



# NEW YORK CITY COMPTROLLER **SCOTT M. STRINGER**



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1 CENTRE STREET, NEW YORK, NY 10007



*Photo Credit: Susan Watts/Office of New York City Comptroller*

## **Prevailing Wages for Workers**

As the economic impacts of COVID-19 distress New York City's workforce and vulnerable communities, Comptroller Stringer announced a telephone campaign to return over \$2.5 million in unclaimed prevailing wages to workers cheated out of their pay by unscrupulous contractors on City-funded projects. The Comptroller's Bureau of Labor Law has been proactive in enforcing prevailing wage and benefit rates for construction and building service workers employed by contractors on City public work projects. When companies on these public contracts fail to pay the proper wages and benefits, the Comptroller enforces the law to recover the money owed to workers and ensures that they receive the money through outreach.

The phone calls notifying workers — many of whom are immigrants — were made by employees of the Comptroller's Bureau of Labor Law who were telecommuting and conducting intensive research to find telephone numbers and email addresses for workers with unclaimed wages.

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## Increasing Access to Air Conditioners

In New York City, more than 80 percent of heat stroke deaths in recent years involved victims who were exposed to heat in homes without air conditioning. In three out of the past five years in the city, there were 20 or more days when the temperature exceeded 90 degrees in Central Park. Those most vulnerable to extreme heat overlap with groups that face negative health outcomes related to COVID-19 — older adults, people with chronic medical conditions or mental health conditions, and the socially isolated.

To address this critical issue, Comptroller Stringer sent a letter urging the City to strengthen the federal Cooling Assistance Benefit program to provide air conditioners to all New Yorkers who cannot afford them but are at risk of a heat-related illness. The letter emphasized that the sweltering summer heat will only be compounded by shelter-in-place and social distancing measures, placing many seniors and vulnerable New Yorkers at risk for heat stroke at home.



*Photo Credit: astudio/Shutterstock*

## Protecting Incarcerated New Yorkers

In an effort to protect incarcerated New Yorkers amid COVID-19, Comptroller Stringer called on the City to protect the health and safety of correctional facility staff and incarcerated individuals who are most at risk of infection. In a letter to the City, he raised concerns that crowded City jails are ill-equipped to protect people during a pandemic and that the New York City Department of Correction (DOC) has not provided enough information about how they are managing the spread of the virus.

Approximately 80 percent of the DOC workforce is Black or Latinx, while about 88 percent in DOC custody are Black or Latinx. Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, more than 1,100 people — over 350 currently incarcerated individuals and nearly 800 DOC staff — have tested positive for COVID-19. These statistics were compiled as medical professionals on Rikers Island sounded the alarm on the urgent threat COVID-19 poses to their patients.



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## Expanding Safety Net for Vulnerable Populations

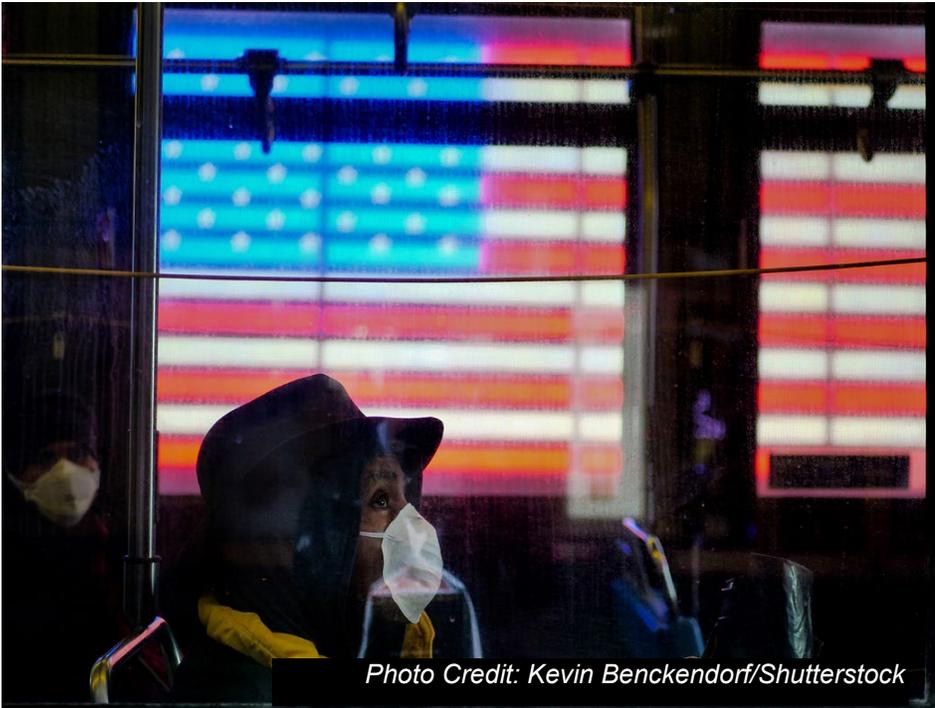


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As the City grapples with the unprecedented loss of life and livelihood in the fallout of COVID-19, Comptroller Stringer has placed a spotlight on the systemic inequalities that make Black and Latinx New Yorkers particularly vulnerable to both COVID-19 and the strains and stresses of the quarantine. Comptroller Stringer took a data-driven approach to examining and mapping the needs and gaps faced by vulnerable populations, and the data is clear: communities of color, immigrants, seniors, and low-income individuals and families are disproportionately impacted by the pandemic and quarantine.

These communities are facing systemic barriers to quality housing, health, food security, environmental quality, and access to technology that put their safety at higher risk during a pandemic. In a new report, Comptroller Stringer called on the City to identify and address these underlying inequities and center these populations in all its response efforts. Solutions included alleviating overcrowded housing, improving air quality, expanding internet access, and eliminating discriminatory loopholes in the social safety net.

## COVID Resource Center

**COVID-19 Resource Center**

The COVID-19 Resource Center contains critical information on the many government programs available to assist New Yorkers in need, recent policy changes regarding health and safety, options for financial support for residents and businesses alike, and organizations to reach out to for additional assistance.

**I am a...**

- Homeowner
- Independent Contractor & Freelancers
- Nonprofit
- Senior
- Small Business
- Tenant

**I am looking for information about...**

- Cultural Activities & Recreation
- Financial Support for Individuals
- Food Access
- Immigrant Resources

**NYC TEXT UPDATES**  
For Updates in English  
Text COVID to 692-692  
Para Actualizaciones en Español  
Text COVIDESP to 692-692

**NYC CORONAVIRUS HOTLINE**  
(888) 364-3065

**COVID-19 FAQ**  
Read More

If you have a question or to submit a resource to be included, please email [COVIDupdate@comptroller.nyc.gov](mailto:COVIDupdate@comptroller.nyc.gov).  
For individual assistance, please email our Community Action Center at

Comptroller Stringer launched a dedicated COVID-19 Resource Center on the Comptroller’s website containing critical information about the many government programs available to assist New Yorkers in need. Other information available includes recent policy changes regarding health and safety, options for financial support for residents and businesses, and organizations to reach out to for additional assistance.

For more information, visit: [comptroller.nyc.gov/services/for-the-public/covid-resources](https://comptroller.nyc.gov/services/for-the-public/covid-resources).

## Contact Us

Community Action Center (212) 669-3916  
Office of the New York City Comptroller, 1 Centre Street, New York, NY 10007

# Fighting for Frontline Workers



Photo Credit: Susan Watts/Office of New York City Comptroller

New York City's essential frontline workers are helping battle the COVID-19 pandemic in public transit, health care, child care, supermarkets, pharmacies, sanitation, janitorial, utility, and delivery industries. These are the workers that are putting their lives on the line to keep our city running, but they are too often ignored, underpaid, and overworked. Comptroller Stringer analyzed who these workers are, where they live, where they're from, how they get to work, their childcare and healthcare needs, and their financial stresses. The data revealed that most are women and people of color, are highly reliant on public transportation to get to work, and are often living at or below the poverty line with children.

Comptroller Stringer outlined a comprehensive set of proposals to assist frontline workers including prioritizing COVID-19 testing for all frontline workers, creating access to hotel rooms and housing for frontline workers to be close to work or quarantined away from family members, expanding hazard pay, guaranteeing healthcare, extending unemployment and other benefits to these workers, and maintaining regular subway and bus services all day long.



Photo Credit: Ron Adar /Shutterstock

## Victim Compensation Fund



*Photo Credit: Susan Watts/Office of New York City Comptroller*

Comptroller Stringer called for the creation of a Victim Compensation Fund to help the surviving family members of all frontline workers who went to work and lost their lives. These frontline workers are caring for our sick, teaching our children, stocking our grocery shelves, staffing our pharmacies, and performing essential government services. The Fund would take care of the families of all frontline workers who have succumbed to the virus, regardless of immigration status, with a national, federally-funded compensation fund modeled after the one created after 9/11 that would cover health costs of all frontline workers, now and in the future.

## Domestic Violence Support

At a time when most New Yorkers are being strongly encouraged to stay in their homes, the stress and economic insecurity that many families are currently experiencing can be triggers for domestic violence. These pressures, combined with the fact that households are now isolated due to social distancing and traditional sources of support outside the home may not be available, can make this a doubly toxic situation, ripe for increased violence.

Comptroller Stringer highlighted concerns for survivors of domestic violence who may feel increasingly at risk in their homes during the COVID-19 crisis by outlining recommendations to the Family Court of the State of New York including strengthening the COVID-19 hotline, providing guidance in multiple languages, working with sheriffs to prevent delays in serving Orders of Protection, and better publicizing the renewal of expired Orders of Protection.



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## Support for Minority and Women-Owned Businesses



*Photo Credit: Susan Watts/Office of New York City Comptroller*

Hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers have lost their jobs amid the pandemic as many businesses and non-profits have had to lay off valued employees. Our city's Minority and Women-Owned Business Enterprises (MWBEs) need access to tools and resources to stay afloat in this challenging environment. In an effort to assist MWBEs with navigating the difficult road ahead, Comptroller Stringer announced a biweekly series of online workshops to expand access to available resources, services, and business opportunities for small businesses and MWBEs impacted by COVID-19.

These presentations are delivered via Zoom on a range of topics including financial resources from the federal, state, and City government as well as the private sector, and current business opportunities within City and State procurement. Interpretation services are available in 12 different languages. The webinar series is part of the Comptroller's MWBE University, a year-long series of workshops designed to increase access to contracting opportunities for MWBEs and ensure all New Yorkers have an equitable chance to earn business from the City's multi-billion dollar procurement budget.