



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Fred Akshar

## Senator Akshar Calls on State Comptroller to Investigate Unpaid State Grants

FRED AKSHAR November 30, 2022

| ISSUE: **SAM GRANT**



(BINGHAMTON, NY) Senator Fred Akshar joined local community and non-profit leaders to publicly call on State Comptroller Thomas DiNapoli to conduct a full and comprehensive audit of several state grants programs that have gone unpaid due to unexplained administrative inaction.

Akshar identified over a dozen local projects totaling over \$6 million in commitments

through the State and Municipal (SAM) Facilities Program that were already approved in previous state budgets. To date, they are yet unpaid with no measurable progress in the State's allocation project. Many are awaiting a simple signature from the New York Senate Majority.

"Today my message to New York State is simple: Pay what you owe," said Senator Fred Akshar. "New York's Budget continues to balloon as federal aid continues to roll in and millions in new grants are being allocated across the state. Why then is there an inability or unwillingness by the State to honor financial commitments already owed?"

Projects still waiting on grant reimbursement include funding for the Greater Good Grocery Store, Binghamton Parks upgrades, Broome County roadway improvements, little league park improvements at Hyde Park and Maine Endwell's Struble field, elevator upgrades for SEPP senior housing, upgrades to the Discovery Center, Mirabito Stadium improvements, an emergency response vehicle for the Town of Maine and more.

Each of these projects were identified and awarded from funding passed in previous State Budgets under a Republican Senate Majority. Since the Senate Democrat Majority took over in 2019, allocation of funding for these projects have been halted.

Local projects still stuck in a mysterious bureaucratic quagmire are not alone, with similar grants awarded in other Republican districts also held up, including funding for water systems improvements in the Town of Greenwood, window upgrades for the Veteran's Memorial Hall in Beacon, NY, an emergency response vehicle for the Continental Village Volunteer Fire Department and several more.

Remarkably, more than 350 projects originated from the Senate Democrat Majority have already progressed through 2022 without issue. Examples include \$250,000 for elevator upgrades in Albany processed in just 4 months, \$500,000 to the College of Mt. St. Vincent in the Bronx to build a Student Success Center processed and paid in one year, \$100,000 to purchase a public safety response vehicle in Westchester approved in 5 months, \$150,000 for ball field improvements in Guilderland and \$200,000 for renovations to a theater space at the Jewish Community Center on the Hudson progressed in four months.

Akshar is calling on the State Comptroller to provide a formal, thorough audit of the processing of these grants, along with an explanation why so many approved projects are not moving at all. All grants are paid through reimbursement, with recipients leveraging these commitments in an effort to apply to other funding sources.

“Improving our communities is not exclusive to the Republican or Democrats and an elevator for seniors in Binghamton is no less important than an elevator in Albany, nor is an emergency vehicle no more important in Queens, Nassau or Westchester than in Broome County or the Town of Maine,” said Senator Fred Akshar. “These grants are all being awarded to local municipalities, community organizations and non profits to help make life better for the people of New York, regardless of their political persuasion. If this system have repeatedly been abused by those in power from both parties, then this system needs to change.”

**Unpaid SAM projects** with no movement from Senate District 52:

- #4500 - (CCAP) Greater Good Grocery Store: \$150,000 - No movement since 2020, awaiting signature from Senate Finance on an administrative change to recipient;

- #6643 - City of Binghamton Parks Upgrades: \$100,000 - On hold with no movement since 4/5/22, and 1/13/17 before that;
- #15685 - Discovery Center Upgrades: \$66,875 - No movement since 9/28/21;
- #15751 - Maine Emergency Vehicle \$76,000 - No movement since 3/5/21;
- #12882 - Broome County Roadway Improvements: \$1,223,000 - No movement since 9/12/22, and 10/25/21 before that;
- #14329 - Hyde Park Little League Improvements not included: \$110,000 - No movement since 4/22/19;
- #15572 - SEPP Elevator: \$100,000 - No movement since 9/28/21;
- #15641 - Binghamton Police Department Main Desk Renovation: \$190,000 - On hold with no movement since 4/5/22, and 7/9/19 before that;
- #15649 - Mirabito Stadium Upgrades: \$2,500,000 - No movement since 4/5/22;
- #15714 - Maine Endwell Struble Baseball Field Upgrades: \$80,000 - No movement since 5/8/22;
- #9102 - Owego Apalachin Schools Aquaponics Lab: \$350,000 - No movement since 8/4/21;
- #13290 - Broome County Mobile Command Unit: \$250,000 - No movement since 4/30/21;
- #15644 - BOCES Food Truck: \$91,767 - No movement for reimbursement since 5/19/21;
- #12844 - En-Joie Golf Course Improvements: \$350,000 - No movement since 9/12/22
- #15647 - Village of Windsor Infrastructure: \$90,410 - No movement since 7/20/21;
- #15758 - Binghamton Fire Air Tank: \$68,239 - No movement since 4/5/22, and 11/1/19 before that, noted as in “Final Review” and also highlighted as on hold;

Examples of unpaid SAM projects in other Senate Minority Districts around the State:

- Town of Greenwood Water Systems Improvements: \$140,000 - No movement since 8/9/21
- Beacon Veteran's Memorial Hall Window Upgrades: \$100,000 - No movement since 5/26/22
- Emergency Response Vehicle for Continental Village Volunteer Fire Dept.: \$50,000 - No movement since 12/10/19
- Catholic Charities CYO Playing Field Renovations: \$150,000 - No movement since 11/8/21
- Town of Pittstown Road Repair Grader: \$225,000 - No movement since 8/26/19

Examples of **paid SAM projects** from Senate Majority Districts:

- #24414 - Bronx College of Mt. St. Vincent Student Success Center: \$500,000 - Legislative letter on 7/7/21, fully disbursed 7/15/22 (processed and paid in 1 year);
- #24899 - Albany St. Anne Institute Elevator Upgrades: \$250,000 - Legislative letter on 3/15/22, Grant Disbursement Approval (GDA) signed 7/8/22 (processed in 4 months);
- #24914 - Westchester County Public Safety Response Vehicle: \$100,000 - Legislative letter on 3/15/22, GDA signed 7/25/22;
- #24896 - Jewish Community Center on the Hudson Theater Space Renovation: \$200,000 - Legislative letter on 3/15/22, GDA signed 7/14/22;
- #24854 - Guilderland Ball Field Improvements: \$150,000 - Legislative letter on 2/23/22, GDA signed 7/14/22;
- #24814 - Nassau County-Farmingdale Ambulance Equipment: \$100,000 - Legislative letter on 1/31/22, GDA signed 5/24/22;
- #24446 (CCAP) - Hamaspik School of Kings County Classroom Renovations and Office Upgrades: \$200,000 - Legislative letter on 7/13/21, fully disbursed 6/30/22;
- #24010 - Queens-Rockaway Volunteer EMS Fire Truck: \$250,000 - Legislative letter on 8/3/20, fully disbursed 5/2/22.

A full list of legislative grants is available at:[https://nysenate-my.sharepoint.com/:x:/g/personal/alpaugh\\_nysenate\\_gov/EU85IEXKpWpMvVEbQ1ppeHIBposX](https://nysenate-my.sharepoint.com/:x:/g/personal/alpaugh_nysenate_gov/EU85IEXKpWpMvVEbQ1ppeHIBposX)