



Reduces Bureaucratic Hurdles, Streamlines Access to Government Agencies, Shortens Processing Times and Improves Access to Child Care Assistance, Tax Credits, and Critical Food Benefits for Women, Infants and Children

New "Chief Customer Experience Officer" Will Ensure State Agencies Are Efficiently Delivering Results To New Yorkers

Governor Kathy Hochul today announced a plan to make government work better for New Yorkers by transforming the way New Yorkers access services and benefits from State agencies during the 2023 State of the State. The State will implement significant technological enhancements to reduce bureaucratic hurdles and improve access to child care assistance, tax credits, and critical food benefits for women, infants, and children; reduce call wait times; implement e-signature technology; launch “one ID” to improve how residents interact with certain State agencies online; and modernize State agency websites and applications to improve the user experience. In order to help State agencies efficiently deliver results to New Yorkers and ensure that this initiative is successful, the Governor will appoint a new Chief Customer Experience Officer to oversee this statewide transformation. Governor Hochul will also sign the State’s first Executive Order on customer experience to build on this initiative and improve access to State services.

“Since transforming the customer service experience at the DMV as Erie County Clerk, I have been committed to making government work for New Yorkers,” Governor Hochul said. “By eliminating bureaucratic hurdles, simplifying processes, and utilizing new technology, we will vastly improve the way New Yorkers access services and benefits from State agencies.”

"New Yorkers deserve easy and direct access to State agency services," said Lieutenant Governor Antonio Delgado. "I am proud to stand alongside Governor Hochul in announcing this initiative that will cut through the red tape and efficiently connect New Yorkers to critical benefits and services statewide."

New Yorkers commonly face significant hurdles when seeking out benefits and services, whether filing for unemployment insurance, getting a driver's license renewed, filing taxes, or signing up for benefits programs. Residents may need to take time off from work to attend in-person appointments, parse through lengthy applications and navigate archaic websites. These administrative burdens amount to a "time tax" on individuals, especially those who are poor, and hinders their ability to obtain critical safety net services that have been proven to lift families out of poverty.

The Governor's plan will put New Yorkers at the center of service delivery and result in faster processing times, greater efficiency, and improved interactions with government.

Simplify the Child Care Assistance Application Process

New York's child care assistance program is state-supervised and locally administered, which means residents navigate different eligibility requirements depending on where they live. Less than 10 percent of children in families that are income-eligible for the program participate, with enrollment declining over the past 10 years even while federal funding has increased and demand for affordable child care grows.

The State will simplify the documentation process, standardize eligibility and benefits across counties, and launch a statewide electronic solution that will allow families to pre-screen for eligibility and apply for child care assistance. The Governor's plan also will simplify the application process and remove duplicative paperwork for families participating in Medicaid and other programs.

Improve the Client Experience for the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children

About half of the families eligible for the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children, known as WIC, participate in the program and those enrolled in the program do not consistently use their food benefits. To

determine what is preventing eligible families from participating and taking full advantage of the program, the State will gather client feedback through live chat, email, text, and surveys and use that information to improve the delivery of WIC services.

Streamline Access to Tax Credits

Each year, between 6 percent and 18 percent of New Yorkers who are eligible for the State's Earned Income Tax Credit, and at least 4 percent who are eligible for the Empire State Child Credit, do not claim these credits. Use of surface mail by the State Department of Taxation and Finance also contributes to missed refunds, refund adjustments or potential bills for New Yorkers.

To address this, the Department of Taxation and Finance will implement a "mobile document upload" that will allow taxpayers to provide documentation using their mobile devices; and implement direct deposit capability for School Tax Relief credits to reduce the need to mail paper checks to beneficiaries. These proposals will save the State time and money and ensure that more New Yorkers receive the financial assistance they and their families need.

Save Time for Residents and State Workers with E-Signature Technology

New York State agencies process more than 10 million paper transactions annually. Even when applications are available online, some documents cannot be signed electronically. This means forms must be printed, signed, and scanned, resulting in slower processing times and delaying access to services and benefits. Governor Hochul's plan will accelerate the use of electronic signature technology, with a select group of agencies implementing this option by the end of 2023.

Lower Call Wait Times and Reduce Reliance on Phone Calls

Governor Hochul proposes to accelerate the adoption of platforms that will enable residents to interact with State workers at select agencies through their preferred method of communication – live chat, text, email or voice calls. Using artificial intelligence-powered chatbots and voice automation to answer the most common questions will improve the efficiency of agency staff and allow them to assist more residents who opt to call or visit an office daily. At the Department of

Motor Vehicles, this effort will reduce caller wait time by 30 percent and eliminate 200,000 calls annually over the next five years.

Launch “One ID for New York State” to Improve Digital Access

Many New Yorkers currently have different usernames and passwords for State agency websites and applications. This causes confusion, results in forgotten credentials, creates security risks, and requires many residents to submit duplicative information when trying to access services provided by different agencies. The NY.GOV ID+ will provide a single, verified login across State government that gives individuals full control of their personal information, makes it easier to verify and secure their identities, prevents fraudulent account creation or access, and provides for a more seamless customer experience.

Building First-Rate Digital and Design Teams

New York State has more than 100 websites, 1,000 web applications and administers thousands of online transactions. Many of these websites are replete with acronyms and bureaucratic language and some are still not optimized to work on a mobile device, despite an average of more than half of New Yorkers accessing them that way.

Governor Hochul will expand the State’s capacity for web design, including growing the team of user researchers, designers and digital professionals to ensure that websites, applications and online transactions are user-friendly, understandable, accessible and adequately serving New Yorkers.

New York State Chief Information Officer Angelo “Tony” Riddick said, “Creating a ‘One ID’ system for access to New York State Government Services will allow our residents to smoothly consolidate their existing NY.gov ID accounts, quickly verify their identities, and help the State better prevent fraud while ensuring a simple and seamless path to State services for eligible New Yorkers. In addition, it will provide baseline efficiencies that further improve processes going forward. We commend Governor Hochul for recognizing that interacting with State government does not have to be a difficult experience, and for her support of this comprehensive initiative that will strengthen our relationship with our customers and get them the assistance they need and deserve.”

Office of Children and Family Services Acting Commissioner Suzanne Miles-Gustave said , “Child care is critical for working families, especially women, to reach their full career potential while knowing their children are in a safe, nurturing environment. Assistance programs open doors to these foundational services where they may not otherwise be possible, and we must do everything to ensure eligible New Yorkers don’t face barriers to receive this vital funding. I thank Governor Hochul for taking another important step to expand access to child care as more parents seek employment, training and educational opportunities to strengthen the health and well-being of their families.”

Taxation and Finance Acting Commissioner Amanda Hiller said, “Improving the customer experience is at the forefront of the Tax Department’s mission. Thanks to Governor Hochul’s leadership, we’re modernizing our systems to accommodate cutting-edge solutions that will enhance our service to New Yorkers, including the delivery of valuable tax credits.”

Department of Health Acting Commissioner Dr. James McDonald said, “Improving services and benefits to New Yorkers through improved technology will greatly enhance access to critical services offered by the Department of Health. Families that rely on the Department’s Women, Infants and Children (WIC) program should have easy access without the burden of navigating cumbersome bureaucratic obstacles. I thank Governor Hochul for her leadership in expanding the State’s capacity to serve the needs of all New Yorkers.”

Department of Motor Vehicles Commissioner and Chair of the Governor's Traffic Safety Committee Mark J.F. Schroeder said,

"We thank Governor Hochul for her attention to efforts to make the customer service experience better for the thousands of people we deal with on a daily basis. Our agency is already employing a limited live chat option for customers to interact with our Contact Center staff with questions about the status of a license, permit or registration and about REAL ID or enhanced licenses. We have already found that customers face shorter wait times to contact an agent and that by pre-filling information about what they are looking for, the process is sped up for the customer and clearer to everyone involved. This assistance from the governor will go a long way toward helping us achieve the goals of our ongoing transformation initiatives, including bringing the DMV to where the customer is and changing the public’s image about us and what we do each day.”

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