



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Michelle Hinchey

Senator Michelle Hinchey Secures Over \$1.5M in State Budget Funding for Local Programs and Initiatives in the 46th Senate District

MICHELLE HINCHEY April 12, 2021

| ISSUE: **2021-22 STATE BUDGET, SD-46 PROJECT FUNDING**



ALBANY, NY – State Senator Michelle Hinchey (SD-46) today announced over \$1.5 million in state budget funding that she secured to support long-standing programs and new initiatives serving the communities of her 5-county senate district, which includes Greene and Montgomery Counties and parts of Albany, Schenectady, and Ulster Counties.

“As a freshman senator, coming into my first state budget cycle, it has been my honor to give Upstate New York a real seat at the table to ensure that our communities and area-specific needs get the funding and attention they deserve,” **said Senator Hinchey**. “I am proud to have championed investment for a diverse range of new initiatives and programs serving residents all across the 46th Senate District, including funding for green job development, agritourism, environmental stewardship, expanded healthcare access, substance use disorder treatment support, and legal services tailored to the needs of our veterans. Our state budget is an opportunity to invest in our people and the services that strengthen our communities. I am honored to fight for these initiatives and thrilled to share the news that these essential investments have been prioritized.”

The FY 2022 State Budget agreement includes funding for the following programs and initiatives secured by Senator Hinchey:

\$100,000 for Catskills Park Stewardship

For the first time, the Environmental Protection Fund (EPF), which provides communities with resources for a wide range of local environmental projects, includes \$100,000 in targeted funding secured by Senator Hinchey to support Catskills ecosystem research and park stewardship and improvement measures conducted by Catskill Mountainkeeper and Catskill Center.

*"The state's investment in the Catskill Park could not come at a better time," **said Ramsay Adams, Catskill Mountainkeeper's Executive Director**. "Visitors have been flocking to the park for the past several years, and with Covid-19 we've seen more visitors than ever. The influx is great for our communities, but comes with a cost to our trails and wild places. This year's budget will help address some of the needs, and we can't thank Senator Hinchey enough for her work to secure this funding."*

Jeff Senterman, Executive Director of Catskill Center said, *"It is heartening after such a challenging year, that environmental priorities for New York State and the Catskills remain a top concern in the State's*

budget. We are grateful for Senator Hinchey's leadership, which has been instrumental in securing these resources for the Catskills. Funding in the Environmental Protection Fund will help manage and protect our Catskill Park and Forest Preserve, including a new source of funding to address visitor safety and wilderness protection, along with continued funding for the Catskills Visitor Center, the Catskill Science Collaborative, Community Smart Growth Grants, and much more. We specifically look forward to being able to improve the safety of the visiting public with new Aid to Locality funding directed towards the Catskill Center to increase the number of seasonal Catskill Stewards working in the Kaaterskill Clove area. We know that these efforts will benefit both the Catskill Park and our Catskill communities, as investments in our parks and environmental programs on average generate a \$7 return for every \$1 invested, which represents local jobs and a positive local economic impact as we work to recover from the Covid pandemic."

\$310,000 for the Renewable Energy Accelerator in Amsterdam

Due to Senator Hinchey's advocacy, the FY 2022 Budget allocates \$310,000 in state funding for the City of Amsterdam's Urban Renewal Agency to establish the "Renewable Energy Accelerator," a new facility in which local entrepreneurs will assemble the talent needed to develop projects and commercialize technologies in the renewable energy field. The funding will also provide for the creation of other collaborative opportunities with local educational institutions, both at the high school and community college level.

City of Amsterdam Mayor Michael Cinquanti said, *"Our City is so appreciative of this successful effort by Senator Hinchey to bring this Accelerator to Amsterdam. The opportunity to help renewable energy entrepreneurs speed up the process of bringing great ideas to market will be an exciting and hopefully fertile addition to our City's commercial base and economy."*

\$500,000 for Bassett Health System to Expand Dementia Care in the Mohawk Valley

Secured by Senator Hinchey, the FY 2022 Budget allocates \$500,000 to Bassett Health System to fund the construction of a new not-for-profit nursing home facility that will address unmet dementia-related needs for care and services in the Mohawk Valley region, providing dementia, subacute, and neurobehavioral care in an innovative, residential-style design that increases resident quality of life.

“We are grateful to Senator Hinchey for securing this vital grant which will support improvements and collaborations to strengthen services and care in our communities and improve access to care for Medicaid beneficiaries and other low-income individuals,” said Lisa Betrus, Senior Vice President and Chief Strategy and Transformation Officer for Bassett Healthcare Network. “Once constructed, our new skilled nursing facility will address the region’s unmet need for dementia care, subacute care, and neurobehavioral care, allowing individuals to stay in the community as they age and their care needs advance. We are proud that our neurobehavioral care unit will address the complex needs of an especially vulnerable elderly population that is underserved in virtually every part of the state.”

\$380,000 to Legal Services of the Hudson Valley for the Veterans and Military Families Advocacy Project

This funding, secured by Senator Hinchey, will be used to support Legal Services of the Hudson Valley’s Veterans and Military Families Advocacy Project (VMFAP), enabling staff attorneys and volunteer lawyers to continue providing free legal assistance to veterans and their family members in civil legal matters. The project also fosters the successful reintegration of veterans into the community by helping them access benefits and services that support their basic human needs such as housing, health, and safety, as well as with financial and employment challenges.

Rachel Chazin Halperin, Esq., CEO of Legal Services of the Hudson Valley said, *“We are grateful to Senators Hinchey and Skoufis for their continued support of Legal Services of the Hudson Valley. It is thanks to their dedication to supporting veterans throughout the Hudson Valley that we will be able to provide veterans and military families who cannot afford an attorney with comprehensive civil legal services when their basic needs, such as housing, food, safety and medical access, are at risk. They are true partners to ensuring that those who have served our country have equal access to justice.”*

\$100,000 for Craft Beverages Trail of the Catskills

Senator Hinchey secured \$100,000 in State Budget funding to create and promote a tourism trail that links craft breweries, distilleries, wineries, and cideries in the Catskills region, providing a destination experience for residents and visitors alike and supporting our agriculture-based economy.

Corey Cavallaro, President of the Craft Beverages Trail of the Catskills said, *"Agritourism is one of New York State's greatest success stories, and here in the Catskills region, we have untapped potential to grow agritourism in the craft beverage sector. We are grateful to Senator Hinchey for securing this important state funding which will allow us to launch an innovative agritourism trail experience to attract more visitors to the region and make it easier for our craft breweries, wineries, cideries, and distilleries to sell and promote their products."*

\$120,000 for Walkway Over the Hudson Farm to Market Initiative

This funding, secured by Senator Hinchey, will be used to renovate the Friends Pavilion so that it can provide exposure and retail space for small businesses in the Hudson Valley to showcase and sell locally grown food, drink, produce, spirits, and other New York-made products. The funding will also be used to hire a Farm to Market Project Manager who will work in partnership with Taste NY to build collaborations with local producers and vendor networks to increase their markets and develop related farmers' market programming.

"We are pleased to partner with Senator Hinchey to bring this vital facility to Walkway Over the Hudson State Historic Park," said John Storyk, Chairman of the Friends of the Walkway Nonprofit Organization. "The upgraded and expanded Friends Pavilion will not only better serve our more than 150 volunteer Ambassadors that are the real spirit of the Walkway, but will also allow us to increase access to Hudson Valley and New York State-made products for the thousands of people that visit our park every day."

\$20,000 for Telehealth Devices to Support Patients Seeking Substance Use Disorder Treatment Services from Family Services, Inc.

This funding, secured by Senator Hinchey, will be used to treat and support a wide range of patients in Ulster County, including those struggling with substance use disorders, by providing them with cellular phones and tablets so that those with limited access to virtual technology can receive telehealth services administered by Family Services' providers.

Brian Doyle, Chief Executive Officer of Family Services, Inc., said, *“We were thrilled to learn of this funding and grateful to Senator Hinchey for her support. With the onset of the COVID pandemic, we quickly and effectively pivoted to provide services via “telehealth”. We have been pleased, as have our clients, that this approach allowed us to maintain contact and treatment, particularly during a period of heightened anxiety and depression experienced by so many. We expect telehealth to remain an important part of our work even “post-Covid”. This grant will allow us to extend greater support to those who struggle with technology but nevertheless rely on our clinical supports that help them move toward recovery.”*

Senator Michelle Hinchey represents the 46th Senate District, which includes Greene and Montgomery Counties and parts of Albany, Schenectady, and Ulster Counties. Senator Hinchey serves as Chair of the Agriculture Committee and sits on the Alcoholism and Substance Abuse, Commerce, Economic Development and Small Business, Cultural Affairs, Tourism, Parks and Recreation, Energy and Telecommunications, Environmental Conservation, and Local Government Committees.

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