



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Anna M. Kaplan

Governor Cuomo Announces Completion of \$2 Million Arts Center in Nassau County

ANNA M. KAPLAN May 24, 2021

| ISSUE: **MAIN STREETS, DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION, ARTS & CULTURAL FUNDING, DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND COMMUNITY RENEWAL**

Project a Key Component of the Village of Westbury's \$10 Million Award Through the Governor's Downtown Revitalization Initiative

Governor Andrew M. Cuomo today announced the completion of a \$2 million cultural arts center that will house a gallery, public performances, arts education, and meeting space in the heart of the village of Westbury in Nassau County. Funded by Westbury's **\$10 million award** through the Downtown Revitalization Initiative, the new facility will serve as a home for Westbury Arts, Inc., and is a key component of the economic development efforts underway in the village.

"We are committed to building New York back stronger and better than it was before, and our Downtown Revitalization Initiative is a key part of our economic resurgence," **Governor Cuomo said.** "Investments through the Downtown Revitalization initiative are helping to transform downtown communities like Westbury into vibrant, diverse hubs of activity for residents and visitors alike, and Westbury's new cultural arts center will help the village and the entire region flourish for generations to come."

Administered by New York State Homes and Community Renewal, the award helped to construct a permanent, state-of-the-art 2,500-square-foot cultural space for Westbury Arts, Inc., in the center of the village's downtown. The project overhauled the existing building's interior, including its floors, walls, and ceilings; installed new plumbing, electrical, fire suppression and mechanical systems; and included the installation of an ADA-compliant elevator.

Selected in 2016, Westbury was the first Long Island community to win the \$10 million Downtown Revitalization Initiative award. With the project's completion, the village gains a new downtown cultural gathering place that will allow Westbury Arts to expand its arts and cultural programming.

New York State Homes and Community Renewal Commissioner RuthAnne Visnauskas said, "Westbury's downtown revitalization reaches another milestone with the completion of the \$2 million new home for Westbury Arts, Inc. The facility is a vivid example of what can be achieved when a proud community works together and devotes their energy, imagination, and dedication to making their village a better place. Projects such as these will draw residents and visitors alike to downtown to support businesses, creating a bustling and thriving community with a strong local economy."

New York Secretary of State Rossana Rosado said, "Westbury is fulfilling its strategic vision and increasing the vibrancy of the village through its implementation of the Downtown Revitalization Initiative. We have seen the valuable role that art and public spaces play in revitalizing communities and the new center for Westbury Arts, Inc. will offer fresh, visually appealing spaces to bring residents together. The Department of State is proud to work with the Village and our agency partners to create the new Westbury Arts Center."

Empire State Development Acting Commissioner and President & CEO-designate Eric Gertler said, "The new Westbury Arts center emblemizes the vital role that the arts play in

nourishing and sustaining a community's quality of life. This DRI-funded project will add creative energy and help fuel economic growth in the Village of Westbury, and throughout Long Island."

Westbury was named a Round One winner in 2016. In addition to the Westbury Arts Building, the village has undertaken six other projects proposed as part of the strategic investment plan. Among Long Island's most diverse and well-located communities, Westbury has a revived downtown, affordable housing options, walkability, and cultural activities that are providing a strong basis for the village's continued growth. Under the initiative, the village is well positioned to advance its existing smart growth and transit-oriented development initiatives, while also increasing the vibrancy of its downtown area with enhanced arts, culture, and dining opportunities.

Senator Anna M. Kaplan said, "The opening of the new home of Westbury Arts is just the latest triumph in the transformation of Westbury Village made possible by the State's \$10 million Downtown Revitalization Initiative Award, and it demonstrates the great things that can be achieved when the community and government come together to craft a vision for a better tomorrow. This new center is a crown jewel not only for the Westbury community, but for all Long Island residents who will visit its performance spaces and galleries, cementing Westbury's status as a premiere destination for the arts."

Assembly Member Michael Montesano said, "In a time where so much is uncertain, it is good to see the arts industry getting such a wonderful opportunity with the opening of this new building. This will be good for the community in more ways than one by providing a creative outlet for residents, supporting economic development efforts and much more. I am thrilled with this addition to our community and look forward to seeing the wonderful things that come from its opening."

Assembly Member Charles D. Lavine said, "I am thrilled to be taking part in the dedication of the new Westbury Arts Center. This facility will further enhance the already vibrant arts and cultural programs that connect, educate, and inspire the diverse and growing community of Westbury."

County Executive Laura Curran said, "Westbury's revitalization has been a big success story, and this investment will cement the Village as a premier arts-centered community on Long Island. As we recover from the pandemic, reviving the arts and cultural activities will provide a strong basis for growth in our downtowns. The county will continue working with our villages to utilize open spaces to attract business and help make Nassau the best place to live, work, and play."

Westbury Mayor Peter I. Cavallaro said, "We are so pleased that the project to create a permanent home for Westbury Arts has come to fruition. It was, from the start of the DRI process (and before), our goal to make Westbury one of the premier arts-centered communities on Long Island, and we always felt that having a gathering place such as the Arts Center was crucial. We see a great future for Westbury Arts in its new home, and we welcome visitors to come and see what Westbury Arts (and Westbury Village) have to offer. We are very grateful to Governor Cuomo and Homes and Community Renewal for selecting Westbury and working with us to complete the seven DRI-funded projects."

About the Downtown Revitalization Initiative

In 2016, Governor Cuomo launched a major new initiative —the Downtown Revitalization Initiative. Through this initiative, the Governor moved to aggressively accelerate and expand the revitalization of downtowns and neighborhood to serve as centers of activity and catalysts for investment in all ten regions of the state. The initiative represents an unprecedented and innovative plan-to-act strategy that couples strategic planning with

immediate implementation.

In four years, the state has committed \$400 million to invest in downtowns that are ripe for revitalization and have the potential to become magnets for redevelopment, business, job creation, greater economic and housing diversity, and opportunity. Participating communities are nominated by the state's 10 Regional Economic Development Councils based on the downtown's potential for transformation, and each community is awarded \$10 million to develop a downtown strategic investment plan and implement key catalytic projects that advance the community's vision for revitalization.

The initiative is headed by New York Secretary of State Rossana Rosado. Communities receive support from private sector experts and a team of state agency staff led by the Department of State in close partnership with Empire State Development, and state Homes and Community Renewal.