



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Jessica Ramos

Excluded Workers Fund to Pass Bringing \$2.1B in Relief for Those Left Out of Federal Stimulus and Unemployment Insurance

JESSICA RAMOS April 6, 2021

ALBANY — Today in the 2021-2022 New York State budget, a three-way agreement was made to create a \$2.1 billion Excluded Workers Fund, creating a long overdue income replacement program for New York's estimated half a million excluded workers who have been ineligible for Unemployment Insurance and excluded from any economic relief for nearly a year.

New York's Fund for Excluded Workers will be the first entirely State run and State funded program in the nation to bring relief to individuals excluded from government-issued economic relief. This one time payment is a culmination of a year's long organizing effort by the over two hundred organizations in the statewide Fund Excluded Workers coalition and legislative push driven by Senator Jessica Ramos and Assembly Member Carmen de la Rosa, is expected to pass this evening.

"This nation's economy has long been built on the backs of our undocumented workforce, and their essential labor that has helped keep our nation running throughout this pandemic. This long overdue relief will offer hundreds of thousands of New York's excluded workers the financial support they need to be able to provide for themselves and their families," said **New York State Senator Jessica Ramos**. "The fund created in this budget will go a long way in recognizing the vital contributions our undocumented New Yorkers have had on our state's

response and recovery, and I am hopeful other states will begin to do the same.”

“Immigrant communities across the state will finally feel a sense of relief after almost a year of being excluded from all government aid in the middle of a global pandemic. I am proud to have worked with a diverse coalition of advocates, workers and Senator Ramos in creating this first in the nation Excluded Fund to ensure that an investment of \$2.1 billion delivers just relief for our communities,” said **Assembly Member Carmen De La Rosa**. “It is past due time for us to put people first and transform our state’s history of austerity into a future of investment.”

"Workers denied recognition of their basic worth for more than a year today celebrate a victory that will reverberate across the state and the country, after the New York State legislature and Governor Cuomo agreed to a budget establishing a \$2.1 billion excluded workers fund. It is the first fund in the nation to provide relief at a scale that comes close to meeting the needs of excluded workers. We are in deep gratitude to State Senator Jessica Ramos, who sponsored the original Senate legislation to establish an excluded workers fund and led throughout the campaign, joining us in the streets and leading her colleagues to deliver this incredible victory. This fund will finally provide relief to hundreds of thousands of workers across New York State who had previously been excluded from every single form of federal or state income support,” said **Bianca Guerrero, coordinator of the Fund Excluded Workers coalition**.

The Excluded Workers Fund will create a new benefit program administered by the Department of Labor. Proposed language lays out eligibility criteria as follows:

- Resident of New York before March 27, 2020 and current residency.
- Ineligible for federal unemployment benefits.

- Suffered a total or partial loss of work-related earnings due to the COVID-19 pandemic or a loss of household income by becoming the breadwinner due to their head of household dying or becoming disabled during the state of emergency.

The agreement also establishes the following tier system to determine the quantity that an excluded worker will be eligible to receive from the State:

Tier 1: Excluded workers can receive a benefit of \$15,600 (which was calculated at \$300 per week for 52 weeks which is nearly a third less than the average wage replacement award for unemployed workers at this time) if they fall within these categories:

- Those who filed a tax return for 2018, 2019, or 2020 using a valid U.S. Individual Taxpayer Identification Number (ITIN).
- Those who can verify via letter from an employer, valid paystubs, wage statement, wage notice, W2, or 1099 showing at least six weeks of work from the six month period prior to the date the applicant certifies they became eligible for benefits.
- Those who can provide documents to be determined by the Commissioner of Labor.

Tier 2: Excluded workers receive \$3,200 (the same amount of federal stimulus payments throughout the pandemic, which were \$1,200, \$600, and \$1,400).

- Under Tier 2, excluded workers who cannot provide the documents required to receive benefits under Tier 1, but can certify identity and residency, can receive a benefit of \$3,200 if they can show alternative proof of work-related eligibility, as determined by the Commissioner of Labor.