

Summary: The 2022 State Legislative Session



Despite a surplus in state resources, Governor Hochul and leadership passed a budget that prioritizes subsidies to billionaires and neglects the needs of Black, brown and immigrant communities. And after the budget was finalized, the legislature did not do any better. The legislature failed to enact the type of transformative legislation that is sorely needed in our communities. While Make the Road New York (MRNY) and partners across the state won several victories this session, we are very disappointed with the final results. We remain committed to fight for the critical programs and protections that will ensure a just recovery for all.

Budget Summary

Fund Excluded Workers & Excluded No More: In 2021, New York passed the largest economic assistance package for undocumented and cash economy workers in the history of this country. \$2.1 billion in relief was rapidly depleted - leaving thousands behind. In 2022, the state legislature failed to replenish the fund or pass the Excluded Worker Unemployment Program, a permanent alternative to unemployment insurance for excluded workers. The fight on behalf of excluded workers continues.

Rent Relief: We called on the state to invest \$250 million to create the critical Housing Access Voucher Program (HAVP), a longer-term solution to addressing the massive and growing homelessness crisis in our state. The state did not include HAVP in the state budget, but did invest in emergency relief by adding \$800 million to the Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP) and \$250 million for assistance with money owed for utility bills. ERAP provides rental assistance grants to low-income New Yorkers at risk of experiencing homelessness due to rent that is still owed (“arrear”) because of the COVID-19 pandemic. The grants may pay up to 12 months of rental arrears. Households eligible for ERAP may also be eligible for grants that cover up to 12 months of unpaid utility (gas or electric) bills.

Immigrant Health Care: We called on the state to invest \$345 million to expand health coverage under a state funded Essential Plan to all low-income New Yorkers, regardless of immigration status. We also called on the state to lengthen Medicaid’s post pregnancy health coverage for everyone, regardless of immigration status from sixty days to a full year. We won the expansion of post pregnancy health coverage, but did not win a state funded Essential Plan that includes all individuals not currently eligible for insurance due to their immigration status. The state took a small step towards our goal of universal coverage by providing health coverage to undocumented New Yorkers aged 65 or older through Medicaid. We will continue to fight for access to coverage and care for all members of our communities, regardless of their immigration status.

Childcare: We called on the state to invest \$5 billion immediately to make childcare available to all low-income children regardless of immigration status. The state opted to invest only \$1.8 billion this year and promised to invest a total of \$7 billion over the next four years. Part of this year’s funding will go to make childcare accessible to families earning up to 300% of the federal poverty line (\$83,250 for a family of four). Undocumented children, however, are not included in this expansion. We will continue to fight for truly universal childcare and against the exclusion of undocumented children from this expansion.

Adult Literacy: We called on state leaders to invest a total of \$23.4 million through New York

State Education Department funding for Adult Literacy Education (ALE): They maintained last year's \$7.8 million ALE investment, but added only \$1.5 million instead of the \$15.6 million that we needed. This shortfall will still leave almost 4 million New Yorkers without the English and high school equivalency classes they need. We will continue to fight for education equity.

Bail Reform: Black and Latinx communities and grassroots organizations in New York, led by people directly impacted by the criminal legal system, organized, fought, and struggled to pass the 2019 bail reforms to root out the racialized targeting of our communities and free our community members from incarceration. In 2020, we saw roll backs to those reforms in the name of public safety. As the population of people returning to our communities have increased, no one has been able to demonstrate a connection to an increase in crime. In this year's budget, Governor Hochul forced through more rollbacks to bail reform, which will now further subject people to the violence and trauma of incarceration, destabilize families and communities, enhance the criminalization of poverty, and compromise public safety.

Legislative Summary

Education: We called on the legislature to pass the Solutions Not Suspensions Act (Nolan A5197 | Jackson S7198) to end harsh and ineffective school disciplinary practices that disproportionately impact youth of color and students with disabilities. Unfortunately, the legislature did not vote on SNS. The legislature did pass a bill granting Mayor Adams control of NYC schools for two years. This bill also requires NYC to reduce class sizes, a requirement that Mayor Adams opposes.

TGNCIQ: We called on the legislature to pass the Stop Violence in the Sex Trades Act (Salazar S3075 | Gottfried A849) which would decriminalize sex work to end police harassment of people who identify as sex workers or trade sex, whether as a form of survival or as a choice. Unfortunately, the legislature did not vote on SVSTA. The legislature did pass a bill creating the "Lorena Borjas Transgender and Gender Non-binary Wellness and Equity Fund." This fund will, in part, provide grants to community-based organizations that serve transgender and gender non-binary individuals.

Housing: We called on the legislature to pass Good Cause Eviction (Salazar S3082 | Hunter A5573) legislation to bring renters' rights to tenants in unregulated housing. Unfortunately, the legislature did not bring Good Cause to a vote. But we did push the legislature to let the 421-A tax benefit for real estate developers expire on June 15th if Good Cause wasn't passed. The legislature passed, and the Governor signed into law, a bill that would allow certain underused hotels to be converted into permanent affordable housing.

Workers: We called on the legislature to pass the EmPIRE Worker Protection Act (Hoylman S12 | Joyner A5876), which would make the promise of a \$15/hour minimum wage real by helping enforce wage theft and equal pay laws. Unfortunately, the legislature did not pass EmPIRE.

Health: We called on the legislature to pass the #End Medical Debt Bills (Rivera S6522, S7625, S2521A | Gottfried A7363, A8441, A3470B) to protect patients from crushing medical debt and pass the New York Health Act (Rivera S5474 | Gottfried A6058). Unfortunately, the legislature did not pass the New York Health Act, which would have created a single payer healthcare system in NYS available to all, regardless of immigration status. But the legislature did vote to end medical debt by passing a bill to regulate hospital facility fees, and a bill to prevent non-profit hospitals from placing liens on a patients' homes or garnishing patients' wages to recover medical debt.