



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Anna M. Kaplan

Governor Hochul Announces Major \$450 Million "Bring Back Tourism, Bring Back Jobs" Inclusive Recovery Package

ANNA M. KAPLAN November 16, 2021

| ISSUE: **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND JOBS, RECREATION AND TOURISM, ECONOMIC RECOVERY, RETURN TO WORK TAX CREDIT, SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT**



\$100 Million in One-Time Payments to Support Hardest-Hit Tourism Workers

\$100 Million in Grants to Encourage Tourism Employers to Rehire Staff

\$25 Million to Attract Convention Center and Hotel Events; Additional \$25 Million for Global and Domestic Marketing Efforts

Commitment to Advance Legislation Expanding Successful Small Business Recovery Program for Businesses Started Just Prior to or During the Pandemic with \$200 Million Relief Program

Governor Kathy Hochul today, coinciding with the reopening of international borders, announced a comprehensive \$450 million "Bring Back Tourism, Bring Back Jobs" inclusive recovery package to support New York State's hardest-hit tourism sector workers, revitalize the state's tourism industry, and support businesses started just prior to or during the pandemic.

Governor Hochul made the announcement at the Museum of Natural History, joined by representatives from I LOVE NY, NY Forever, tourism and business groups, as well as labor groups representing workers in the tourism industry. This package of programs represents a multi-faceted approach to revitalizing the industry through assistance for workers, investments in small businesses, and consumer-focused marketing around the nation and the world.

"Our tourism industry represents the essence of what sets New York apart from the rest. New York can't come back from this pandemic unless our tourism industry and its workers come back," **Governor Hochul said.** "Our nation-leading \$450 million recovery package

not only helps tourism industry workers get back on their feet, but will also help small businesses and venues reopen their doors. Our message to the world is clear: New York is coming back and we welcome you with open arms."

The economic impact of COVID-19 on New York State's tourism economy has been severe; in 2019, this industry supported one out of 10 jobs and generated more than \$100 billion in economic impact. Last year, international visitation was down 86% from 2019, and domestic visitation fell by 37%, generating a nearly 55% loss in direct spending and an almost 50% drop in economic impact.

In response, Governor Hochul today announced a comprehensive strategy to support unemployed workers and struggling businesses in the critically important tourism and hospitality sector, which was New York's third-largest industry prior to the pandemic; to incentivize the rehiring of these critical workers; and to jumpstart demand for the State's tourism and hospitality attractions.

\$100 Million Tourism Worker Recovery Fund

The first part of this package supports New Yorkers in the most impacted tourism and hospitality industry sectors who were on extended federal unemployment insurance the last week before those benefits ended and have yet to see their earnings fully recover. The New York State Department of Labor will issue one-time payments of \$2,750 to as many as 36,000 qualified workers in tourism sector industries. New Yorkers who are eligible will be contacted directly via text or email.

United States Secretary of Labor Marty Walsh said, "Under Governor Hochul's leadership, New York is a model for getting much-needed relief money out the door into the hands of working Americans. New York's forward-looking approach will bring back good paying, middle-class jobs, and it will bring back an industry that is critical to reopening our

economy."

\$100 Million Tourism Return-to-Work Grant Program

The second piece of this package is designed to encourage tourism businesses that suffered job and revenue losses to rehire workers, while providing financial relief. Qualifying tourism businesses will be eligible for grants of up to \$5,000 per net new full-time employee, or \$2,500 per net new part-time employee, hired to offset their labor costs. To receive full benefit, employers will have to maintain employment increases over six months. Employment increases will be based on total employment rather than specific individual employees, and businesses that can demonstrate the greatest workforce losses resulting from COVID-19 will be a priority. More information, including a sign-up for program-related email alerts, is available [here](#).

\$25 Million Meet in New York Grant Program

This program focuses on venues and events to generate and support new business-focused travel. This holistic approach to visitation recognizes the spending habits of business and convention travelers for overnight stays, food and activities. The Meet in New York program will provide grants to help convention centers and conference spaces bring more events, traveler spending and jobs back to New York State. Qualifying venues and their partnering event hotels can offer meeting organizers discounts on booking fees or room blocks to entice business, with grants reimbursing a portion of such discounts. More information on qualifying businesses and events can be found [here](#).

\$25 Million I LOVE NY Global Marketing Campaign

This consumer-facing global tourism promotion campaign extends a new invitation to domestic and international visitors, allowing I LOVE NY to expand its current marketing efforts into additional domestic and international markets. The campaign will include

broadcast and digital elements that promote New York State as the world's premier travel destination, where visitors are encouraged to come be a part of it and find what they love.

\$200 Million Program for Businesses Started Just Prior to or During the Pandemic

To further New York State's commitment to small businesses, Governor Hochul announced plans to introduce legislation in January 2022 at the start of New York State's legislative session to create a \$200 million program designed to support businesses started just prior to or during the pandemic. This forward-looking initiative would utilize existing funding in the state's \$800 million COVID-19 Pandemic Small Business Recovery Grant Program to support younger businesses that were otherwise ineligible for relief through existing state and federal programs to ensure greater inclusivity among small and micro-businesses.

The Pandemic Small Business Recovery Grant Program has been extremely successful thus far, with over \$325 million awarded to support nearly 20,000 small and micro-businesses across New York State. More than 19,000 awardees were businesses with ten or fewer employees, 83% of grantees were minority and women-owned business enterprises, and the average grant funded has been nearly \$17,000. This legislation will represent an expansion of the program to include small and micro-businesses that were previously ineligible for pandemic relief through the state and federal programs.

Senator Anna M. Kaplan said, "Prior to the pandemic, New York's tourism industry was an economic powerhouse that accounted for over 800,000 jobs statewide and tens of billions of dollars of economic activity each year, but the unprecedented closure of international borders and the near halting of travel dealt a devastating blow to the entire industry and its workforce. As borders reopen and people begin to feel safe traveling again, the tourism industry urgently needs relief for struggling small businesses and their workforce to get back on their feet and open their doors to visitors again. I applaud Governor Kathy Hochul

for her leadership to ensure this vital industry has the resources it needs to once again become an engine for growth and job creation in the State, and I applaud her for her leadership to ensure that small businesses across every sector have access to desperately needed pandemic recovery grants. The State's \$800 million Pandemic Small Business Recovery Grant program has been a lifeline to thousands of businesses across the state, but until now, there have been limitations in place preventing some newer small businesses in our community from accessing the help that they need and deserve. I look forward to working with Governor Hochul to ensure this common-sense measure is passed in the State Legislature urgently so that more small businesses in our state can access this important grant program."

New York State Department of Labor Commissioner Roberta Reardon said, "The tourism industry is not only a critical economic driver in New York State, but it is one of the things that makes New York such a great place to visit. I applaud Governor Hochul for recognizing the hardship this pandemic has had our tourism industry. This comprehensive initiative is crucial to reviving our tourism industry and assisting the workers who have been directly impacted by this public health crisis."

Empire State Development Chief Operating Officer and Executive Deputy Commissioner Kevin Younis said, "Tourism is a key part of New York State's diverse economy. It supports jobs and businesses across an array of industries by allowing us to share all the incredible attractions, events and experience we have to offer with visitors from around the globe. The return of tourism is vital to the growth and sustainability of our economic future, and these new initiatives will help us revitalize this struggling industry."

Empire State Development Vice President and Executive Director of Tourism Ross D. Levi said, "When New York State partners with the tourism industry, it's an unstoppable combination. This holistic effort announced today by Governor Hochul will help spur visitation of all

kinds, from international travelers looking for an unforgettable vacation to business people attending important industry events. The programs will also help support the state's unparalleled tourism industry so that it can deliver world-class customer service and an incomparable guest experience."

New York State Council on the Arts Executive Director Mara Manus said, "NYSCA applauds Governor Hochul's commitment to reinvigorate international tourism to New York - our extraordinary arts and culture organizations, institutions and spaces of every description are open and ready to welcome the world once again. The return of cultural tourism will power New York's unparalleled arts and culture sector as it rebuilds capacity, safely begins a multi-year recovery process, and strengthens our economy. When the arts thrive - New York soars!"

New York State Council on the Arts Chair Katherine Nicholls said, "We celebrate today's long-awaited milestone as our state's borders reopen after 20 months of closure to stop the spread of COVID-19. New York is synonymous with the arts, and welcoming back tourists to New York's iconic attractions, cultural anchors, and main street businesses is the result of our state's thoughtful health and safety protocols. The time to visit New York is now - and we are grateful for our state's responsive leadership to support and spur our economic recovery in perfect harmony with the exciting, diverse landscape of the arts."

New York State Tourism Advisory Council Chair Cristyne Nicholas said, "As New York's borders again open to international visitors, the support package the governor announced today will help the tourism industry continue in its role as a vital driver of the state's economy. We are fortunate that Governor Hochul understands the tourism industry and has been there with us when times were good and now during this challenging time as we strive to rebuild with renewed enthusiasm."

Senator José M. Serrano said, "Significant investment in New York's tourism industry will provide a vital lifeline for a number of other sectors, including restaurants, hotels, performing arts, and cultural institutions. As we welcome international travelers back to our state, these visitors will play an important role in our economic recovery from COVID-19, and we must do everything we can to support workers and businesses during this critical time. Many thanks to Governor Hochul for recognizing the importance of a thriving tourism industry."

Assemblymember Daniel O'Donnell said, "A vibrant tourism industry is essential to New York's pandemic recovery. As Chair of the Assembly Committee on Tourism, Parks, Arts, and Sports Development, I've seen how tourism touches every facet of the local economy -- from museums and theaters to hotels, restaurants, and transportation systems. The "Bring Back Tourism" recovery package is a game-changer. It will give much needed financial support to workers and businesses while providing a roadmap to accelerate a safe return for the entire industry. I thank Governor Hochul for her leadership in re-building and revitalizing our tourist industry for the days and years to come."

Assemblymember Charles D. Fall said, "As we continue to recover from this pandemic, we need to make sure that we aren't leaving any industry behind. Thank you to Governor Hochul for supporting Staten Island and our tourism industry in their recovery by using creative and common sense solutions."

Manhattan Borough President Gale A. Brewer said, "The opportunity to experience world-class arts and culture is what attracts tourists to New York, and I'm grateful to Governor Hochul for her leadership, partnership, and investment in one of our city's core sectors. The state's investment will boost employment by providing grants for small businesses and nonprofits that hire new workers, fund incentives for convention and conference centers, and launch a global campaign to bring New York's brand front and center when it comes to the best

vacation destinations. It comes at a critical time in New York's economic recovery as our holiday season gets underway."

President of the Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union (RWDSU) Stuart Appelbaum said, "Too many RWDSU members have suffered from a lack of hours or complete lack of employment due to the state's lingering loss of tourists amid the COVID-19 pandemic. Our members in the Airline industry have particularly been hard hit. Supporting workers who have been impacted by the decline in tourism is a necessary component for our state's reopening."

President of 32BJ SEIU Kyle Bragg said, "Tourism is a vital economic engine for New York, and it's powered by workers who've been hit hard during the pandemic. We're pleased by the Governor's commitment to this critical sector and to a recovery that centers the workers who are its backbone. Today's announcement marks a significant milestone in our economic comeback and will deliver meaningful relief to hardworking New Yorkers."

President of the NY Hotel Trades Council Rich Maroko said, "When NY shutdown in March 2020 due to COVID, no one could imagine that nearly two years later we'd still have thousands of tourism industry workers struggling with unemployment and now the loss of federal benefits. Thanks to Governor Hochul and the hundreds of millions of dollars the state will be providing to rehire workers and reopen the tourism industry, these workers finally have something to be hopeful for this holiday season. This plan will ease the financial suffering of tens of thousands of unemployed New Yorkers while creating a path back to active employment and growth for the tourism industry."

President and CEO of Brooklyn Botanic Garden Adrian Benepe said, "The cultural institutions of NYC have long been part of the creative gravity that attracts tourists from all over the world, nation, and region to NYC. These visitors in turn create hundreds of thousands of good-

paying jobs—including at the same institutions--and are crucial to the tax base. Though we have seen a very solid return of local visitors and membership since the reopening and the gradual easing of the pandemic, we really missed having visitors from outside of NYC this past summer. We are grateful to Governor Hochul for her large, dynamic, and sensible plan to help the tourism industry rebound, and to bring visitors back to NYC and to experience the culture (and horticultural beauty!) of places like Brooklyn Botanic Garden—helping to preserve and expand good jobs in Brooklyn."

President and CEO of The Staten Island Chamber of Commerce Linda Braun said, "The pandemic has turned New York City's economy on its head, in particular, our tourism and hospitality sectors. The Staten Island Chamber of Commerce thanks Governor Hochul for her commitment to new tourism funding. Increased tourism spending and the jobs created by this sector will be a huge part of the city's recovery."

NYC & Company President and CEO Fred Dixon said, "We applaud Governor Hochul for her focus on the tourism and events industry by providing new resources and support for its accelerated recovery. As we work to bring visitors and events back to our state and city, jobs, spending, tax collections and economic stimulus will follow. On behalf of New York City's tourism and hospitality community, we look forward to collaborating even more with the state to ensure the full return of the visitor economy for the benefit of all New Yorkers."

New York State Hospitality & Tourism Association President Mark Dorr said, "As the tourism industry welcomes back international travelers today or the first time in 20-plus months, the industry is overwhelmed by Governor Hochul's announcement regarding the state's financial support of the its third-largest industry, tourism," said New York State Hospitality & Tourism Association's President, Mark Dorr. "From dedicated funding incentives for hotels bringing back workers, to grants that allow meeting planners to offer convention business discounts, it is all much needed support for an industry that was decimated by the

pandemic. We applaud Governor Hochul for her vision as we continue to rebuild the world's best tourism destinations."

President and CEO Queens Chamber of Commerce Thomas J. Grech said, "After the devastation of the last 20 months the program being announced by Governor Hochul is just the shot in the arm at our small businesses need. We applaud her efforts to get this done."

Times Square Alliance President Tom Harris said, "Today we are pleased to welcome the world back to Times Square and New York City so they can join the 1.6 million people who have been visiting Times Square each week. According to Visa data in 2019 international travelers spent 631 million dollars in Times Square and our businesses are anxiously awaiting that return, and while they wait we are thrilled to learn of this support from Albany to help bridge the gap for tourism related businesses that are so prevalent here in Times Square along with our small and business travel related industries who have suffered so much over the past year and a half."

President and CEO, Greater New York Chamber of Commerce Mark Jaffe said, "The Governor's tourism and economic recovery package hits the target. In order for NY to fully recover from the Covid pandemic; we need to help the industries and small businesses that were mandated to shut down for our public health & safety. It makes sense to provide incentives for tourism-based businesses (like restaurants, retail hotels, entertainment, cultural institutions and convention centers) so that they can hire the new employees that they desperately need. We can only boost employment in the tourism sector by providing pay incentives for those who are willing to go back to work as we come out of the pause. No doubts this package will help us recover. We look forward to working with Governor Hochul to help market NY globally "as open for business with clean & safe streets". The package announced today will no doubts help restore our world image and improve the livelihood of so many of the business & civic leaders we represent."

President of the Alliance for Downtown New York Jessica Lappin said, "Tourists flock to New York for our museums, Broadway shows, and to eat and shop in our home grown restaurants and shops. That's why investing in these unique businesses and cultural gems, and bringing back tourism, is critical to our recovery."

President and CEO of the New York State Tourism Industry Association Robert Provost said, "Governor Hochul is addressing the needs of the moment while incentivizing future success. This package will stimulate the return of group and international travel while supporting small business survival and those still struggling with job loss. It is hard to imagine a more comprehensive and strategic plan of support, and we owe Governor Hochul a thank you for her foresight and vision."

Executive Director of the NYC Hospitality Alliance Andrew Rigie said, "New York's restaurant and nightlife industry serve cuisines and scenes that represent local flavors and cultures from around the world. Unfortunately, so many of these small businesses that rely heavily on tourists have suffered tremendously throughout the pandemic, and that's why we commend Governor Hochul for her investment in, and support for the economic recovery of tourism. It will be a boost to our eating, drinking, dancing, cultural spots and jobs."

Transport Workers Union Local 100 President Tony Utano said, "This is great news for workers. Whether it's a subway or bus trip to the theater, a double-decker tour of Times Square, or a horse-carriage ride through Central Park, we are ready to once again show off our great city. We don't just move New York, we move the world when it comes to New York."

President and CEO of the Manhattan Chamber of Commerce Jessica Walker said, "These new initiatives come at a critical moment in our recovery. We must regain our position as the number one tourist destination in the world in order to support small businesses and job growth for all New Yorkers. Thank you to Governor Hochul for putting forth a thoughtful

roadmap to do just that."

President and CEO of the Partnership for New York City Kathryn Wylde said, "Governor Hochul is appropriately prioritizing further investment in cultural institutions as well as the retail, food services, accommodations and entertainment sectors that have suffered the greatest losses as a result of the cessation of tourism during the pandemic. These industries represent 9% of the city economy, but 20% of jobs in the city."

Co-Chair of the NY Independent Venue Association Jen Lyon said, "As the industry group representing over 200 NY independent venues and promoters, we have experienced firsthand the devastating impact of COVID-19 on the State's live performance and tourism economies. Our members are continuing to experience over a 60% decline in ticket sales right now. We appreciate the Governor taking swift action after assuming office to support this critical sector and look forward to continuing to work together to ensure NY's independent for-profit and nonprofit venues are able to fully recover."