



Voice - Knowledge - Progress
For Workforce Development

New York State Legislative Update

January 5, 2022 www.nyatep.org

Overview of the 2022 State of the State

Governor Kathy Hochul presented her inaugural State of the State today, with a heavy emphasis on guiding the State through the COVID pandemic; including rebuilding the healthcare workforce and addressing the overall devastating impact on the economy. This was a historic address, as she is the first female Governor and it was conducted in the Legislative Chambers. Her speech also marked a significant change in tone, as the Governor directly addressed the contentious divide between the Office of the Governor, the Legislature and the Mayor of New York City during the prior Administration. She made clear this is not how business will be conducted in the Capitol moving forward, declaring this A New Era for New York.

NYATEP has worked closely with the Governor and her team, during her tenure as Lieutenant Governor, and now as she leads the State. This dedicated partnership has meant that workforce development and investment in worker training have been articulated as key priorities for leadership. As indicated by Governor Hochul, workforce development, in particular SUNY and CUNY, will be crucial pillars of the State's economic recovery. She shared, "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." To advance this, she proposes the State's tuition assistance program be available to part-time students and incarcerated students; something NYATEP has advocated for, for years. Lastly, she underscored the connection between economic and workforce development; and indicated in her speech the need for the recovery to be equitable and invest in underutilized populations, such as people with disabilities and returning citizens.

The sectors that she spoke the most about included: Healthcare; Education; Infrastructure, including \$1 billion to bring affordable broadband to New Yorkers; Technology; and Clean Energy, including a \$500 million investment in offshore wind. As well as massive economic development investments proposed to spur growth through the Regional Economic Development Councils.

The following summary has been compiled for NYATEP members to highlight key areas of focus that will impact the workforce sector. Items highlighted in orange are advocacy priorities supported by NYATEP. [You can read the full State of the State online.](#) If you would like more details about any of the information included here, please contact a member of the NYATEP staff for additional support. As in years past, it is important to note that the Governor had proposed a combination of big ideas and legislative changes (which will require the support of

the Legislature). The Governor's Executive Budget will be released in the coming weeks and will include more specifics on policy and fiscal implications for the proposals outlined in the State of the State. When the Executive Budget is released we will analyze and identify where there are actual financial investments; including the status of the \$175 million Workforce Development Initiative.

Key Proposals in the State of the State: A New Era for New York

Increased Coordination for Economic and Workforce Development (pg 61-63)

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). It is unclear who will staff this office, and its relationship to the Governor's Office of Workforce Development and the State Workforce Board. It will play a role in articulating regional funding for workforce development.

Rebuilding the Healthcare Economy

Rebuild and Grow the Healthcare Workforce by 20% Over the Next Five Years (pg 22)

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 homecare.

Make a \$10 Billion Investment in Healthcare and Support Wages for Workers (pg 22)

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 prorated 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.

Attract Students into Healthcare by Relieving Their Financial Burdens (pg 24)

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.

Award Prior Learning Credit across SUNY and CUNY (pg 24)

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.

Connect Immigrant New Yorkers to Direct Support Professionals (pg 26)

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 professionals.

Expand Workforce Development Partnerships to Build a Human Services Talent Pipeline (pg 27)

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 (pg 27)

The need for home healthcare workers in New York is estimated to grow by roughly 65 percent 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.

Retain the Existing Healthcare Workforce (pg 28)

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.

Support More Career Flexibility for Direct Care Worker (pg 28)

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.

Create an Office of Healthcare Workforce Innovation (pg 30)

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.

Enhance Suicide Prevention in Schools, Homes, and Communities (pg 44)

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.

Protect Public Safety and Take Strong Action Against Gun Violence

Triple Investment in Community-Based Gun Violence Response (pg 54)

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, additionally the Governor intends to sustain that emergency increase in SNUG funding levels and increase funding by an additional 50 percent in the coming year. This funding 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.

Invest In New York's People

Provide Meaningful Tax Relief for Small Business (pg 59)

To boost recovery across the state, Governor Hochul will provide \$100 million in tax relief for 195,000 small businesses. 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.

Tax Credits Support Food Production Farm Labor (pg 60-61)

- *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.

Strengthen the Office of New Americans' (ONA) (pg 63)

The Governor intends to continue investing in 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.

Help More New Yorkers Move Between Education and Career (pg 64)

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.

Expand Access to Apprenticeships (pg 65)

To help expand access to apprenticeships in the emerging fields (IT, Healthcare, Advanced Manufacturing), 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.

Recruit the Next Generation of Public Servants (pg 65-66)

- **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 (pg 66-67)

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 midcareer 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.

Make New York a Model for the Employment of Workers with Disabilities (pg 67-68) 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.
- 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.
- 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 (pg 69)

To ensure that economic growth and recovery lifts up all workers the Governor plans to:

- Ban Agreements That Limit Workers' Ability to Move and Work Freely
- Increase Criminal Penalties for Employers Who Commit Wage Theft
- Modernize How Workers File Labor Law Claims to Be More Accessible to today's Workforce

Launch "Jails to Jobs": A Program to Improve Re-Entry into the Workforce and Reduce Recidivism (pg 69-70)

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 (pg 70)

To better support employment opportunities for parolees and further reduce recidivism, Governor Hochul proposes that 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.

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

Enable Voluntary, Private-Sector, In-Prison Employment Opportunities that Pay a Good Wage (pg 71)

Governor Hochul proposes amending 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.

Expand Vocational, Job Readiness, and Re-Entry Programs (pg 71)

- 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 reentry 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 (pg 72)

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.

Support the Agriculture Workforce and Improve the Food Supply Chain (pg 75)

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.

Stop Transcript Withholding from SUNY/CUNY (pg 82-83)

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.

Invest in New York's Communities

Repurpose Closed Prisons to Drive Economic Growth and Close Service Gaps (pg 118)
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.

Accelerate the Renewable Energy Economy to Protect Climate Health and Create Jobs (pg 143)

- \$500 million investment to develop our state's offshore wind port infrastructure and supply chain that will create 2,000 jobs.
- Providing the training programs necessary to ensure that New York has a skilled workforce to achieve 2 million electrified or electrification-ready homes by 2030.
- 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.

REBUILD NEW YORK'S SCHOOL SYSTEM AND REIMAGINE HIGHER EDUCATION

Expand the Alternative Teacher Certification (pg 170)

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.

Upskill Teacher Support Workers to Earn Their Certifications (pg 174)

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.

Increase Access to Childcare for 100,000 Families and in Workers wages (pg 175)

In the event that there is no federal action, the Governor proposes 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.

Provide Tuition-Free Workforce Credential Programs at Community Colleges for High-Demand Fields (pg 179)

Governor aims to 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 (pg 180)

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.

Support Internships for SUNY and CUNY Students (pg 180)

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.

Transform SUNY into a Nation-Leading Public Higher Education System (pg 181)

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 (— 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.

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 (pg 184)

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 Careers (pg 185)

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 (pg 185)

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.

Provide Affordable Degrees and Credentials to All Kinds of Learners (pg 185)

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 system wide; 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.

Redesign the 21st-Century College System (pg 195-196)

Key elements of this initiative include:

- Expand high-quality workforce credential sequences at State-operated and community colleges in high-demand fields.
- 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.
- 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.

Build Bridges Between Education and Work (pg 197-199)

- 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 (pg 200)

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 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.

Ensure Gender Equity and Equal Rights

Create a Council on Gender Equity (pg 202)

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.

Promote Equity and Economic Justice in New York’s Cannabis Industry (pg 207)

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. 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.

Build on New York's Nation-Leading Support for Minority- and Women-Owned Businesses

Invest in Faster MWBE Certifications and Address the Backlog in Pending Certifications and Appeals Unit (pg 209)

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. ESD will also secure a third party to help the MWBE Division more rapidly address older applications, and ensure all pending applications are responded to efficiently. 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.

Strengthen Immigrant Services

Codify Language Access Policy and Create a New Office of Language Access (pg 213)

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 Hawaii—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.

Extend and Enhance Tax Credits for Hiring Veterans (pg 217)

- 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.