

# Liz Krueger



New York State Senate | 28th District

March 2020

## Coronavirus Information:

My office has received calls from constituents with questions about the coronavirus, and I am aware that community members are concerned about what is being done to contain public health impacts in New York. I am in communication with New York City and State officials and Departments of Health regarding the coronavirus, which has been named "COVID-19" by the World Health Organization.

At the time of this community bulletin, a small number of New Yorkers have tested positive for the coronavirus. We should expect to see increased numbers of people testing positive in the coming days due to increased testing capabilities that have recently

come on line in the state. It is important to know that health care providers and agencies are working closely to monitor for potential cases of the virus. New York's Wadsworth Center, the New York City Public Health Laboratory, and Northwell Laboratories have been approved to handle coronavirus testing, which will significantly expedite testing. The State Legislature has passed a bill allocating \$40 million to fund response efforts to the coronavirus, which will allow the State to hire additional staff and obtain necessary equipment and resources. Health insurance companies have been directed to waive cost sharing related to coronavirus testing, including emergency room, urgent care, and office visits.

The coronavirus is believed to spread primarily between people in one of the following ways:

- Between people who are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet);
- Through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes; or
- Spread from contact with infected surfaces or object. It may be possible that a person can get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching their own mouth, nose, or possibly their eyes, but this is not thought to be the main way the virus spreads

Prevention is key. The CDC and Departments of Health recommend the following:

- Get a flu vaccination if you have not already.

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- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Stay home when you are sick.
- Whenever possible, avoid large crowds and gatherings, as well as taking the subway during rush hour. Use alternate modes of transportation for your commute to work, such as biking or walking, if possible.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.
- Individuals who are experiencing symptoms (fever, coughing, and having trouble breathing in particular) and may have traveled to areas of concern or have been in contact with somebody who has traveled to these areas should call ahead to their healthcare provider **before** presenting for treatment.

If you are unsure whether you are experiencing coronavirus symptoms or for information on how to obtain testing, please call 311 for assistance. If you have no doctor or insurance and think you may have the virus and need to be tested, call the statewide helpline at 1-888-364-3065. To report price gouging, call the state Division of Consumer Protection at 1-800-697-1220. You can also sign up for text message updates from the NYC Department of Health by texting "COVID" to 692-692.

For additional information, please visit the following websites:

- CDC coronavirus page: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/transmission.html>.
- New York City Health Department coronavirus page: <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/doh/health/health-topics/coronavirus.page>
- New York State Health Department coronavirus page: <https://www.health.ny.gov/diseases/communicable/coronavirus/>
- New York City Department of Education coronavirus updates page: <https://www.schools.nyc.gov/school-life/health-and-wellness/coronavirus-update> and coronavirus parent letters page: <https://infohub.nyced.org/in-our-schools/translations/letters/coronavirus>

## Message from Liz...

I continue to work with my colleagues on evaluating the Governor's proposed budget, and on February 29th I joined all of my Senate colleagues from Manhattan at a budget hearing where we heard testimony from our constituents and advocates on a host of issues. I learned a great deal from the eloquent comments of those who participated in the hearing. You can view a video of the event here and read written testimony if you are interested: <https://www.nysenate.gov/calendar/events/liz-krueger/february-29-2020/2020-nys-state-budget-forum-manhattan>

At the Manhattan hearing we heard from 60 people who shared their thoughts on what we should be prioritizing, and many others submitted written testimony. The largest number of testifiers focused on "budget justice" - the need to raise revenue through taxes on the very wealthy to fund a wide variety of priorities, from a Green New Deal, to K-12 and higher education, to addressing healthcare and proposed Medicaid cuts. Others shared their concerns regarding programs for people with disabilities, older adults and geriatric mental health, public transportation, affordable housing and addressing homelessness. There was also discussion of key policy proposals in the Governor's

budget, including cannabis legalization and surrogacy. I was pleased to get such a broad range of ideas, and as the budget process moves forward, I know that I and my colleagues will keep in mind these valuable contributions to the dialogue about what our priorities should be.

Hearing from the public is a huge part of the Legislature’s job in evaluating the Governor’s proposed budget and then negotiating a final product. As Chair of the Senate Finance Committee my role involves developing my own priorities for addressing the state’s revenue needs and program funding based on the input from the public. It also involves serving as a clearinghouse for the priorities of my Senate colleagues to make sure that we have input from around the state.

In the next week or so, the Senate and Assembly will issue their “one-house” budget proposals, which are the product of all the discussions now going on among my colleagues and me (and our counterparts in the Assembly). These resolutions will establish the priorities of our individual conferences as we go into the final negotiations with the Governor. The one-houses are about specific dollar amounts, but are also about weighing in on whether the Legislature supports the broad range of policy proposals included in the budget.

After the release of the one-houses, the Senate and Assembly will hold joint conference committees, which allocate funds for the priorities of each conference. Then the final negotiations between the Legislature and the Governor begin with the goal of reaching agreement by the budget deadline of April 1. There is a great deal of work to be done this month, but I am hopeful that despite the real fiscal challenges we face, we will be able to reach an agreement on a responsible budget that addresses the serious issues our state faces.

## **POLICY SPOTLIGHT**

### *Preventing Teen Smoking*

*This month I wanted to share an article by Reality Check, a student-led statewide program offered by Public Health Solutions Inc. for youth between the ages of 13 through 18 to address tobacco control. Students who join NYC Smoke-Free's Reality Check program participate and lead activities and events to help expose the tobacco industry and reduce the number of teens that initiate smoking.*

Although New York has achieved many great successes in tobacco control over the years, one of the challenges that we face is keeping up with the tobacco industry’s ever-morphing predatory practices to get young people to smoke. There has been progress in reducing smoking over the last two decades, but in recent years we have seen that progress halt, and witnessed the rapid growth of a new scourge – teen vaping. We must take this threat seriously, and rely on tried-and-true anti-tobacco strategies to keep our kids safe.

Cigarette smoking among New York’s high school youth declined 82 percent between 2000 and 2018, but from 2016 to 2018 the rate increased slightly for the first time since 2002. Even more alarming, electronic cigarette use among the state’s middle and high schoolers continues to rise. Between 2014 and 2018, the rate increased fully 160 percent, from 10.5 percent to 27.4 percent, meaning more than 1 in 4 middle and high school-age New Yorkers are using e-cigarettes.

E-cigarette companies are taking their cues from Big Tobacco, using the same old deceptive marketing strategies to deny and deflect from the real harm of their products. However, unlike traditional tobacco products, e-cigarette companies face very few restrictions - and they are taking full advantage of this Wild West environment.

E-cigarette ads have a strong presence not only on the internet but also on television and radio, in movies and print, and at events and retail stores. As e-cigarette advertising increases so does e-cigarette use among youth.

“As a user of social media, I have witnessed how electronic cigarettes infiltrate my social media community and turn my generation's means of expression into a lucrative business”, said Charity Antwi, student at School of the Future. “Big Tobacco is influencing my peers to advertise their electronic cigarette products so that they can lure in the young and the vulnerable users of social media. Now, I ponder: who's going to protect my younger siblings, my friends, and the younger generation when these companies have such a strong presence on social media. We are not safe from this harmful addiction when we are in school nor when we are on social media. Our generation is blind to the threatening presence of Big Tobacco companies, and the dangers of vaping. Therefore it is our responsibility to take action.”

The tobacco industry also knows that flavors are the most effective way to reach new, young users. Flavors improve the taste and reduce the harshness of these products, making them more appealing and easier for youth to try the product and become hooked for life. Nearly two-thirds of NYC kids who smoke now report that they started with flavored tobacco.

Those numbers suggest that most underage users might never have tried vaping if cigarettes tasted like cigarettes. From kid-friendly flavors like gummy bear and cotton candy, to over 15,000 other options, flavors hook kids on a drug known to be as addictive as heroin.

“The industry actively markets dangerous nicotine delivery devices to adolescents while trying to obfuscate the real risks of using these products. More than half of teens falsely believe e-cigarettes are harmless – but they are dead wrong. Many people, especially teens don't know what's in many of the popular vaping products they use today. I have talked to some of my friends after getting involved in Reality Check and asked them why they continue to use JUUL and other vaping products knowing that they had so many harmful chemicals in them,” said Bella Hynes, student at School of the Future. “But as it turns out, many of them didn't know. In fact one person tried to explain that it was just flavored water and vapor. If people were more informed about what is in these products, they would consider the consequence of using them.”

One JUUL pod contains as much nicotine as a whole pack of cigarettes. Adolescent nicotine exposure can change the brain to create a stronger addiction, make young people more susceptible to addiction to other substances, hinder adolescent brain development, lead to memory and concentration problems, and increase the risk of adolescents starting and continuing to smoke combustible cigarettes. And research shows that the amount of time a person is a smoker is even more impactful on their likelihood of experiencing lung disease than the number of packs per day – making it even more important to prevent young people from starting early.

More kids than ever, most of whom were not smokers before, are at risk of becoming addicted to nicotine through e-cigarettes. Research shows that young people who vape are more likely than their non-vaping peers to smoke traditional cigarettes in the future. In addition, the most recent New York

Youth Tobacco Survey indicates that 31% of high school students who have never used e-cigarettes are open to vaping, up from 27.5% in 2016.

We must be vigilant in combating the tobacco industry's ever-morphing predatory practices to attract younger customers and keep current smokers addicted. Every day of delay means increasing numbers of electronic cigarette users putting their health at risk. We cannot allow our kids to be human guinea pigs in Big Tobacco's dangerous experiment.

As a City and State, we must get involved. Electronic cigarettes are reversing decades of progress in reducing tobacco use, and creating an even wider gap in the persistent disparities regarding addiction. We know what works – banning flavors, stopping ads that target out kids, and making products less accessible to young people. We must recommit ourselves to these proven comprehensive tobacco control strategies, and end the youth e-cigarette epidemic.

### *Compensated Surrogacy*

Last month I joined Assemblymembers Didi Barrett and Daniel J. O'Donnell in introducing legislation (S.7717) to legalize and regulate compensated gestational and genetic surrogacy, as well as establish necessary protections for all parties involved in egg- and sperm-donations and assisted reproduction. Surrogacy can be a satisfying and positive experience, but it is also a complex physical, emotional, and legal process with the potential for serious negative outcomes. That is why it is vital to have protections in place for everyone involved, especially low-income people. Below is the text of an op-ed I wrote for the Gotham Gazette explaining my position on this issue:

Advances in assisted reproductive technology (ART), including intrauterine insemination (IUI), in vitro fertilization (IVF), egg and sperm donation, and surrogacy, have created remarkable new family-building options in the last several decades. As someone who is unable to have my own biological children, I support New Yorkers being able to use ART, including surrogacy, to build the families they want.

Yet these relatively new technologies bring with them complex issues that must be considered carefully. After many discussions with my colleagues who support existing proposals to legalize and regulate paid surrogacy in New York, as well as experts and advocates, I believe those proposals do not do enough to balance and protect the health, safety, interests, and rights of all parties involved.

At the same time, in spite of the fact that paid gestational and genetic surrogacy are currently illegal, the ART, gamete donation, and surrogacy industries are already operating in New York, with insufficient regulation and protections. That is why I have introduced an alternative bill, along with Assemblymembers Didi Barrett and Danny O'Donnell, to tighten regulations on gamete donation and to legalize surrogacy with appropriate safeguards.

Our bill goes further than existing proposals in creating consumer protections, ensuring that participants are fully informed of health risks and other relevant factors, preventing exploitation, power imbalances, and inequitable treatment, requiring the use of best medical practices to protect the health and wellbeing of all parties, and information-gathering to facilitate much-needed research and tracking.

Intended parents, people acting as surrogates, egg and sperm donors, and of course any children that are conceived by assisted reproduction or born through surrogacy, are all intimately invested in

the process and outcomes of any gamete donation or surrogacy agreement. For intended parents who decide to use surrogacy, they spend a significant amount of money, take time to carefully choose a person who will bear their child, and place their hopes in the person acting as surrogate.

Surrogates take on significant risks to their health, and in some cases their lives. They place their trust in the intended parents to adhere to the surrogacy agreement, and to provide a good home for the children they have spent nine months growing and nurturing inside their own body.

Children born through surrogacy or using ART have a right to have their needs and interests considered throughout the process, and to access data and research that are sorely lacking today on the health impacts of using certain forms of ART.

Our bill strengthens the existing proposals through several new or tightened provisions, including:

Evaluating intended parents and people acting as surrogates to assess eligibility.

Minimizing health risks for surrogate by establishing age restrictions, requirements relating to prior pregnancies and births, and preclusions on preexisting medical and psychological conditions that would make the pregnancy high-risk.

In order to prevent human trafficking, requiring intended parents and surrogates to be U.S. citizens or permanent lawful residents, and New York State residents for at least 12 months prior to executing an agreement.

Explicitly requiring more comprehensive, longer-lasting health, life, and disability insurance be provided to the surrogate.

Recognizing and protecting the human agency of the surrogate by allowing them to terminate the agreement at any time during the pregnancy. If this happens, the surrogate must return any financial compensation already received other than payment for medical, legal, and pregnancy-related expenses.

Creating a window after the birth of a child during which, in rare and extreme circumstances, the person acting as surrogate could ask a court to step in and determine legal parentage.

I believe that these measures, and several others addressing not only surrogacy but an array of assisted reproduction technologies, are necessary to balance the needs and interests of all the people engaged in gamete donation or surrogacy agreements. I hope that my colleagues in the Legislature, and Governor Cuomo, will take the time – after the new state budget is passed – to thoroughly consider and discuss all of the options on the table. Fundamental issues of equity, family, health, and people's lives are at stake.

## COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT

Due to the evolving situation regarding the coronavirus, it is possible that events listed below may be cancelled or rescheduled.

### **Roundtable for Boomers and Seniors Thursday April 2nd:**

The Roundtable for Boomers & Seniors provides an opportunity for constituents to come together to explore life issues that are relevant across the age span. At each session, attendees hear from and engage with professionals who are knowledgeable on topics that are of most concern to the growing population of older adults in New York City. Over the course of five sessions, the Roundtable looks at a specific issue from different perspectives each month. This year's series will focus on Living Well as We Age in the Community.

The fourth roundtable session will take place Thursday, April 2nd from 8:30 to 10:30 a.m. at Lenox Hill Neighborhood House, 331 East 70th Street, and the topic will be "Living Well vs. Living Forever." One of the great accomplishments of science is that we have been able to significantly extend the average life span. But how do we balance living long vs. living well? Hear from the experts about how to think about what is truly important to us when making health care decisions, and learn about exciting new research using psychedelics as part of palliative care and to address end-of-life existential distress.

Speakers include Anthony P. Bossis, PhD, Clinical Assistant Professor, Department of Psychiatry, NYU School of Medicine, and - Mary E. Morrissey, PhD, MPH, JD, Program Director, Healthcare Management Certificate Program in Public Health and Palliative Care, Global Health Care Innovation Management Center at Fordham University.

To RSVP visit [www.tinyurl.com/SeniorRoundtable4-2-20](http://www.tinyurl.com/SeniorRoundtable4-2-20) or call (212) 490-9535.

### **Older Adult Job Search Strategies and Employment Fair April 14th &15th:**

Senator Krueger's 2020 Older Adult Job Search Strategies and Employment Fair will be held on April 14th and April 15th at Lenox Hill Neighborhood House, 331 East 70th Street, between 1st and 2nd Avenues.

#### **Tuesday, April 14th 9:45am - 1pm**

Co-sponsored by the NYPL Business Library (SIBL)

#### *Job Search Strategies and Support*

Job search guidance for the mature worker, including how to make persuasive pitch during an interview. Limited employment coaching slots available for advanced job seekers. To reserve a coaching slot, you must have a resume, and at least one job posting. Slots are limited; reserve in advance.

#### **Wednesday, April 15th 10:00 am - 1 pm.**

#### *Employment Fair*

20+ employers and agencies seeking to hire and assist older adults in their job search.

**Due to limited space, the fair is only open to Sen. Krueger's constituents**

RSVP to [liz@lizkrueger.com](mailto:liz@lizkrueger.com) or call 212-490-9535. Please include your address when responding.

### **Survey on Finding a Doctor for Medicare and Medicare Advantage Patients:**

If you have Medicare health insurance - either original Medicare or a Medicare Advantage plan - I am interested in hearing what your experience has been finding medical providers that accept your insurance. Please take a few minutes to fill out a short survey and let us know what you have experienced when looking for primary care providers and specialists that accept your Medicare plan. Click on the following link: <https://tinyurl.com/medicare-access-survey>.

### **Forum on Dyslexia Legislation March 9th:**

On Monday, March 9, CEC District 2 is hosting "A Panel Discussion With New York State Legislators on Dyslexia Legislation: How We Can Change the System." Find out how parents, students and educators can help pass meaningful legislation to change the way we identify and teach struggling readers and children with dyslexia. Panelists include State Senators Brad Hoylman and Robert Jackson and Assemblymembers Robert Carroll and Jo Anne Simon, and will be moderated by Danielle Scoranno, Research Coordinator at The Windward Institute and Host of READ Podcast.

The event will take place from 6:30 - 8:30 p.m. at The Clinton School, 10 E 15th St, New York, NY, Auditorium. Please contact Emily at [ehellstrom@cecd2.net](mailto:ehellstrom@cecd2.net) for questions or more information

### **Town Hall with Chancellor Richard A. Carranza March 10th:**

On Tuesday March 10th Community Education Council District 2 is hosting a Town Hall with Chancellor Richard A. Carranza. The Town Hall will take place at MS 131, 100 Hester Street, in the Auditorium, and will begin at 6:30pm. The Chancellor will be taking questions. You can submit a question by emailing [CEC2@schools.nyc.gov](mailto:CEC2@schools.nyc.gov) and putting 'Question for the Chancellor' in the subject line. Comment cards will also be distributed at the Town Hall.

### **Apply for Property Tax Exemption Programs by March 16th:**

The New York City Department of Finance administers property tax exemptions that can reduce the property taxes you pay by up to 50%. Seniors, veterans, clergy members, and people with disabilities who own one-, two-, or three-family homes, condominiums, or cooperative apartments may be eligible.

Not only can exemptions be combined to maximize savings, certain exemptions can keep you out of the city's lien sale.

You can apply at the Department of Finance's website at

<https://www1.nyc.gov/site/finance/benefits/property-benefit-forms/benefits-forms-property-owners.page>

or by requesting an application through 311. To take advantage of these tax breaks, you must apply by the March 16, 2020, deadline.

Available property tax benefits include:

- **Senior Citizen Homeowners' Exemption (SCHE):** for property owners age 65 and over by December 31, 2020 with an annual income of \$58,399 or less;
- **Disabled Homeowners' Exemption (DHE):** for property owners with disabilities and an annual income of \$58,399 or less;
- **Basic STAR:** for homeowners with an annual income of \$500,000 or less; you must apply with the New York State Department of Taxation and Finance
- **Enhanced STAR:** for seniors 65 and over with annual incomes of \$88,050 or less

- **Veterans:** for those who served in the U.S. military during designated periods of conflict, their unremarried surviving spouses, and Gold Star parents
- **Clergy:** for active and retired members of the clergy and their unremarried surviving spouses

**Medicare Scam Alert:**

A constituent contacted my office after receiving an unsolicited colon cancer screening test kit in the mail. The sender in this case was Home Access Health Corporation with an address in Illinois, however, other companies could also be participating in this scam. In the enclosed letter, the constituent was informed that their doctor had ordered the test, which was not the case. Upon inquiring with their health plan, the constituent was informed not to respond or complete the test. Subsequently, Home Access Health Corporation has followed up by phone and by mail to provide reminders that the test should be completed. To prevent becoming a victim of this scam, if you receive an unsolicited colon cancer screening, or any other type of health screening test kit in the mail, do not respond to the sender, provide any personal information, or complete the test, or you will likely be held responsible for all related costs. If you are unsure whether your health care provider ordered the test for you, call their office to inquire.

**Plan Ahead if you Need a Real ID Drivers License:**

Starting October 1st, New Yorkers will need either a passport or a Real ID Driver's License or Non-Driver I.D. in order to board a commercial flight or enter certain federal buildings. Federal rules require in-person visits to the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) to get a Real ID and this has resulted in major backlogs and long lines at offices, which will only get worse as we approach the October 1st deadline. You can reduce your wait time at the DMV by scheduling an appointment, though appointments need to be booked more than a month in advance. The link for Manhattan appointments is <https://nysdmvqw.us.qmatic.cloud/naoa/index.jsp>.

To find out more about the Real ID, including what kinds of proof of identity are accepted, visit <https://dmv.ny.gov/driver-license/federal-real-id>.

**NYC Center for Children Offers Therapy for Child Victims of Abuse:**

The New York Center for Children (NYCC) offers free life-changing therapy services for as long as necessary to help children heal from abuse. All of NYCC's services to children and families are free of charge and are made possible by the support of generous supporters and our community. NYCC provides services to children and youth from 3 – 23 years of age. Dedicated to serving children and families for twenty-five years, NYCC also provides groundbreaking training programs on the diagnosis, treatment, and prevention of child abuse attended by medical students, doctors, nurses, and first responders worldwide. More than 20,000 professionals have been trained through NYCC's educational programs. For information on their services visit <http://www.newyorkcenterforchildren.org/get-help>.

NYCC also has an active volunteer program and welcomes involvement and support from community volunteers. Volunteers assist with tutoring, special events, administrative support and more. To learn more, and to apply, please visit: [www.newyorkcenterforchildren.org/volunteer](http://www.newyorkcenterforchildren.org/volunteer), or email [volunteer@newyorkcenterforchildren.org](mailto:volunteer@newyorkcenterforchildren.org).

For additional questions, please contact: Christine Crowther, Executive Director, at (212) 517-3012, ext. 32, or [ccrowther@newyorkcenterforchildren.org](mailto:ccrowther@newyorkcenterforchildren.org).

**New Group Activities for Upper East Siders Aged 60+:**

Two Yorkville organizations, Search and Care and Knickerbocker Plaza Senior Center, are partnering to bring free group activities that support healthy aging for UES residents aged 60+. New groups include Tai Chi Mondays and Down Memory Lane Thursdays – providing low-impact body and cognitive-centered activities. Nutrition, Advocacy and Speakers groups also forming in East Harlem and Carnegie Hill. For information, please call Christen Schuchardt at Search and Care: 212-289-5300 X221.

**Free Tax Preparation Assistance:**

IRS-trained volunteers are available to provide free tax preparation assistance throughout New York City. I encourage you to take advantage of these services, which can save you money and ensure you avoid getting caught in “Refund Anticipation Loan” scams that many for-profit tax preparers engage in.

AARP is sponsoring a number of locations on the East Side, and there are no age or income restrictions to receive this assistance. Here are some sites in the 28th Senate District where you can get free assistance with your taxes:

58th Street Library, 127 East 58th Street  
Telephone: 212-759-7358  
Site Hours: Wednesday and Saturday, 10:00am-2:00pm

67th Street Library, 328 East 67th Street  
Telephone: 212-734-1717  
Site Hours: Friday, 10:00am-2:00pm

Community Church of New York, 40 East 35th Street  
Telephone: 212-683-4988  
Site Hours: Thursday, 9:30am-1:30pm

Epiphany Library, 228 East 23rd Street  
Telephone: 212-679-2645  
Site Hours: Thursday, 10:00am-2:00pm

Lenox Hill Neighborhood House, 331 East 70th Street  
Telephone: 212-218-0481  
Site Hours: Wednesday, 9:00am-1:00pm

Science, Industry and Business Library (SIBL), 188 Madison Ave @ 34th Street  
Telephone: (917) 275-6975  
Site Hours: Thursday 10:00 a.m-2:00 p.m.

Stanley Isaacs Neighborhood Center, 415 East 93rd Street  
Telephone: 212-360-7620  
Site Hours: Friday, 9:30am-2:00pm

New York City also offers free tax preparation either in person or online for individuals making \$66,000 or less.

You can file in-person an NYC Free Tax Prep site. Filing is completely free and includes e-filing and direct deposit of your refund. Some sites have income limits. For most sites, you must have earned \$54,000 or less in 2016 to use In Person service. Some NYC Free Tax Prep sites have special services if you are self-employed, are applying for an Individual Taxpayer Identification Number, you are a senior over age 60 with pension or retirement-related question or you need to file or change your return from a previous tax year. At these sites, you will drop off your documents and pick up the completed return later.

You can also complete your tax return online at certain NYC Free Tax Prep sites with help from an IRS certified VITA/TCE volunteer preparer. You must have earned \$66,000 or less in 2016 and have a valid email address to use the Assisted Self-Preparation service.

You can access a map of tax preparation sites at each site and find out which required tax documents you need at [nyc.gov/taxprep](http://nyc.gov/taxprep).

### **Legal Advocacy Clinics At Lenox Hill Neighborhood House:**

The Lenox Hill Neighborhood House Legal Advocacy Center offers assistance on a number of different issues. Here is a list of their ongoing programs and clinics:

- SNAP (formerly Food Stamps) Clinics:

- Wednesdays from 10am to 1pm at Lenox Hill Neighborhood House, 331 East 70th Street. Arrive by Noon.

First come, first served. Bring proof of identity, income information, utility bill, proof of housing costs, information on any dependents, proof of immigration status for non-citizens, and if you are 60 or over or on SSI/SSD, information on medical costs. For more information, call 212-218-0503, option 2.

- Tenants Rights Advice Clinic: Walk-in clinic, now at 3 locations.

- April 16 from 10am to 1pm at 331 East 70th Street. First come-first Served, arrive by Noon.

- March 18 and April 8 at East Harlem Action Center, 158 East 115th Street, from 2pm to 5 pm. First come-first Served, arrive by 4 pm.

- March 25 at Lenox Hill Neighborhood House Casa Mutua, 159 East 102nd Street, from 2pm to 5 pm. First come-first Served, arrive by 4 pm.

- SCRIE Clinics: Walk-in Clinic. The next clinics will take place March 17 from 10:00 a.m to 1:00 p.m at Lenox Hill Neighborhood House, 331 East 70th Street. You must arrive before 11:30 to ensure you can be seen. If you are 62 years or older, live in a rent regulated apartment and have an annual household income of \$50,000 or less you may be eligible for the Rent Freeze Program. Find out if you are eligible and get assistance applying or recertifying for SCRIE.

- DRIE Assistance: If you are 18 years of age or older, live in a rent-regulated apartment, receive disability-related benefits and have income below \$50,000/year, you may be eligible for DRIE. For an appointment or information, contact us at [DRIE@lenoxhill.org](mailto:DRIE@lenoxhill.org) or 212-218-0503, option 0.

- Health Care Access Project: call 212-218-0503. Assistance with Medicaid, Medicare Savings Program Medicare Part D, Epic and health insurance through the New York State of Health Marketplace.

- Advance Directives: If you need assistance from a volunteer attorney with setting up advance directives, including health care proxies, living wills, powers of attorney and simple, low asset wills, contact the Advance Directives Project's intake hotline at 212-218-0503, option 4, for an eligibility screening.

**VOLS Legal Clinics for Seniors:**

The VOLS Elderly Project staff and pro bono attorneys provide free legal advice, information, document drafting, and other brief services to low-income Manhattan residents aged 60 and over, and to the social workers and advocates who assist them. Their schedule includes:

Friday March 13th - 2:00 pm, Legal Clinic,  
Burden Center for the Aging, 415 East 73rd Street (b/t 1st and York)

Friday March 20th - 10:00 am, Legal Clinic,  
Stanley M. Isaacs Neighborhood Center, 415 East 93rd Street

Monday March 23rd - 10:00 am, Legal Clinic,  
Encore Community Services Center, 239 West 49th Street (b/t Broadway and 8th Ave.)

**Affordable Housing Opportunities in Manhattan:**

**Essex Crossing Site 4** is now accepting applications for 121 affordable studio and 1- 2, and 3-bedroom apartments newly constructed at 180 Broome Street on the Lower East Side in Manhattan. Rents for these apartments range from \$562 and \$3,770 depending on income and unit size. Applicants must have incomes between \$21,463 and \$218,460 depending on unit and family size. Asset limits also apply. Preference will be given to residents of Manhattan Community Board 3 for 50% of units, mobility-impaired persons for 5% of units, visual- and/or hearing-impaired persons for 2% of units, and municipal employees for 5% on units. Former Site Tenants of the Seward Park Extension Urban Renewal Area (SPEURA) receive priority for 50% of the CB preference units.

A full description of the building and application process is available at <https://a806-housingconnect.nyc.gov/nyclottery/AdvertisementPdf/963.pdf>

Households may elect to submit an application by one of two methods: EITHER online OR by mail. To submit your application online now, please visit NYC Housing Connect at [www.nyc.gov/housingconnect](http://www.nyc.gov/housingconnect) and select “Apply for Housing.” To request an application by mail, mail a self-addressed envelope ESSEX CROSSING SITE 4/ TRIBOROUGH FINANCE NEW, PO BOX 2003, NEW YORK, NY 10035.

Applications must be submitted online or postmarked by April 7, 2020. Applicants who submit more than one application may be disqualified.

**Metrocard Bus and Van Schedule:**

The MTA offers MetroCard-related services throughout New York City through mobile buses and vans. Buses provide a full range of services, including applying for or refilling a Reduced-Fare MetroCard, buying or refilling a regular MetroCard, or getting answers to a MetroCard-related question. Vans sell Unlimited Ride MetroCards and Pay-Per-Ride MetroCards, and they refill MetroCards and Reduced-Fare MetroCards. Buses and vans will be in my district on the following dates and locations:

March 10, 9 - 10:30 am, 92 Street & Lexington Avenue – Bus  
March 10, 11:00 am - 12:30 pm., 86 Street & Lexington Avenue – Bus  
March 10, 1:30 - 2:30 pm, 68 Street & Lexington Avenue – Bus  
March 18, 9 – 10:30 am, 79 Street & Third Avenue - Bus  
March 18, 11 am - 1 pm, 79 Street & York Avenue – Bus

March 18, 1:30 - 2:30 pm, 72 Street & York Avenue – Bus  
March 19, 8:00 - 10:30 am, 47 Street & 2 Avenue – Van  
March 19, 11:30 am - 2:00 pm, 28 Street & 2 Avenue – Van  
March 24, 9 - 10:30 am, 92 Street & Lexington Avenue – Bus  
March 24, 11:00 am - 12:30 pm., 86 Street & Lexington Avenue – Bus  
March 24, 1:30 - 2:30 pm, 68 Street & Lexington Avenue – Bus  
April 1, 9 – 10:30 am, 79 Street & Third Avenue - Bus  
April 1, 11 am - 1 pm, 79 Street & York Avenue – Bus  
April 1, 1:30 - 2:30 pm, 72 Street & York Avenue – Bus  
April 2, 7 – 9 am, 90 Street and York Avenue - Van  
April 2, 8:30 - 10:30 am, 47 Street & 2 Avenue – Van  
April 2, 1:30 - 3:30 pm, 28 Street & 2 Avenue – Van  
April 3, 9 - 10 am, 57 Street and 1 Avenue – Van  
April 3, 10:30 - 11:30 am, 57 Street and 3 Avenue – Van  
April 3, 12:30 - 2:00 pm, 68 Street and 1 Avenue – Van

The full mobile MetroCard schedule is available at <http://mta.info/metrocard/mms.htm>. Please note that MetroCard buses and vans do not take credit cards.

**Heat Season Rules:**

The City Housing Maintenance Code and State Multiple Dwelling Law require building owners to provide heat and hot water to all tenants. Building owners are required to provide hot water 365 days a year at a constant minimum temperature of 120 degrees Fahrenheit.

Between October 1st and May 31st, a period designated as “Heat Season,” building owners are also required to provide tenants with heat under the following conditions:

- Between the hours of 6AM and 10PM if the outside temperature falls below 55 degrees, the inside temperature is required to be at least 68 degrees Fahrenheit.
- Between the hours of 10PM and 6AM the inside temperature is required to be at least 62 degrees Fahrenheit. Note that there is no longer any outside temperature requirement for night hours

Tenants who are cold in their apartments should first attempt to notify the building owner, managing agent or superintendent. If heat is not restored, the tenant should call the City’s Citizen Service Center at 311. For the hearing-impaired, the TTY number is (212) 504-4115. The Center is open 24 hours a day, seven days a week.