



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Kevin Thomas

## Constituent Resources

SENATOR KEVIN THOMAS May 12, 2022

| ISSUE: **CONSTITUENT SERVICES**

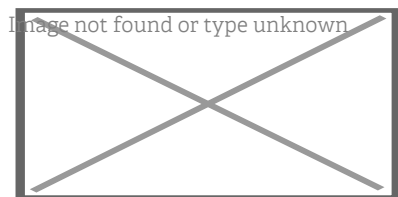
### Senator Kevin Thomas' Constituent Resource Page

Dear Neighbor,

Welcome to my **Constituent Resource Page**. Simply click the name of the topic you are interested in below, and you will find a drop-down of updated information, links, and resources related to that topic.

If you cannot find what you are looking for, please get in touch with my Office by emailing [thomas@nysenate.gov](mailto:thomas@nysenate.gov), or calling **516-739-1700**. My staff and I are here to help!

Sincerely,



Senator Kevin Thomas

# Our Office

Our staff is fully available to assist you via phone or email. Please reach out to us if you have any questions! We would love to hear from you.

Phone: 516-739-1700

Email: [Thomas@nysenate.gov](mailto:Thomas@nysenate.gov)

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/SenatorKevinThomas>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/SenKevinThomas>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/senatorkevinthomas/>

## Resources for Seniors

Nassau County Office for the Aging - There is a local office for the **New York State Office for the Aging (NYSOFA)** in every county in New York State. The dedicated people who work at your local office for the aging have the training, experience and local knowledge to help you access a variety of services and benefits, or can direct you to the appropriate agency or organization for help. The contact for the Nassau County Department of Human Services Office for the Aging is **(516) 227-8900**.

New York State Department for the Aging Helpline 800-342-987

Social Security Administration 800-772-1213

Medicare 800-633-4227

Medicaid 800-541-2831

**Veterans Administration** 888-838-7697

**Nassau County Department of Senior Citizen Affairs Senior HELP-LINE** Available Monday-Friday 9am-5pm: **(516) 227-8900**

**LICC Senior Helpline:** **516-679-0000**

**RSVP Suffolk Senior Reassurance Line:** **631-979-9490**

**EPIC** The *Elderly Pharmaceutical Insurance Coverage (EPIC)* program is a New York State program for seniors administered by the Department of Health. EPIC operates a toll-free Helpline which is available from 8:30AM to 5:00PM, Monday through Friday. Call **1-800-332-3742 (TTY 1-800-290-9138)** for more information or to request an [application](#).

**SMART Seniors** Smart Seniors is a resource from the Attorney General's Office that teaches seniors, their family, and loved ones how to recognize common scams and avoid them.

**[SMART Seniors Packet](#)**

## **Resources for Veterans**

**Nassau County Veterans Services Agency** - **516-572-6565** Services include: help with VA forms, free food pantry, job placement, free transportation, housing assistance, and financial planning.

**The Joseph P. Dwyer Veterans Peer Support Project** Honoring the memory of PFC Joseph P. Dwyer and his legacy of service, the mission of our PFC Joseph P. Dwyer Peer Support Program is to empower veterans and their family members to find passion, purpose and

hope as they transition from military to civilian life. If you are interested in joining PFC Joseph P. Dwyer Peer Support Program, email Program Manager Dan Arnold at [darnold@vocwny.org](mailto:darnold@vocwny.org) or call 716-898-0110 ext. 118.

**Nassau County's "Vet Mart" food pantry** is open to vets in need, and now has a drive-up program. If you can't pick up, volunteers can come to you. The pantry is located at 2201 Hempstead Turnpike, Building Q, East Meadow, NY and is open Monday-Friday from 9 AM to 12 PM. Contact: 516-572-6526.

**New York Legal Assistance Group Veterans Project (NYLAG)**

212-946-0343 (Intake Monday, Wednesday, and Thursday, 9am-3pm)

[vethelp@nylag.org](mailto:vethelp@nylag.org)

<https://www.nylag.org>

NYLAG provides free civil legal services to veterans on a range of issues including eviction prevention, public benefits denials, debt collection and health care.

**New York State Department of Veterans' Affairs**

718-722-7072

888-838-7697 (to schedule an appointment with a benefits advisor)

<https://veterans.ny.gov>

The New York State Department of Veterans' Affairs provides assistance to veterans and their

families with accessing benefits, employment, health care, financial and housing issues.

## **U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs**

New York Regional Office

423 East 23rd Street

New York, NY 10010

212-686-7500 or 844-698-2311

<https://www.va.gov>

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs coordinates a wide range of health care, disability, education, employment, housing and pension benefits for veterans and their families. Many veterans are eligible for geriatric and long-term care services in VA facilities and/or their homes.

**Veterans' Homeowner Tax Exemption** The current alternative veterans' exemption was designed to make more veterans eligible for exemptions, especially those veterans of Korea and Vietnam who did not receive payments which would have qualified them under the old law. To learn more, visit this link: <https://www.nassaucountyny.gov/3306/Veterans-Real-Property-Tax-Exemptions>

### **Additional VA Toll Free Numbers:**

- Crisis Hotline: 800-273-8255
- Education (GI Bill): 888-442-4551
- Life Insurance: 800-669-8477 OR 800-419-1473
- Medical care for dependents and survivors: 800-733-8387
- Special Issues (Gulf War/Agent Orange): 800-749-8387
- Veterans Health Administration: 877-222-VETS (877-222-8387)

- Women's Health: 885-VA-Women (885-829-6636)

## Mental Health Resources

The NYS Office of Mental Health Emotional Support Line - 1-844-863-9314

NYS Domestic and Sexual Violence Hotline: 1-800-942-6906

Adelphi University's Institute for Parenting Warmline?: 516-515-1948 Adelphi University's

Institute for Parenting Warmline (calls are returned Mondays & Thursdays) is for parents, caregivers, and educators of young children (ages 0-6) who have questions regarding babies' and young children's development and wellbeing, especially in times of heightened stress. Your call will be returned by an infant and early childhood specialist from the Institute for Parenting at Adelphi University.

Long Island Trauma Recovery Network Please email [LongIslandTrauma@gmail.com](mailto:LongIslandTrauma@gmail.com) for more information.

## Housing Resources

State of NY Mortgage Agency (SONYMA) - State of New York Mortgage Agency (SONYMA) offers low-interest mortgage loans and programs to help qualified buyers purchase their first home. [Learn more at https://hcr.ny.gov/sonyma](https://hcr.ny.gov/sonyma).

Apply for Heating and Cooling Assistance (HEAP) - New Yorkers can apply for heating and cooling assistance under the Home Energy Assistance Program. [Learn more](#).

Homeowner Assistance Fund (HAF) - The Homeowner Assistance Fund helps eligible homeowners avert mortgage delinquency, default, foreclosure, and displacement. [Learn more](#) or call **1-844-77-NYHAF** (1-844-776-9423).

**Homes for Veterans Program** - Helps U.S. military veterans, Reservists, National Guardsman & active duty buy their first home or move. [Learn more.](#)

## Small Business Resources

**New York State Small Business Guide** - The NYS Division of Small Business & Technology has a free guide to starting a small business in New York State. [Click here to download a .pdf version.](#)

**New York State Directory of Small Business Programs** - Find valuable programs and resources for business planning, operations and growth. [Learn more.](#)

**New York Business Express** - A comprehensive resource for starting, running, and growing a business in NYS, including a Business Wizard and information on support programs and incentives. Visit <https://www.businessexpress.ny.gov/> to learn more.

## STAR Program FAQ

The School Tax Relief (STAR) program offers property tax relief to eligible New York State homeowners. Below, you can find a guide to frequently asked questions about the program. If you have further questions about STAR, contact [your New York State Senator](#) or call the **STAR helpline at 518-457-2036 from 8:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. on weekdays and 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. on Saturdays.**

### What does it mean to be a STAR recipient?

The School Tax Relief (STAR) program provides eligible homeowners in New York State with relief on their property taxes. If you are a STAR recipient, you receive the benefit in one of two ways:

- The **STAR credit program** (open to any eligible homeowner whose income is \$500,000 or less) provides you with a check in the mail from the New York State Tax Department to apply to your school taxes. If you currently receive your STAR benefit as a reduction on your school tax bill (the STAR exemption), you may receive a greater benefit if you switch to the STAR credit to receive a check instead. **The value of the STAR credit savings may increase by as much as 2% each year, but the value of the STAR exemption savings cannot increase.** The STAR exemption savings can never be higher than the STAR credit savings. To learn more about switching from the STAR exemption to the STAR credit, [click here](#).

- The **STAR exemption program** The STAR exemption program is closed to all new applicants. If you're a new homeowner or you weren't receiving the STAR exemption on your current home in 2015, you can Register for the STAR credit to receive a check directly from New York State. If you have an existing STAR exemption, you may need to reapply with your assessor if you are receiving the Basic STAR exemption and wish to apply for the Enhanced STAR exemption, or if you continue to own the property but have filed a new deed. [Click here to learn how to reapply](#).

Whether you receive the STAR exemption or the STAR credit, there are two parts to the STAR program: **BASIC STAR** and **ENHANCED STAR**.

## **BASIC STAR**

### **Who is eligible for BASIC STAR?**

- available for owner-occupied, primary residences;
- the income limit for the Basic STAR credit is \$500,000 (the income limit for the Basic STAR exemption is \$250,000);



- based on the first \$30,000 of the full value of a home

### **How do I apply for BASIC STAR?**

If you have recently bought your home or have never applied for the STAR benefit on your current home, you only need to register for the STAR credit with the New York State Tax Department once to receive a STAR credit check, and you will continue to receive the annual benefit as long as you are eligible. You can register 24 hours a day, 7 days a week at [www.tax.ny.gov/star](http://www.tax.ny.gov/star), or by phone weekdays from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. (518-457-2036).

### **Enhanced STAR**

Provides an increased benefit for the primary residences of senior citizens (age 65 and older) with qualifying incomes:

- \$88,050 or less for the 2020-2021 school year,
- \$90,550 or less for the 2021-2022 school year
- based on the first \$70,700 of the full value of a home for the 2021-2022 school year.

The STAR benefit applies only to school district taxes. It doesn't apply to county, town, or city taxes, except in the cities of New York, Buffalo, Rochester, Yonkers, and Syracuse. In those five cities, the exemption is applied partly to city taxes and partly to school taxes.

Note: Senior citizens receiving STAR may also be eligible for the senior citizens exemption. [See Senior citizens exemption to learn more.](#)

## **Enhanced STAR Income Verification Program (IVP)**

All Enhanced STAR recipients are required to participate in the Enhanced STAR Income Verification Program (IVP). In the first year that you apply for the Enhanced STAR exemption, your assessor will verify your eligibility based on the income information you provide. In the following years, we will verify your income eligibility. You will not need to reapply for the exemption or provide copies of your tax returns to your local assessor.

[Click here to learn how to enroll in the IVP Program.](#)

If you have an existing STAR exemption, you may need to reapply with your assessor if you are receiving the Basic STAR exemption and wish to apply for the Enhanced STAR exemption, or if you continue to own the property but have filed a new deed. [Click here to learn how to reapply.](#)

## **Additional Resources and Relevant Links:**

- **STAR Resource Center**
- **Local Official Addresses/Contact Information**
- **Nassau County Land Records Viewer** (allows access to almost all information maintained by the Department of Assessment including assessment roll data, district information, tax maps, property photographs, past taxes, tax rates, exemptions with amounts and comparable sales. )

## **Resources for Students**

**Student Loan and Debt Relief Resources** - NYS DFS maintains a helpful resource page on a variety of financial subjects including financing higher education and repaying student loans.

**Student Programs** - From the halls of higher-learning to the halls of the State Capitol, New York State Senate Student Programs offers undergraduate and graduate students exciting opportunities to learn about state government and to experience firsthand the legislative process. Learn more at <https://www.nysenate.gov/student-programs>.

**Education Debt Consumer Assistance Program (EDCAP)** - EDCAP is a program of the Community Service Society of New York (CSS). It was created to help New Yorkers struggling with student debt navigate the student loan repayment system and regain financial health. We are funded by the New York State Legislature. Call or email: **888-614-5004** or [edcap@cssny.org](mailto:edcap@cssny.org). All services are free and unbiased.

**Student Borrower Bill of Rights** - Know your rights! Every student loan borrower in New York has a set of rights under the law.

**NYLAG (New York Legal Assistance Group)** - Every student has the right to educational opportunity—including access to special education and a higher education free of fraud. NYLAG provides free legal help to students facing inequality. [Learn more](#).

## **Learn more about New York's Unemployment and Pandemic Programs**

Unemployment insurance is funded by the federal government, but administered by each individual state. For more information on unemployment insurance in NY State, click [here](#).

If you are experiencing difficulty contacting the New York State Department of Labor, you can contact your New York State elected officials for assistance. To find your New York State Senator and/or Assembly Member, click [here](#).

## **Health & Wellness Resources**

**Tick and Lyme Disease Prevention**