediately.
- *Allow Provisional School Professionals in Classrooms:* Governor Hochul proposes to reform the state’s certification statute to provisionally approve teachers for immediate work if they meet coursework, fingerprint, and background check requirements. This action would enable teacher candidates to teach while they wait for SED to complete its lengthy approval process. Provisional approval would also be extended to school counselors, social workers, and other SED-licensed professions with current job market shortages, as well as for retirees with expired licenses in good standing. Additionally, the requirement for SED approval to renew expired licenses for individuals with clean records would be waived, at least during the teacher shortage.

Create a State Teacher Residency Program

Teacher residency programs, in which teachers in training are given a mentor and real teaching experience under the mentor’s supervision, have been proven to dramatically increase teacher retention rates and improve the experience of educators in the early, toughest years of teaching.

Governor Hochul will create the Empire State Teacher Residency Program, which would provide matching funding for local districts to create two-year residency programs for graduate-level teacher candidates. Funded programs would involve SUNY, the City University of New York (CUNY), and/or private colleges partnering with public school districts to provide reduced or free tuition for teaching candidates, including books and fees, mentoring, and a stipend to cover living expenses. The program will prioritize diversity among teacher residents and partnering mentors and will place an emphasis on both high-need subject areas and geographic locations with teacher shortages.

Fund New Cohorts of the Master Teacher Program

New York’s Master Teacher Program is a professional community of outstanding teachers who are dedicated to supporting the development of the next generation of great educators. Master Teachers foster a supportive environment for pre-service and early career teachers, engage in peer mentoring, and share insights into the most innovative practices across all grades and regions. To date, the program has awarded tens of millions of dollars to 1,200 teachers.

Currently, the Master Teacher Program focuses on three domains: STEM content; Pedagogy; and Students, Families, and Communities. To expand this successful mentoring model, Governor Hochul will fund new program cohorts, aimed at supporting teachers of color, Career and Technical Education (CTE) teachers, and guidance counselors. Special programming will focus on ensuring that all students have information and opportunities about CTE programs and alternative career pathways.

Upskill Teacher Support Workers to Earn Their Certifications

There are more than 100,000 paraprofessionals and teaching assistants¹⁵¹ working in New York State schools — a number that is rapidly rising¹⁵² — and many of them

would pursue their full teaching certification with greater support. Governor Hochul will provide funding for paraprofessionals to gain skills and credentials to become teachers, with a priority on diversity in the workforce. The program will cover two years of part-time tuition, fees, and books at SUNY and CUNY for those awarded paraprofessionals who remain employed in a school district while pursuing a teaching degree, and it will provide support for participants pursuing a teaching degree. School districts would be required to pair candidates with professional mentors.

Provide Schools with Billions of Dollars by Fully Funding Foundation Aid

In October, Governor Hochul announced that the State will phase in full funding of Foundation Aid to New York school districts by the 2023-24 school year.¹⁵³ Foundation Aid is the State's main education operating aid formula. It is focused on allocating State funds equitably to all school districts, especially high-need districts, based on student need, community wealth, and regional cost differences. This decision means the state will provide billions of dollars more in aid to school districts statewide.

Governor Hochul's decision to fully fund Foundation Aid brings to an end a 29-year battle over adequate funding of public schools, particularly those with higher-need students. This bold decision means all schools will now receive equitable resources. New York State is home to the best-funded public P-12 education system in the world, spending more per pupil than any other state in the nation.¹⁵⁴

Increase Access to Childcare for 100,000 Families and Invest \$75 Million in Wages for Childcare Workers

Childcare is essential to give children the best possible chance at success and parents the ability to participate and advance in the workforce. Governor Hochul strongly believes the federal government must act to pass Build Back Better and

dramatically expand childcare coverage for families in New York and across the nation. In the event that there is no federal action, she will propose an expansion of access to childcare for 100,000 New York families, by increasing eligibility from 200 percent of the federal poverty line to 225 percent, and investing \$75 million in better pay for childcare workers.

These are critical steps toward making childcare affordable for every family who needs it and realizing the goals developed by New York’s Child Care Availability Task Force, which Governor Hochul co-chaired as Lieutenant Governor.

Part VII-B: Rebuild the Academic and School Mental Health Supports Worsened by the Pandemic

The impact of COVID-19 on entire generations of students is staggering. One imminent priority is addressing the significant learning loss that occurred due to remote learning — deficits with the potential to follow students for years. Pandemic-driven deficits in math and reading could result in American students earning some \$61,000 less over their careers unless we close the pandemic learning gap.¹⁵⁵

Equally critical is addressing the social-emotional challenges that students are facing as a result of the pandemic. And while New York State was already facing a pre-pandemic gap in access to children’s mental healthcare, that gap has only widened. One CDC study found that, between April and October 2020, there was a 24 percent¹⁵⁶ rise in the proportion of mental health emergency visits for children ages 5 to 11, compared with the same window in 2019.

Both of these challenges have had a disproportionately high impact on racial minorities. One of every 600 Black children and 1 of every 700 Hispanic children lost a parent or caregiver during the pandemic, compared to 1 of every 1,400 Asian and 1 of every 1,500 white children.¹⁵⁷

Governor Hochul will help New York’s school children get on and stay on the road to recovery through initiatives that close the academic and social-emotional gaps widened by COVID-19, ensuring that the pandemic does not prevent students from getting all the educational opportunities they need and deserve.

Provide Learning and Mental Health Grants to High-Need Districts

Governor Hochul will provide additional mental health grants to school districts and encourage school districts to invest federal funding to address the student trauma brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic by providing a new state matching fund, the Recover from COVID School Program (RECOVS), prioritizing districts with the highest needs. This funding will help create or expand summer learning, after-school, or extended-day and extended-year programs to help students make up academic ground. It will also support the hiring of mental health professionals, the expansion of school-based mental health services, and other evidence-based mental health supports for students and school staff.

Connect the Student Service Corps with Community Groups to Meet Local Needs

There are tens of thousands of SUNY and CUNY students in graduate or undergraduate programs in education-related fields such as childcare, counseling, education, social work, and more. Building on a successful model in Puerto Rico, Governor Hochul will launch an initiative to connect SUNY and CUNY student volunteers with local nonprofit partners to fill critical community needs identified by local stakeholders.

Volunteers will focus on providing support in education and tutoring, hunger prevention, mental health, and after-school activities, among other areas. Students

will get academic credit and meet weekly hour requirements for providing services, working in concert with providers, local schools, and their colleges.

Pilot Programs to Create Positive School Climates

Locally funded programs designed to create positive school climates have demonstrated promising results. Some participating schools have seen an 82 percent decrease in suspensions since 2013-14 and a reduction in violent incidents by 54 percent.¹⁵⁸ To help build more positive school climates at a moment of great need during the recovery, Governor Hochul will fund pilot programs to create safe, positive, and supportive climates in high-need schools.

Funding will focus on meeting students' holistic needs, with programs supporting Therapeutic Crisis Intervention for Schools, Response to Intervention, Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports, the Human Rights Campaign Foundation's Welcoming Schools initiative, and the United Federation of Teachers' Positive Learning Collaborative, among others. Funding could also be used for programs that address other options to improve school climate. To ensure the programs help parts of the state that need it most, funding will prioritize schools with high levels of suspensions coupled with high levels of student poverty, homelessness, special needs students, English language learners, and other vulnerable populations.

Part VII-C: Help Two-Thirds of New Yorkers Earn a Post-Secondary Degree by 2030

Just as New York is at risk of an unequal recovery from the pandemic, New York's students face an unequal path to job opportunities and career success. COVID-19 accelerated the economic changes already taking shape in the state. In the coming years, an estimated 70 percent of all new jobs in the U.S. will require some post-secondary credential, and by 2024, nearly 3.5 million jobs in New York State will require an associate degree or higher.¹⁵⁹ At the same time, some 53 percent¹⁶⁰ of

New York State jobs may be impacted by automation in the years ahead, with roles in administrative support, sales, food prep, and other service sectors at greatest risk.

Aggressive policy interventions are needed to ensure that all New Yorkers have access to the higher education opportunities that will translate into job opportunities in high-growth industries. Governor Hochul has a comprehensive plan to make higher education in our state more affordable and accessible: whether students are seeking a two-year degree, a four-year degree, or a non-degree credential; whether they are going full-time or part-time; and whether they are looking for their first job, or a new and better job. These actions will help two-thirds of New Yorkers earn a post-secondary credential (degree or non-degree) by 2030.

A stronger future for New York's economy begins with a stronger investment in higher education and giving our people the skills they need to succeed.

Expand Access to College-Level Courses

College-level courses provided in high school, or “concurrent enrollment” programs, help New York's students get a head start on college completion, reduce their student debt, and accelerate their job prospects. But funding for these programs is provided on a grant basis and is disconnected from the relative success of programs in effectively helping students earn college credit and matriculate to an institute of higher education. Moreover, the pandemic created additional challenges¹⁶¹ for high school students trying to complete these programs remotely.

To change this paradigm, Governor Hochul will propose reforms to incentivize early college high school programs that are the most successful in matriculating students to college with credits earned in high school (excluding AP and IB credits). With support tied to success, Governor Hochul will encourage the establishment and growth of effective concurrent enrollment programs, and in doing so, put more and

more students on a path to getting a post-secondary educational credential and the employment opportunities that come with it.

Expand the Part-Time Tuition Assistance Program to Serve 75,000 Additional Students

New York's Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) is largely unavailable for students studying part time. To be eligible for part-time TAP, students are required to attend school full time for a year before receiving awards, and they also must have earned 12 credits or more in each of the two previous semesters — with a minimum of 24 credits earned in the previous year.

Expanding access to part-time TAP would allow students with work or family responsibilities to attend school without upending their lives. It would also help revitalize community colleges by building enrollment with a new population of students.

Governor Hochul has a plan to expand part-time TAP for New York's SUNY and CUNY students that is as revolutionary as it is simple. She will eliminate the 24-credit prior-year eligibility requirement, and instead make prorated awards available to any individual enrolled in six or more credits of study at a SUNY, CUNY, or not-for-profit independent college.

Governor Hochul's plan will expand tuition assistance to provide support to 75,000 additional New York students annually, all working hard to get ahead.

Provide Tuition-Free Workforce Credential Programs at Community Colleges for High-Demand Fields

Non-degree workforce credential programs provide critical skills to New Yorkers seeking jobs in an ever-changing economy, and help employers find workers to

meet their needs. There may be no more important area for state investment when it comes to workforce development.

Governor Hochul will therefore create a financial aid program that fully funds workforce credential sequences at community colleges in high-demand fields. To ensure the program focuses on the highest-growth areas, Empire State Development (ESD) and the State's Regional Economic Development Councils (REDCs) will recommend which courses of sequence would be eligible for State funding, based on an analysis of regional industry trends and workforce needs. This analysis will take into account existing offerings that are privately supported, ensuring that the state is investing its resources into areas that truly need state support.

Provide Childcare at All SUNY/CUNY Campuses

Access to affordable childcare can be a major barrier for New Yorkers trying to pursue higher education or workforce development courses at state institutions. Currently, 18 SUNY¹⁶² and eight CUNY campuses lack on-site childcare. To close this gap, Governor Hochul will expand childcare to all SUNY and CUNY campuses, providing support for more New Yorkers working hard to get their education and improve their job skills.

Award Prior Learning Credit Across SUNY and CUNY

As described in Section I, as part of the Governor's plan to make it easier for New Yorkers to move between college and career, SUNY and CUNY will adopt a consistent, statewide policy for crediting relevant prior learning and work experience, supporting credit accumulation, certifications, and post-secondary attainment. Under this policy, all students in SUNY and CUNY schools will have a far more seamless experience returning to school to gain the necessary credentials to move up the career ladder.

Support Internships for SUNY and CUNY Students

Internships can provide critical, real-world experience for students as well as a foot in the door with a future employer. For far too long, unpaid internships presented impossible tradeoffs for middle- and low-income students, but increasingly employers are recognizing the importance of paying interns. Still, there are many more CUNY and SUNY students seeking to prepare themselves for the jobs of the future than there are paid internships available to them. Governor Hochul will work with SUNY and CUNY to establish public-private funding partnerships with employers and trade associations, in which public and private dollars are matched to support the creation and scaling of new internship programs.

Part VII-D: Transform SUNY into a Nation-Leading Public Higher Education System

Currently serving 370,000 students and stretching across 64 campuses, the SUNY system is rightly a source of pride and focus for our state. SUNY provides New Yorkers with access to postsecondary education at institutions that drive local economic innovation with strong research and workforce preparation. Its graduates make an average income 20 percent higher¹⁶³ than the state's median, and debt among graduates of SUNY's four-year institutions is significantly lower than that of graduates of peer institutions.¹⁶⁴

As the New York and global economy change, and as New York rebuilds from the destructive impact of the pandemic, SUNY and its portfolio of institutions across the state constitute an indispensable asset to catalyze economic growth and true opportunity for New Yorkers statewide. A reimagined SUNY has the scale, mission, and reach to propel New York to become the world's leader in innovation, equitable economic growth, and upward mobility. Large-scale university research, development, and technology transfer can catalyze economic innovation and job growth in communities across the state and help solve global and local challenges.

Increasing the number and diversity of people with college degrees and credentials valued in the labor market, and connecting these people to in-demand jobs, will advance individual upward mobility, strengthen communities, and drive economic growth. As the largest comprehensive statewide system of public higher education in the country, SUNY is uniquely positioned to support these priorities at large scale and at a level of quality that is nationally competitive.

Yet SUNY faces challenges that stand in the way.

First, research and development expenditures from all sources for leading SUNY institutions is less than half that of other major state systems, and the leading SUNY school for research and development is ranked only 62nd in the country.¹⁶⁵ SUNY has fewer startups and patents than peer systems.¹⁶⁶ But SUNY has tremendous research and development capability and potential for centers of excellence that can be expanded with leadership and funding and then drive innovation, catalyze local job growth, and help start up and attract companies that can help revitalize local economies. For example, Binghamton University is poised to be the international leader in battery storage technology, including a BATTERY-NY project (mentioned above), which has the potential to bring 8,000 new jobs to the Southern Tier and play an important role in combating climate change. This builds on a storied legacy of world-changing research at SUNY, including one of the first practical uses for artificial intelligence, invented at the University at Buffalo to help the post office read address labels.

Second, SUNY has experienced dramatic declines in student enrollment that must be reversed. While demographic shifts have contributed to enrollment declines and certain SUNY campuses have made enrollment progress, the broader enrollment trends across SUNY have been substantial. Across all SUNY colleges, there are nearly 100,000 fewer students than 10 years ago — a drop of 19.7 percent. At community colleges, enrollment is down 34 percent over 10 years.¹⁶⁷ And SUNY's decline in four-year enrollment contrasts with overall increases at some of the highest-

performing peer systems in other states. SUNY has exceptional new opportunities for attracting the 1.8 million New Yorkers with some college but no degree,¹⁶⁸ as well as more working adults, out-of-state and international students, more underrepresented populations and low-income students, and a far greater share of New York's recent high school graduates.

Third, the New York economy is rapidly changing, and SUNY must adapt quickly to keep pace and meet employer demands. Fifty-three percent of New York jobs are vulnerable to automation.¹⁶⁹ Jobs of the future are being created now in healthcare, technology, media, and the green economy. Many careers require four-year degrees or higher for long-term success, but entry into even these sectors can begin with an associate degree or credential that provides a jumpstart and credit toward a future bachelor's degree. SUNY is well positioned to meet these demands because it includes a comprehensive portfolio of institutions: university centers/doctoral-granting institutions, comprehensive colleges, technology colleges, and community colleges. To leverage this strength, these institutions must build closer ties between education and work, including with leading employers across growing industries, and must ensure that learning is aligned with hiring needs for in-demand jobs and the future of work. They also must expand access for students to valued industry credentials (including accelerated credentials providing credit toward valuable degrees), dual enrollment programs, and work-based experiences that generate meaningful credit toward degrees across these institutions.

Meeting these challenges head-on will mean significant change for the entire SUNY system and will require careful and thoughtful planning and implementation. In addition to the immediate actions Governor Hochul is proposing as per her 2022 State of the State — including part-time tuition assistance, on-campus childcare, and a stronger connection between workforce development programs and employer needs (see Part VII-C) — she will partner over the next year with SUNY, its individual institutions, and key stakeholders to develop a plan to implement her

vision to transform SUNY into the top statewide system of public higher education in the country.

Goals for the System

Governor Hochul’s vision includes ambitious goals to enable SUNY to become the state’s engine for economic development and upward mobility and to become the best and most equitable statewide system of higher education in the country. That includes helping each part of the SUNY system — the university centers and doctoral-granting institutions, comprehensive colleges, community colleges, and technology colleges — lead the country when compared to peers, at every credential or degree level.

An implementation plan will achieve the following goals by 2030:

- Increase Enrollment by One-Third — to More Than 500,000 Students — and Help New York Lead the Country in Degree and Credential Attainment With Enrollment and Completion Rates Reflecting the State's Socioeconomic, Geographic, and Racial Diversity:* Reaching this goal will require increasing enrollment of recent high school graduates enrolling full-time at SUNY but also increasing enrollment of part-time students, working learners, those with some college but no degree, high school students through dual enrollment programs, out-of-state and international students, people in state and local correctional facilities, and underserved and marginalized learners, more generally. It should leverage technology to reimagine who SUNY can serve and how. And it should support the state’s goal of equipping two-thirds of New Yorkers with a degree or valued credential by 2030 and making progress, such as substantial improvements for degrees and credentials while ensuring the smallest educational attainment gaps in the country for low-income students, underrepresented populations, and rural students.

- *Prepare Hundreds of Thousands of People for In-Demand Jobs and Upwardly Mobile Careers:* Reaching this goal will require clear, measurable targets for attainment of high-demand credentials, wage gains, and good-paying jobs, as well as for closing gaps for underrepresented populations. It also will require a data system that would track earnings, employment, and economic success to adjust curricula and offerings to provide the evolving job skills needed for in-demand jobs in a dynamic labor market.
- *Ensure a World-Class Student Experience, Using Metrics That Matter Most to Students.* These metrics include students' sense of belonging, the relevance of what students are learning, and students' experiences with SUNY's operations, including the process of applying, enrolling, obtaining financial aid, accessing courses, accumulating and transferring credits, and getting the financial, academic, and health and wellness counseling they need to succeed. Reaching this goal will require a system-wide focus on student experiences that drive success.
- *Recruit, Support, and Retain Top Faculty and Staff to Support and Teach Students and Conduct Both Basic and Applied Research, and Significantly Diversify the SUNY Workforce, Including by Increasing the Number of Full-Time Faculty of Color:* Reaching this goal will require competitive salaries and benefits and significant investments in professional development, technology, infrastructure, fellowships, and learning labs.
- *Provide Affordable Degrees and Credentials to All Kinds of Learners:* Reaching this goal will require implementation of the Governor's proposals outlined in the State of the State, including aid for part-time students, dual enrollment students, and those in workforce credential programs; implementation of a single seamless financial aid application and policy that maximizes the aid available to every learner; acceleration of progress toward attainment,

including via seamless transfer systemwide; credit toward valued degrees for prior and work-based learning and stackable career credentials; and progress on degree completion to ensure that students not only are able to enroll in an affordable college but also to earn a degree or credential that leads to a middle-class career.

- *Double-Sponsored Research, Startups, and Patents:* This will involve a focus on research, development, and technology transfer that can drive sustainable, local economic development, growth of good jobs, and community impact. Reaching this goal will require attracting substantial federal funding to address major global and national challenges.

Success on each of these goals will depend both on overall progress as well as advances in equity.

SUNY and CUNY are both indispensable engines of economic revitalization and mobility for New Yorkers. In addition to this plan for SUNY, the Governor will continue to work with CUNY's leadership to support it and ensure that both institutions can fulfill the promise of public higher education in New York.

Key Initiatives

As an immediate step toward these goals, Governor Hochul will work with SUNY, its individual institutions, and key stakeholders to develop a detailed implementation plan over the course of 2022.

At the heart of Governor Hochul's vision is a belief that one of SUNY's major strengths is its portfolio of institutions across the system, and the North Star of the implementation plan will be helping each school be the best version of itself. The plan will finalize the goals, develop and prioritize initiatives, and establish implementation and measurement strategies for the entire system as well as its institutions by type. Prioritized initiatives and work should be informed by

evidence-based models, studies of local demand and best practices, potential return on investment, and feasibility. Each priority initiative should specify who is accountable for delivery, what is needed to reach students at scale, which stakeholders will be engaged, and when key milestones will be reached. Planning for community colleges will be done in close collaboration with their boards and local leaders.

Moreover, the overall plan — and each priority initiative — will include clear cost estimates and funding plans. Specific funding sources may include public-private partnerships, savings from efficiencies or earned revenue, reallocation of resources, philanthropy, and public funding. And to ensure progress, the plan will outline an expected trajectory for achieving the goals, the format for progress reports (including to the public), processes for course-correction, and the data systems needed for transparency and accountability.

To jumpstart the planning process, Governor Hochul has identified seven mutually reinforcing initiatives (described below) that will help achieve the goals outlined above and transform SUNY into a statewide engine of economic innovation and build on its history of generating upward mobility. These initiatives will support SUNY's full portfolio of sectors and students statewide to help increase the number and diversity of people with college degrees and credentials providing a conduit to good careers and lifelong learning — and to boost research and development driving local economic innovation and growth.

Develop Global, National, and Regional Research Institutions, Including Stony Brook and Buffalo as SUNY's Flagship Institutions

University research and development can drive innovation and local economic revitalization in every region across the state. But while SUNY has strong research capacity, faculty, and partnerships, the system lags behind its peers in the *scale* of research and in advancing research-driven economic innovation and development.

From 2015 to 2018, SUNY was issued fewer than 300 federal patents, compared with more than 2,000 issued for California’s system. In the same time frame, SUNY launched just 54 startups, compared with 135 across the Texas system.¹⁷⁰

Meanwhile, the four SUNY university centers — University at Albany, Binghamton University, University at Buffalo, and Stony Brook University — lagged in research funding behind peers like the University of Texas at Austin, University of Michigan, and others.¹⁷¹ At a critical moment when unprecedented federal research funding may be available, SUNY can set and meet ambitious goals and position institutions across the state to expand their research to drive local and global impact.

The Governor has a vision to further develop world-class research and teaching universities into centers of research, economic development, and teaching excellence that are also engines of economic mobility and equity, thanks to their accessibility and integration with the broader SUNY system. The university centers have key strengths they can build upon: They serve more low-income students than their higher-ranked peer institutions, and their graduation and retention rates are nearly at parity with those institutions. The task ahead is to build on and maintain this accessibility while improving in the key areas where SUNY lags its peers: research and development expenditures, faculty compensation and faculty diversity, and attracting more of the best high school graduates from all backgrounds to SUNY schools.¹⁷²

Core elements of this initiative include:

- *Make Stony Brook University and the University at Buffalo Flagships for SUNY — and World-Class Research Institutions:* Stony Brook University and the University at Buffalo both have R1 status (the highest research designation among U.S. institutions), Association of American Universities membership, over \$250 million in current research and development expenditures, at least 30 percent of students receiving Pell Grants, and at least 70 percent

completion rates. In light of these distinctions, they would become SUNY's flagship institutions. This designation and support would help drive a goal for each institution of achieving \$1 billion annually in primarily federal research funding by 2030, well over double their respective current levels of research expenditures. This would place both among the current top 20 public universities nationally in research expenditures. The goal would also be for these two SUNY institutions to become national leaders on other metrics, such as economic development and growth in good jobs fueled by research and development, expanded and diversified student enrollment and improved graduation rates, greater innovation, and service to the community and state. Governor Hochul would work with SUNY to provide the needed flexibility for Buffalo and Stony Brook to be mission-driven and entrepreneurial. Once strong plans are in place, she will champion public and private funding for research and industry collaboration, upgrades to key infrastructure (particularly for labs and scientific research), faculty compensation packages, and challenge grants to incentivize cross-department and industry collaborations that address the world's biggest problems. These universities will also get the flexibility needed to be entrepreneurial, establish partnerships, expand loan forgiveness, and charge fees and differential tuition that are appropriate for world-class research and teaching universities. As a first step toward strengthening these institutions further, Governor Hochul is announcing \$102 million for a new academic building for the School of Engineering and Applied Sciences at the University at Buffalo, and \$100 million in funding to construct a multidisciplinary engineering building at Stony Brook.

- *Support University at Albany and Binghamton University to Further Develop as National-Class Research and Teaching Universities:* These are SUNY's smaller R1 universities, so their goals will be similar to Stony Brook and Buffalo, but at a different scale: achieving \$500 million each in annual research funding; increasing economic impact of applied research and development; expanding

and diversifying student enrollment; and improving graduation rates, innovation, and service to the community and state. There is a strong track record here to build on; for example, as mentioned above, Binghamton University is poised to become an international leader in battery storage technology, driven by the work of Nobel Laureate Professor M. Stanley Whittingham. These are the types of success stories we will aim to achieve across our university centers and throughout the system statewide.

- *Advance Regional Economic Development Through Research and Development Statewide:* Beyond the university center programs, institutions and programs statewide should invest in areas of current and proposed research strength, with a focus on applied research, development, and technology transfer connected to local economic development needs, Public and private matching funds should be pursued for federal research grants, and investments should be made in laboratories and equipment tied to specific research and development strategies, as well as faculty recruitment packages to attract and retain top faculty in areas of research strength. SUNY will work with the business community to explore strategies for supporting this work, including through fellowship programs to help SUNY faculty and graduate and postdoctoral students become entrepreneurial scientists in fields that can drive substantial future economic impact.
- *Invest in an Ambitious Effort to Attract and Retain Faculty and Researchers:* SUNY lags its higher-ranked peers in faculty compensation by about 10 to 20 percent on average,¹⁷³ which makes it difficult to attract and retain the best, most diverse faculty and researchers. Investments should be made in boosting compensation and recruitment programs for faculty and research, establishment of endowed chairs, and flexibility should be given to offer more competitive faculty packages. These initiatives should include a focus on attracting and retaining a more diverse and highly qualified faculty and

workforce, including increasing the number of full-time faculty of color. These investments will pay for itself many times over, including in generating additional federal research and development funding.

- *Build “Labs for the Future” Statewide:* Labs and scientific facilities in all types of SUNY institutions and programs, should be repaired and modernized.

Supporting initiatives include:

- Launch Grand Challenges to encourage intercampus and cross-disciplinary exploration of the world’s biggest problems.
- Reunite the College of Nanoscale Science and Engineering (CNSE) with the University at Albany to streamline management and promote research excellence.
- Increase athletics competitiveness through investment in Women’s and Men’s Division 1 teams.

Become a Leader in Equity

SUNY enrolls relatively high percentages of students who are low-income students or who are from underrepresented or marginalized populations. The four university centers enroll and graduate a higher share of underrepresented students than most of the top public colleges and universities in the country. SUNY’s student population nearly reflects the state’s diversity, and the Educational Opportunity Program has a strong track record of lifting up students who are economically and educationally disadvantaged. That said, underserved students lag behind their peers on measures of bachelor’s degree completion within six years for many historically marginalized groups, including Indigenous, Black, Hispanic, Asian, and non-citizen students. The 2020 six-year graduation rates at SUNY for Hispanic, Black, and Indigenous students were 61 percent, 57 percent, and 50 percent, respectively, compared to 70 percent for white students.¹⁷⁴ SUNY should engage in a comprehensive effort to close recruitment, retention, completion, and job placement gaps and become a more

equitable system that reflects New York State demographics by supporting enrollment and completion among underrepresented, low-income, and first-generation populations.

Core elements of this initiative include:

- Help Eight MSIs Become Models for Advancing Equity Outcomes:* Currently, only three SUNY community colleges are designated MSIs (Orange, Rockland, and Westchester). As a core component of this effort, SUNY should aim to help five additional campuses — including at least one four-year institution — become MSIs by 2025. MSI is a federal designation for higher education institutions that serve a significant share of students from certain demographic groups. For example, to qualify as a Hispanic-serving MSI, an institution must have at least 25 percent Hispanic student enrollment. MSI designation qualifies the institution to apply for additional federal grants non-MSIs cannot. To support the goal of eight total MSIs, schools should receive funding toward evidence-based practices in faculty recruitment, staff recruitment, and student support programs designed to drive improvements and expand socio-economic and racial diversity in enrollment, completion, and strong career earnings.
- Provide Equity Grants Statewide:* The three current and five new MSIs will be an important anchor for our efforts to serve a more diverse student population, but what they do must influence the entire system. All of our institutions must become “minority-serving,” even if they do not have this formal designation. So in addition to funding for our MSIs, SUNY could provide grants for colleges and universities to analyze their outcomes and practices with an equity lens. SUNY could also offer equity challenge grants to institutions that set goals and strategies — and use evidence-based practices — to make measurable progress on enrollment, persistence,

completion, post-graduate earnings, and student experience for targeted populations.

Supporting initiatives include:

- *Invest in the SUNY DEI Phase 1 Action Plan:* SUNY has an action plan to improve diversity, equity, and inclusion. SUNY should invest in the plan to strengthen and expand Opportunity Programs across more campuses by offering academic guidance and tutoring, career support, and counseling.
- *Reimagine Recruiting and Admissions:* SUNY should reform its recruiting and admissions process to intentionally build a student body that better reflects the community SUNY serves, with an increased emphasis on national and international recruiting.

Streamline the Application and Financial Aid Process and Offer a Single Consolidated Application for Financial Aid

SUNY has substantially lower debt and default rates than peer institutions,¹⁷⁵ and some of the lowest tuition and fees in the country, but too many students still face a heavy debt burden. SUNY should better focus on equitable outcomes for students by race, ethnicity, gender, geography, and income by, first, restructuring the recruitment, enrollment, and retention of students and, second, establishing a more student-friendly financial aid system. To achieve these goals, help reverse SUNY's enrollment declines, and help reduce student debt among graduates, SUNY should create the Efficient Application for a SUNY Education (EASE) initiative, streamlining the application and financial aid process significantly. SUNY-EASE should have two core components:

- *Make It Easier to Apply to Multiple SUNY Schools:* Most current SUNY applicants only apply to one of the four-year institutions, increasing the

chances that they will enroll outside the system entirely if rejected by that school. SUNY should develop and implement a plan to enable students to submit a single common application and simultaneously apply to schools across the system. SUNY should also explore a mechanism by which students who meet certain cutoffs and criteria are automatically deemed admitted to certain four-year SUNY colleges and universities — and proactively offered a spot without having applied. SUNY should invest in a state-of-the-art application system and associated policies and processes to match students with multiple SUNY institutions in the event they are not accepted into their top choice.

- *Make it Easier to Apply for Financial Aid:* New York is a leader in scholarship and grant programs, but many students are not aware of all their financial aid options or are otherwise unable to apply. In particular, completion rates for the Free Application for Student Aid (FAFSA) have plummeted recently, especially among low-income applicants and students of color. To reverse this trend and make it easier for students to access financial aid, SUNY, in partnership with New York State, should create a FAFSA Completion Corps, providing grants to local aid experts charged with helping students complete the necessary forms, including making this available through New York high schools. The State should also explore building FAFSA completion into high school graduation.

For longer-term and more meaningful change, the New York Higher Education Services Corporation (HESC) should make recommendations for an overhaul and streamlining of various financial aid programs to create a single, streamlined process for students to qualify for and receive aid.

Supporting components of SUNY-EASE include:

- Launch pilots to identify student-friendly innovations to improve college affordability and reduce debt, such as “net price” guarantees.
- Pilot a debt-forgiveness program to release “stranded credits” (earned credits blocked from a transcript due to outstanding debt) for any student that re-enrolls at any SUNY campus.

Redesign the 21st-Century College System

To reverse the trend of decreasing enrollment, SUNY should redesign its offerings to become more responsive to employer needs, while improving financial sustainability through expanded enrollment and operational excellence. This would leverage the distinctive strengths of each institution to develop educational pathways appropriate for the new world of work — one with multiple on-ramps and off-ramps for students who will increasingly be going between education and the labor market so that their skills can remain relevant as they advance their careers.

Key elements of this initiative include:

- Expand high-quality workforce credential sequences at State-operated and community colleges in high-demand fields (see Part VII-C for more).
- Accelerate resource- and information-sharing, and partnership-development between State-operated and community colleges, in order to develop and improve programs.
- Reverse declining enrollment through stronger workforce engagement, improved course offerings for working adults, and connections to “early college high schools,” which prepare students for entry with existing credits. (See Part VII-C for more).
- Strengthen and expand SUNY pathways to four-year degrees from community college, including via strengthening support networks such as mentorship programs and targeted communications.

- Develop a comprehensive, cross-campus transfer and articulation policy, including between non-degree and degree programs. This includes expanding seamless transfer and articulation agreements to ensure an easy transfer approach should apply to any SUNY course or program, no matter the primary affiliate campus. It also includes exploring the development of a statewide common-course numbering for SUNY to simplify the current SUNY Transfer Paths, the development of guaranteed associate degree transfers into SUNY four-year degree programs, and a statewide reverse transfer to retroactively grant an associate degree to students who had not completed the requirements of an associate degree before they transferred to a four-year institution.

Help Individual SUNY Campuses Establish Distinct Identities

The entire SUNY system would benefit from greater individual distinction — and differentiation — of individual institutions in the eyes of prospective applicants. To help SUNY institutions build more competitive public profiles, SUNY should create a challenge grant available to colleges that propose an area of distinction designed to grow enrollment and improve student job outcomes. The easy credit transfer system (mentioned above) would also support this initiative by providing students with greater flexibility to change their focus midstream. To be considered for funding, programs would include current and planned levels of enrollment, retention, and completion, both overall and specifically for underrepresented populations, women, and low-income students.

Supporting initiatives include:

- Establish select comprehensive colleges as Honors Colleges (such as SUNY Geneseo) and/or Arts Colleges (such as SUNY Potsdam’s Crane School of Music) to sharpen the institution’s mission and help build a brand to attract students.

- Launch a collaboration across regional technical colleges to build on existing strengths and accelerate leadership in a specialized field. One example would be an enhanced College of Agriculture and Technology that leverages programs across SUNY Delhi, SUNY Morrisville, and SUNY Cobleskill.
- Use SUNY's land grant college, Cornell University, as a model of responding to local community needs with research that has global implications.

Build Bridges Between Education and Work

Post-secondary education is crucial for economic success, with 69 percent of jobs¹⁷⁶ in New York requiring some post-secondary credential. But roughly 2.5 million New Yorkers between the ages 25 and 44 lack a post-secondary degree or credential, putting them at risk of being left behind as the job market continues to trend toward more skilled hires.¹⁷⁷

The availability and direction of current resources has led, in some cases, to a mismatch between job market needs and the availability of SUNY offerings. For example, SUNY produces three times more business-related degrees than healthcare-related degrees, even though the need for healthcare jobs is significantly greater.¹⁷⁸ And in many cases, students are unable to enter programs they would have rather explored due to lack of funding or lab space.

To better meet employer demands and student needs, SUNY should create a Jobs Accelerator program designed to tailor offerings around New York's highest-growth occupations, including healthcare, digital technology, and green jobs. This will build upon SUNY's Applied Learning Program by expanding employer involvement to increase the number of quality work-based learning opportunities and ensure the curricula reflects needed job skills - and by increasing the number and scale of impressive programs with strong workforce ties such as SUNY Delhi's online nursing program and SUNY Oswego's broadcasting and communications program.

As part of this effort, SUNY should align investments across its degree and certificate portfolio to programs that reflect regional employment needs verified by employers partnering with these programs — and which will therefore earn funding support from Governor Hochul’s proposed workforce development program. A core activity will be to work with employers to determine hiring and skill needs, prioritize career programs to reflect evolving needs in a dynamic labor market, and ensure SUNY programs become powerful conduits to employability in good, in-demand jobs.

Supporting initiatives include:

- Expand SUNY’s online offerings, with a focus on employer-valued career credential programs. SUNY should invest in the technology and support needed to accelerate the growth of hybrid and fully online learning options to reduce barriers to enrollment and completion, compete with fully online universities like Western Governors University, and to provide students across the system access to best-in-class and specialty faculty. A careful review will be completed of quality and alignment to current and future business and employer skill needs. This will inform a plan for how to scale the program, including with innovations such as competency-based learning. Although there has been some improvement in hybrid and fully online course offerings, SUNY lags behind industry leaders in providing all learners, especially part-time students, with online options.
- Invest in reimagined, quality career services for every SUNY college and university to provide career advising and employer partnerships that align with student aspirations and employer needs. This effort can include “one-stop shops” on every campus that leverage student affairs functions, often scattered across a campus, to serve students both in person and virtually. This effort should be supplemented with partnerships involving K-12 education, including giving college and career counselors in the state’s public

high schools information and training to help guide students to SUNY and CUNY programs aligned to in-demand careers.

- Create and expand employer credential and certificate programs aligned to current and future employer hiring needs and ensure that credits can apply to institutions and valued degrees across the system.
- Dramatically expand quality relevant applied learning and work-based learning experiences that prepare SUNY students for the next step in their careers. This effort includes exploring and scaling “Degree Apprenticeships,” where students can blend classroom-based learning with for-credit apprenticeships that accelerate progress toward a degree and a good job.
- Increase opportunities for college and career counselors in the state’s public high schools to receive training in the latest evidence-based practices for guiding and supporting students along postsecondary pathways mapped to their highest career aspirations — and explore ways to increase the capacity of counseling offices in state high schools to meet those additional demands.

Become a Leader in Adult Learning Opportunities

Millions of New Yorkers could benefit from a post-secondary degree or credential, either because they stopped school after they received a high school degree (or equivalent) or because they have low median earnings based on their job sector. To help these New Yorkers access opportunities for career advancement and higher earnings, SUNY should prioritize recruitment and support programs for working adults seeking a post-secondary education. SUNY has already taken important steps to make transfer and pathways across multiple institutions easier across the system, as SUNY Empire has emerged as a national leader for prior learning and credentialing. This work should be extended further to include pathways for these adult learners. As part of its plan development, SUNY should survey adult and part-time learners and identify significant barriers to participation and completion — and then develop options for what SUNY can do to remove those barriers.

Supporting initiatives include:

- *More Flexible Options:* SUNY should design a “clean sheet” model that better supports learning opportunities for working and part-time adults, including credits for prior education (as proposed in Part VII-C above), monthly (instead of semester-based) programs, and remote classes.
- *Stronger Remote Programs:* SUNY should expand quality hybrid and distance learning options so students learn from the best instructors, no matter where they physically are located.
- *Faster Graduation and Credential Attainment:* SUNY should review and revamp mechanisms for accumulating credits and earning degrees and credentials, including competency-based learning and credit for work experience, helping students finish their studies faster without compromising quality. SUNY also should explore providing industry-valued credentials during the first year of a degree program.
- *Lifelong Learning Incentives:* SUNY should launch “SUNY for Life,” a continuous lifelong learning model that provides working adults with incentives — including free or discounted programs — to complete degrees or earn that next credential.
- *Targeted Outreach Campaign:* Focusing on those who have completed more than 50 percent of their degree requirements and stopped within the last five years, SUNY could launch an outreach campaign focused on getting these adults to re-enroll and attain a degree or another valued credential. Modeled after similar efforts like Michigan Reconnect, this campaign could include financial incentives for these students, including elimination of past debts, as

well as linkage to childcare and other investments that Governor Hochul is proposing at SUNY.

SECTION VIII

ADVANCE NEW YORK'S PLACE AS A NATIONAL EQUITY MODEL

The events of the past two years have marked a critical, if long overdue, turning point in national awareness of social injustice and inequity. New York has a strong foundation to build on with its Human Rights Law, first passed in 1945 (originally as the Ives-Quinn Anti-Discrimination Bill) and updated many times since, one of the oldest and most expansive anti-discrimination laws in the country. But as the pandemic continues to expose vast disparities in our social and economic systems, and as hate crimes and subtler but no less damaging forms of discrimination continue to harm both New Yorkers and our communities, we must be even more intentional about the actions we take to ensure that our state is truly working on behalf of everyone we have vowed to serve.

In furtherance of New York's commitment to equity and social justice, Governor Hochul will advance a wide-ranging plan to promote and support gender equity, racial equity, anti-hate, social justice, the LGBTQIA+ community, immigrants and new arrivals, and veterans with the goal of protecting the health, safety, economic opportunities, and fundamental dignity of every New Yorker.

Part VIII-A: Ensure Gender Equity and Equal Rights

Create a Council on Gender Equity

In 2017, New York launched the Council on Women and Girls to help state policies advance women's rights and equality. Governor Hochul will propose to transform that group into the Council on Gender Equity, expanding its scope and impact.

Composed of Cabinet members and community leaders from across the state, the new Council will serve as an advisory body to the Governor, working to meet a

vision of true gender equity in New York. The Council will take an intersectional approach to elevate the needs of women, girls, and transgender and gender non-conforming individuals, focusing on underserved populations and communities of color.

As an inaugural project for the Council, the Governor will charge it with creating recommendations to bring more New York women back into the workforce in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Council will seek new solutions that confront the challenges facing workers across the economic spectrum.

Protect Reproductive Access for All

Building on her ongoing commitment to protect reproductive health and rights for all New Yorkers, Governor Hochul will take additional action to ensure anyone seeking reproductive care in New York has the access they need:

- *Expand the Family Planning Grant Program:* Family planning providers offer crucial care in communities around the state. As New York reenters the federal Title X program, the State will use the money it was previously using to make up for lost federal dollars to increase awards for Family Planning Program grantees.
- *Support Safety-Net Providers:* Community health centers and diagnostic and treatment centers, many of which provide much-needed reproductive health services, report major difficulty recruiting and retaining staff, especially in competition with larger hospital systems. Governor Hochul will provide additional support to essential safety-net providers.
- *Codify Insurance Coverage for Abortion:* Governor Hochul will propose legislation to codify regulations that require private insurance plans to cover

abortion without cost-sharing. This legislation will shore up protections for this important coverage in the face of increased threats to abortion access.

Pass an Equal Rights Amendment This Session

Given the enduring inequalities that women, people of color, and other marginalized communities continue to face in employment, political representation, and economic opportunity, among other areas, New York must demonstrate its commitment to equality for all New Yorkers. Governor Hochul will work with the Legislature to pass an Equal Rights Amendment this session.

Part VIII-B: Promote Anti-Hate, Racial Equity, and Justice for All New Yorkers

Bolster the Nation's Strongest Anti-Discrimination Law

New York's Human Rights Law was the first state anti-discrimination law in the country, and we were also the first to create a permanent agency enforcing anti-discrimination legislation. But for New York to remain a leader in human rights, we must take steps to bolster the law, both in terms of what it covers and how it gets implemented.

As coverage under the Human Rights Law has expanded and caseloads have increased in recent years, Division of Human Rights (DHR) funding and staffing levels have dropped or remained stagnant. This shortfall harms the quality of the agency's work, inhibits the agency's ability to take on new initiatives, lengthens investigations, and threatens the agency's ability to meet its targets for completing investigations under federal contracts.

Additionally, there are opportunities to shore up gaps in the Human Rights Law to expand coverage further and improve access to the agency's complaint process. These include:

- Adding domestic violence victim/survivor status as a protected class in housing cases.
- Adding immigration and citizenship status as a protected class.
- Updating digital systems to allow DHR complaints to be submitted and processed electronically.
- Directing DHR to make virtual hearings available permanently.

Governor Hochul will propose to expand the Human Rights Law to address these shortcomings to protect more New Yorkers.

Establish a Hate and Bias Prevention Unit to Improve Incident Response and Invest in Preventative Measures

New York State does not have a unit dedicated to community outreach and healing in response to hate and bias incidents, which can serve as an important supplement to the enforcement measures carried out under criminal hate crimes laws or the Human Rights Law. With nearly 500 hate crimes in 2020 — and an increase in anti-Black and anti-Asian crimes in particular — New York needs a dedicated unit to support communities through these difficult moments.¹⁷⁹

Governor Hochul will create a Hate and Bias Prevention Unit, housed within DHR, to provide a coordinated, rapid, and community-focused response to hate and bias incidents.

The unit's general charge would include leading efforts around public education and outreach, serving as an early warning detection system in local communities, and rapidly mobilizing to areas and communities in which a bias incident or incidents have occurred.

More specifically, under this proposal, the Hate and Bias Prevention Unit staff would oversee two broad initiatives:

- *No Hate in Our State Council:* This statewide Council would be organized by region, each headed by unit leadership and co-chaired by local stakeholders. The Council would provide a place for community members to share concerns, organize educational programming, host hate crime prevention and community healing events, conduct trainings in conflict resolution, and facilitate the filing of complaints with DHR and other relevant agencies. The Council would hold periodic meetings that would be open to the public and tailored to address specific local and regional issues.
- *Rapid Response Team:* The unit's Rapid Response Team will mobilize to communities impacted by a bias or hate incident. Once mobilized, the Rapid Response Team will participate in community healing and support, including through rallies, conflict resolution meetings, public education, referrals, and will facilitate the filing of complaints with relevant State agencies.

Additionally, to further proactive efforts at hate crime prevention, Governor Hochul will fund a new seventh round of the Securing Communities Against Hate Crimes (SCAHC) grant program, which boosts safety and security for certain organizations at risk of hate crimes or attacks because of their ideology, beliefs, or missions.

Expand Benefits for Victims of Hate Crimes and Other Acts of Violence by Increasing the Cap for the Replacement of Essential Personal Property

This proposal seeks to increase the capped reimbursement rate for Essential Personal Property (EPP). The current capped reimbursement rate is \$500 and has been the same amount since 1998. Over the past two decades, through inflation and other cost-of-living increases, this capped amount has become insufficient to meet the needs of a victim of crime in 2022 and often fails to make them whole for their

EPP losses. Personal property is not a federally reimbursable expense, and therefore EPP is paid entirely with State funds.

Governor Hochul will propose amending the Office of Victim Services' (OVS) enacting statute to raise the cap for items of EPP from \$500 to \$2,500. While this proposal raises the financial cap, such items of EPP will be appropriately tailored and limited to those necessary for the health and safety of the victim. This will balance the needs of victims of crime with the finite, financial resources of the state.

All eligible victims of crimes, including victims of hate crimes and of domestic violence-related crimes, will greatly benefit from OVS being able to provide a much-needed, increased reimbursement for EPP.

Promote Equity and Economic Justice in New York's Cannabis Industry

New York's legalized cannabis industry is in development, with the State expecting to issue licenses for adult recreational use. But the rise of what is estimated to be a \$4.2 billion¹⁸⁰ industry must create opportunities for all New Yorkers, particularly those from historically marginalized communities.

In support of that goal, Governor Hochul will create a \$200 million public-private fund to support social equity applicants as they plan for and build out their businesses. Licensing fees and tax revenue will seed the fund and leverage significant private investment.

While New York has committed to making its cannabis industry more equitable, this action will put that commitment into practice. New York will lead where many other states have fallen short. The Governor is focused on providing more than basic business supports and training for our future cannabis entrepreneurs, and this fund will provide direct capital and startup financing to social equity applicants as the

State takes meaningful steps to ensuring that New York’s cannabis industry is the most diverse and inclusive in the nation.

The fund will help New York achieve its goal to award 50 percent of all licenses to equity applicants, including individuals from impacted communities, minority- and women-owned businesses (MWBEs), distressed farmers, justice-involved individuals, and service-disabled veterans. Additionally, New York will create a State-run business incubator to further support equity applicants.

Together these actions will help ensure that as New York’s cannabis industry thrives in the year ahead, more New Yorkers can reap the rewards.

Part VIII-C: Build on New York’s Nation-Leading Support for Minority- and Women-Owned Businesses

Governor Hochul recently announced that New York State’s utilization rate for MWBEs has surpassed 30 percent — the highest in the country.¹⁸¹ But despite that progress, New York’s MWBE program remains severely under-resourced relative to its demand and, as a result, faces several steep challenges, including unacceptably long wait times for businesses seeking certification and limited access to business development opportunities, including low-interest loans for small businesses.

To fix this inherited problem, Governor Hochul will implement a multi-pronged strategy to ensure that MWBEs across the state have a meaningful opportunity to participate in state contracting, including: (1) providing dedicated resources to eliminate a backlog of MWBE applications and reduce future applicant wait times; (2) establishing a faster, dedicated MWBE appeals unit to eliminate a backlog of MWBE appeals; and (3) increasing access for MWBEs to reduced-rate financing.

Invest in Faster MWBE Certifications and Address the Backlog in Pending Certifications

Due to a lack of resources and investment in the MWBE Program, for years the program has consistently received more applications than it was able to process, resulting in increased wait times for certification applicants. As a result, MWBEs awaiting certification miss out on opportunities in the awarding of ongoing state contracts and major new state projects.

To address this problem, Governor Hochul will fund and direct Empire State Development (ESD) to expand its MWBE Division workforce dedicated to processing new and renewal applications, ensuring an adequate number of staff to both handle new incoming applications and prevent an additional backlog of applications from accruing.

In addition, to address the backlog of existing applications, ESD will secure a third party to help the MWBE Division more rapidly address older applications, and ensure all pending applications are responded to efficiently.

Going forward, these new investments — alongside upgrades to certification technology already underway — will result in decreasing applicant wait times and certifying qualified businesses in a timely manner.

Establish a Faster, Dedicated MWBE Appeals Unit to Address the Backlog in Appeals

In conjunction with the efforts to streamline and support the certification process, ESD will also establish a new unit dedicated exclusively to processing administrative appeals, including challenges to the denial of MWBE certification. This action will allocate staff and resources to clear the existing backlog of pending administrative appeals, while also retaining sufficient staff to handle incoming appeals in a more timely manner.

Promote Equal Access to Reduced-Rate Loans for MWBE Businesses

The Linked Deposit Program¹⁸² helps existing New York State firms obtain reduced-rate financing to make borrowing less expensive. Eligible businesses can obtain loans from commercial banks, savings banks, savings and loan associations, farm credit institutions, and Pursuit (formerly the New York Business Development Corporation). But while Linked Deposit is an essential economic development tool that has supported thousands of New York State businesses, there is a troubling lack of MWBE participation within the program. Of the \$2 billion in Linked Deposit participation, only \$116.5 million — or less than 6 percent¹⁸³ — has gone to MWBEs in New York State.

Governor Hochul will expand eligibility under the existing Linked Deposit program to include Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFIs), increasing access to reduced-rate loans for small businesses, including MWBEs. This new action will enable more small businesses such as MWBEs, who often bank with CDFIs, to access the Linked Deposit Program funding that has helped so many other New York businesses expand their markets and develop new products.

Part VIII-D: Protect New York’s LGBTQIA+ Community

Support LGBTQIA+ Health Services

New York State has a longstanding commitment to the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, gender non-conforming, and non-binary community and has designated funding to support the work of the New York State LGBT Health and Human Services Initiative, including the network of organizations, over several administrations. Over time, that funding has been reduced as part of the budget process and must be appropriately funded to reflect a growing need.

To support the LGBTQIA+ community — whose members experience high rates of discrimination, family rejection, poverty, and physical and mental health disparities, including the ongoing AIDS epidemic — Governor Hochul will support direct health services, cultural competency education and training, and organizational capacity building, ensuring that New York State, as the birthplace of the modern LGBTQIA+ movement, will continue to pave the way.

Ensure Gender-Affirming Treatment of Individuals in State Correctional Facilities

Transgender, non-binary, and intersex people routinely endure harassment, violence, and discrimination while in correctional facilities. Nationally, transgender incarcerated people are nearly 10 times¹⁸⁴ more likely than the general prison population to be assaulted while incarcerated.

To ensure consistent protections and fair treatment of transgender, gender non-conforming, and intersex New Yorkers in the criminal justice system, Governor Hochul will propose legislation requiring that incarcerated people in state and local correctional facilities be addressed and have access to commissary items, clothing, and other materials consistent with their gender identity. The Governor’s proposal will ensure individualized and informed placement of incarcerated people that respects their gender identity while also establishing measures to protect the safety of incarcerated individuals.

Provide Gender “X” Options at All Public-Facing State Agencies

The Gender Recognition Act (GRA), signed in June 2021, allows New Yorkers the option of an “X” gender marker on state driver’s licenses. This important step helped ensure that all New Yorkers, including transgender and non-binary individuals, can have documents that accurately reflect their gender identity. But while many different State agencies collect information about gender, most are not covered by

GRA's requirement to provide an "X" option when identifying their gender during an interaction with an agency.

To ensure that New Yorkers can accurately express their gender identity when accessing more state services, Governor Hochul will propose an expansion of the GRA to require additional public-facing State agencies that collect gender information to include an "X" option.

Part VIII-E: Strengthen Immigrant Services

Increase Funding for the Liberty Defense Project

The Liberty Defense Project is a public-private partnership between the Office for New Americans (ONA) and a statewide coalition of advocacy organizations and legal assistance groups to provide free legal assistance and representation to immigrants in New York State, regardless of immigration status. This program has been hailed as a national model for immigration representation.

To strengthen this vital legal assistance for immigrants, Governor Hochul will increase Liberty Defense Project funding to ensure not only the continuation of the program's current services but also the ability to serve more New Yorkers who need protections against federal immigration enforcement, fund new federal litigation efforts around immigration law, and increase social worker capacity to address difficult life circumstances for immigrant families and to smooth transitions when people are released from immigration detention.

These actions would provide the strongest State-led and coordinated integration services in the nation.

Strengthen the Office for New Americans

ONA was created in 2012 and exemplifies New York State's proud tradition as a beacon for immigrants. Through ONA, New York has led the nation in providing services for immigrant communities and has often filled the gaps where the federal government has been unable or unwilling to dedicate resources to new arrivals. ONA administers grant programs and oversees a network of community providers that help immigrant New Yorkers with everything from citizenship applications to workforce development.

Currently, ONA operates 39 opportunity centers, offering services to more than 4.4 million new Americans living in New York.¹⁸⁵ In 2020, ONA affiliates helped new Americans submit close to 2,250 citizenship and DACA applications, and the ONA network performed a cumulative total of nearly 1,300 legal consultation days for immigrant New Yorkers.

Governor Hochul will increase ONA funding, enabling the agency to expand its critical services.

Codify Language Access Policy and Create a New Office of Language Access

New York's statewide language access policy requires all executive State agencies that interact with the public to provide interpretation services in any language and to translate vital documents into the 10 most spoken non-English languages in the state, based on Census data. To build on and improve language access services for limited English proficient New Yorkers, Governor Hochul will establish a permanent Office for Language Access — just the second such office in the country, to Hawaii¹⁸⁶ — that will be charged with coordinating and overseeing implementation of the statewide language access policy. Governor Hochul will also commit to the codification of a statewide language access policy, and the new Office for Language Access will provide important assistance in developing and implementing a strongest-in-the-nation language access law.

Part VIII-F: Boost Local Veterans' Programs

Reinforce Support for Local Veterans' Service Agencies

State law requires New York to provide every county and city veterans' service agency with \$10,000 per year, and an additional \$5,000 for each increment of 100,000 people living in each such county or city. Over the past decade, the complexity of the federal benefits system has increased significantly, and more veterans have needed to rely on professional assistance in pursuing their benefits claims and appeals. County veterans service agencies provide these important services to veterans around the state, and deserve state resources to assist in this effort. But despite the increased complexity of the services they provide, the last time the minimum payment was increased was in 2009, when it doubled from \$5,000 to \$10,000.

To provide New York's veterans with the support they deserve, Governor Hochul will increase the minimum annual state funding for county and city veterans service agencies from \$10,000 each to \$25,000 each — a 150 percent increase.

Expand the Joseph P. Dwyer Peer-to-Peer Veterans' Support Program Statewide

Created in 2012, the Joseph P. Dwyer Peer-to-Peer Veterans' Support Program supports veterans who are transitioning from military service to civilian life and facing challenges related to PTSD, traumatic brain injury, and depression. The program's support and counseling services are delivered to veterans by fellow veterans, helping create and build relationships based on common experiences.

Currently, the State provides funding for Dwyer programs in more than 20 counties. Governor Hochul will fund the statewide expansion of this program to ensure that veterans throughout New York have access to this vital support.

Expand the Veterans' FreshConnect Program to Fight Food Insecurity

New York's Veterans' FreshConnect Program, which provides additional funds to SNAP beneficiaries for farm market and farm stand purchases, was awarded a national Pillar of Excellence Award¹⁸⁷ for its innovative work in combating veteran food insecurity. This coupon program is available to all SNAP beneficiaries shopping at farm markets.

Governor Hochul will expand the Veterans' FreshConnect Program by increasing funding by \$225,000, allowing the program to better serve the veteran population. Working with the Division of Veterans' Services (DVS), New York will allocate FreshConnect checks directly to county veteran service programs to significantly increase their reach and redemption rate. While valuable for the at-risk veteran population, redemption rates are currently low, at just 17 percent in 2020.

This increased funding also accounts for the increase in SNAP benefit levels, which are directly linked to FreshConnect Checks benefits.

Expand Rollout of Veterans' Welcome Center Kiosks

Identifying veterans and bringing them into contact with their earned benefits is a challenge faced by DVS and veterans' service agencies across the country. To help reach more New York veterans, DVS developed a pilot plan for the development of touch-screen kiosks that allow users to securely and easily connect with resources available to veterans and their families in New York. The kiosks bring together in one place information about a wide variety of veterans' benefits that are administered through different State agencies.

On Veterans Day 2021, Governor Hochul announced the installation of the first kiosk, which is located at the Capitol Region Welcome Center in New Baltimore.¹⁸⁸ To expand access to this important service, the State will roll out more kiosks in more locations with large veteran populations across the state, with a focus on high-traffic regional welcome centers and transit hubs.

Support the Military-to-Civilian Transition Pathway

Transitioning from military service to civilian life is often difficult for veterans, with increased rates of suicide, homelessness, unemployment, and criminal justice involvement the first year after military discharge.¹⁸⁹ To ease this transition, the federal government has partnered with a nonprofit to develop the Expiration of Term of Service (ETS) sponsorship program, which helps veterans navigate this difficult period. Through the ETS, volunteer sponsors help veterans transition out of military service into their new lives.

To help New York's veterans access this successful program, Governor Hochul will announce a statewide initiative to help ensure the presence of ETS sponsors in every county. DVS would work with partners across the state, including county veterans service agencies, not-for-profit veterans service organizations, and community-based organizations to recruit mentors across the state and provide resources and assistance to ensure returning veterans are connected with their earned benefits. The Governor will also direct State agencies to develop a public awareness campaign to help recruit mentors.

This proposal responds to feedback from veterans collected by DVS as part of the Governor's Challenge to Prevent Suicide Among Service Members, Veterans, and their Families. With an expanded ETS program, New York can better support the returning veterans who have served us all.

Extend and Enhance Tax Credits for Hiring Veterans

The current Hire-A-Veteran Tax Credit program¹⁹⁰ provides a tax credit for the hiring of qualified veterans for one year or more for at least 35 hours each week. But this program is currently underutilized due to unnecessary restrictions that limit its benefits. To support New York State veterans seeking work as well as business seeking to hire veterans, Governor Hochul will extend and enhance the Hire-A-Vet Tax Credit in the following ways:

- Expand the definition of eligible veterans — currently limited to service members who are discharged from service after September 11, 2001 — to a more inclusive definition that includes all service members regardless of the date of discharge.
- Remove the current distinction between disabled and non-disabled veterans to allow businesses to get the highest tax credit rate (15 percent of total wages) and the highest tax credit cap (\$15,000 per veteran) for all eligible veterans.
- Allow credits for the hiring of eligible veterans who work part time for at least one year, instead of limiting the credit to veterans who worked at least 35 hours each week.

SECTION IX

MAKE CRITICAL REFORMS TO RESTORE NEW YORKERS' FAITH IN THEIR GOVERNMENT

Across the country, Americans are in the midst of a historic decline in public trust in government — little wonder given recent political events. Since the 1960s, when up to 77 percent¹⁹¹ of Americans trusted the federal government to do the right thing, that faith has fallen steadily, settling in the teens and low 20s in recent years. This dramatic decline holds true across both major political parties: it has been more than a decade since more than one-third¹⁹² of either Democrats or Republicans expressed trust in their national leaders.

Trust in state government is generally higher among Americans, but that too is in decline — as of September 2021, it was at its lowest point¹⁹³ since 2009. Governor Hochul has taken steps to restore this faith, including announcing new transparency plans from more than 70 executive agencies and public authorities in October.¹⁹⁴ But as we continue to recover from the social and economic devastation of the pandemic, New Yorkers of all backgrounds, across all parties, and from all regions expect even more from their elected leaders who pledge to serve their best interest.

Governor Hochul is committed to showing the country what good and honest government looks like. Her plan is anchored by a bold proposal to limit statewide elected officials to two consecutive terms. Other key initiatives are designed to overhaul the state's ethics commission and increase transparency through all levels of state government.

Enact a Two-Term Limit — and Ban Outside Income — for Statewide Elected Officials

To demonstrate her commitment to responsible government, Governor Hochul will propose a Constitutional amendment to limit all four statewide elected officials to two consecutive four-year terms in office.

Additionally, to further reinforce government integrity, Governor Hochul will propose that all statewide public officers be prohibited from seeking any work to supplement their income upon being elected (except academic positions approved by the ethics board).

These actions will help ensure that the focus of New York State’s elected officials is where it should be: on New Yorkers.

Replace JCOPE with an Effective Watchdog

Recent events have called into question the independence of the Joint Commission on Public Ethics (JCOPE) and its ability to carry out its mandate to restore trust in government by ensuring compliance with the state’s ethics, lobbying laws, and regulations.

New Yorkers expect more and deserve better. Governor Hochul will propose legislation to repeal and replace JCOPE with a truly independent and effective ethics enforcement entity.

This new watchdog would consist of a rotating board of five members made up of the 15 state-accredited law school deans or their designees. Members would select a Chair and each would be paid a reasonable per diem for their participation. They would abide by majority voting — eliminating the “Special Vote” practice used by JCOPE, which was a large part of its dysfunction. Other elements of this proposal would include:

- *Improving Transparency:* JCOPE was made exempt from the Freedom of Information Law (FOIL), and it now operates largely in executive sessions — practices that create the potential for unnecessary secrecy, or at least the perception that the body has something to hide. To improve transparency and instill more faith in the new watchdog, it will be subject to FOIL and Open Meeting Laws like other State agencies. All votes would be public, subject to public due process hearings, and required to adhere to all final determinations.
- *Ban Outside Communications:* This new legislation would prohibit individual members of the new ethics body from communicating with outside parties regarding any potential or ongoing investigation. Should the Board find a member in violation of the new rule, that member would be subject to sanctions.

By creating an ethics body that prioritizes transparency and integrity, the State will take an important step toward earning back the faith of New Yorkers.

Strengthen Ethics Requirements for Local Officials

For decades, the State has amended the ethics provisions within Public Officers Law and the Legislative Law without also amending the similar ethical provisions in General Municipal Law that governs the hundreds of municipal officials (outside of New York City). The result is that municipal officials are sometimes held to different and lower standards of conduct.

In an effort to make ethics requirements more consistent and easier to understand across New York's levels of government, Governor Hochul will propose legislation to harmonize the provisions across these laws with respect to gifts, Standards of Conduct for all public officers, nepotism, and lobbying.

This action will further help assure New Yorkers that those entrusted with government service are fulfilling their ethical duty to the public.

Enact a State-Level Voting Rights Act

There is a long and disturbing history of voter suppression and discrimination in the United States, and recent developments in state legislatures around the country have sent an all-too-clear reminder that we are still living with anti-democratic tactics today. Since the general election in 2020 that saw record turnout,¹⁹⁵ at least 19 different states have enacted 30 laws¹⁹⁶ restricting access to the ballot through measures like stricter voter ID requirements, shortened early voting periods, and more onerous requirements to vote by mail.

In contrast to this troubling trend, New York State has made significant progress in expanding voting rights in recent years — enacting early voting, allowing no-excuse absentee voting, and restoring the right to vote to individuals successfully serving a period of community supervision, just to name a few — but more work remains to be done. Practices that suppress voter turnout can still be found in our elections, and the legacy of voter suppression can be seen in the persistent gap between white and non-white New York voter participation: in the November 2020 general election, approximately 69 percent of eligible non-Hispanic white voters cast their ballots, compared to approximately 63 percent of eligible Black voters, 55 percent of eligible Hispanic voters, and 52 percent of eligible Asian voters.¹⁹⁷

While other states around the country continue their efforts to block access to the ballot box, Governor Hochul will cement New York State's position as a national leader on voting rights protections. This year, she will advance legislation establishing a state-level voting rights act that will enhance protections against voter suppression and vote dilution, establish new protections against voter intimidation and deception, improve language access for voters, and require boards

of elections in jurisdictions with a history of civil rights violations to obtain pre-clearance for changes to election-related policies and practices.

Make Voting Easier by Lowering the Voter Registration Deadline to 10 Days Before an Election

New York is now well behind many other states that have passed laws to make voting access easier. For example, 26 states (and Washington, D.C.) allow no-excuse absentee voting;¹⁹⁸ 20 states (and D.C.) allow same-day voter registration;¹⁹⁹ and 30 states have registration deadlines that are closer to Election Day than New York's current 25-day limit.²⁰⁰

As an immediate step toward making voting easier for more New Yorkers, Governor Hochul will call on the Legislature to amend State law to lower the voter registration deadline from 25 days to 10 days before Election Day, which does not require a Constitutional amendment.

As a further step, the Governor will urge the Legislature to begin the Constitutional amendment process for no-excuse absentee voting and same-day registration.

Require Polling Locations on College Campuses

Voter turnout has soared in recent elections among college students, but young voters still face a number of barriers in exercising their right to vote, including the location of polling stations far from campus.²⁰¹ Distant polling places in unfamiliar parts of town can discourage young people from voting, establishing habits that get harder to change later on.

To expand voting access for New York's younger residents, Governor Hochul will propose legislation to require polling places on college campuses. Under the Governor's proposal, whenever a contiguous property of a college or university

contains 300 or more registrants, the polling place designated for such election district shall be on such contiguous property or at a location approved by the college or university.

What better way to instill faith in good government than to strengthen the democratic process for New Yorkers the very first time they can engage in it.

END NOTES

Wherever possible, the State of the State 2022 book has provided references to facts, figures, and other details, along with publicly accessible links to these sources. In some cases, the information reflects internal data analyses.

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