



MONDAY ALERT

New York State Alliance *for* Retired Americans

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December 1, 2025

Did You Know???

Report: Social Security Provides a Significant Boost to State and Local Economies

Social Security's economic impact continued to rise in 2023, [according to a new report](#) from the National Institute on Retirement Security (NIRS) entitled "Quantifying the Economic Impact of Social Security Benefit Spending."

The report determined that in 2023 alone, Social Security's impact on the U.S. economy was \$2.6 trillion. More than 67 million Americans received \$1.37 trillion in benefits, while approximately 12.2 million domestic jobs were supported by the program leading to \$804.6 billion in income. This combined created tax revenues of \$363 billion, while \$1.6 trillion was added to the GDP.

Overall, every dollar spent on Social Security translated to \$2 in economic activity. For example, [in New York State alone](#) a total of 3.8 million residents received benefits, while 440 thousand jobs were supported by Social Security. Also in New York for each dollar paid out in Social Security benefits supported \$2 in economic activity occur in NYS. (\$94 billion)

"These findings affirm how important Social Security is to our entire country," said **Robert Roach, Jr. and Barry A. Kaufmann** President of the Alliance and the New York State Alliance. "These earned benefits are spent and invested back into our local economies. More than ever, it's crucial to protect and strengthen this vital institution."

More data, including 51 fact sheets and a recorded webinar, can be found [here](#).

Long Island Chapter of NYSARA Helps Combat Food Insecurity at Thanksgiving and Beyond

The Long Island Chapter is addressing food insecurity at Thanksgiving. Two years ago, the chapter decided that celebrating Thanksgiving should also include doing something nice for people who were food insecure. The chapter thought that our members would bring nonperishable food to be donated to a local pantry.

The chapter initially had difficulty finding a food pantry to donate the food collected and had a large amount of food but no place to send it. They finally connected with a food pantry that was run by a local Church. They told us that they would be glad to accept the donation but were unable to pick it up. So members of the chapter brought it to them.

Subsequently the chapter received a beautiful letter of thanks from their Priest. Then we spoke to the person who was in charge of the church pantry. She explained to us that most pantries are well stocked in November and December because that is when they receive a large quantity of donations. It is the other ten months of the year when they really need our help.

Our Executive Board decided to incorporate the wish to help people that are food insecure into the DNA of the chapter. Starting at that time each meeting notice would ask that members bring nonperishable food. The result is that we now have a flow of donations from our membership that we pass through to the food bank.

As union members the chapter believes that it is our responsibility to fight against food insecurity experienced by those who struggle with this issue on a daily basis.

Fiscal Policy Institute NYS Mid Year Budget Analysis

New York State's Division of the Budget (DOB) recently published its [mid-year budget update](#), which forecasts considerable budget gaps in the years ahead: an apparently staggering \$26.8 billion gap over the next four years *before even*

accounting for the impending losses of federal funding under the so-called “One Big Beautiful Bill Act” (OBBBA).

At first glance, this seems like an insurmountable challenge. If the State is facing dramatic deficits *before* it loses federal funding, then a statewide fiscal crisis must be around the corner. As our report shows, however, the DOB’s forecasted budget gaps are products of excessively conservative revenue forecasting, rather than an underlying imbalance between revenue and spending. In fact, barring a recession, the State’s budget—before accounting for the OBBBA impacts—is likely to generate surpluses over the next four years.

The DOB forecasts overestimate the risk of revenue shortfalls but also *underestimate* the OBBBA impacts, thereby minimizing their impact on the state budget. **The Fiscal Policy Institute estimates that cumulative funding cuts under the OBBBA will be \$5.6 billion in the next fiscal year, FY 2027, and \$14.3 billion by 2030.** These cuts broadly reflect the decision of the current Congress and President to eliminate health care coverage for many low- and middle-income families in order to fund tax cuts for the well off. The bill is especially generous to those earning more than \$1 million each year. In New York, these taxpayers stand to save a collective [\\$12 billion annually](#) on their federal taxes.

Our report explains why the State’s fiscal position is considerably stronger than the DOB forecasts indicate and, at the same time, why the OBBBA’s impacts are more severe than the State is accounting for. It also demonstrates the continuing strength of the State’s tax base and fiscal reserves, and that the fiscal challenges ahead can be managed through raising new revenue to the extent necessary.

Signs an Older Adult May Need Help

From the NYS Office for the Aging

- Change in eating habits
- Neglecting personal hygiene

- Neglecting housework
- Inappropriate behavior
- Change in relationship patterns
- Burns or injury marks
- Decreased participation in activities once important to them
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What is NYSOFA NY Connects

- NY connects is a trusted place to go for free, objective information and assistance on long-term services and supports (LTSS) in New York State for individuals of all ages and abilities, regardless of income or payer source.
- Established by NYSOFA in partnership with New York State Department of Health (DOH)
- Administered by the Local (County) Office for the Aging centers and Independent Living Centers (ILCs), in partnership with the Local Department of Social Services in each county.

NY Connects: Core Functions

- Information and Assistance
 - Preliminary financial and functional screening process to assist individuals in identifying options and access to LTSS
 - Coordination of applications for public benefits and other services including Medicaid

- Guidance and linkage to functional and financial eligibility determination processes
- Cross-systems coordination to help individuals access Medicaid and non-Medicaid services
- Person-Centered Options Counseling
- Outreach and public education activities for individuals of all ages and abilities in need of LTSS
- Facilitation of local Long-Term Care Councils

Accessing NY Connects

- In Person at local NY Connects office or in the individual's home or other community setting
- Call Local NY Connects directly
- NY Connects Resource Directory <https://nyconnects.ny.gov/>
- Statewide Phone number 1-800-342-9871

Only One Week Left for Medicare Open Enrollment

Medicare beneficiaries have until December 7 to enroll in new plans or change their coverage. During this time, patients can assess changes in their current plans and other plans offered in their area. They can also choose different or new coverage based on their needs.

[Research has shown](#) that many seniors don't even compare plans – let alone change coverage – during open enrollment. But health care costs have risen in the last year and are expected to continue to grow next year. Medicare Part B premiums [will increase](#) by 9.7 percent, further compounding expenses for seniors. Advocates say that's why it's even more urgent for beneficiaries to find coverage that fits their needs and budget.

Experts say that older Americans should pay special attention to how their current plans might change or how new coverage might differ from their current coverage. Many Medicare Advantage and Medicare Supplement plans are increasing the maximum amount that beneficiaries have to pay out-of-pocket for their care next year. Patients might lose access to their preferred providers and/or see fewer Part D and patient preferred organization (PPO) plan options.

For seniors who are confused about how to navigate open enrollment, State Health Insurance Assistance Programs provide unbiased guidance. [Find your local SHIP office here.](#)

"Costs are going up and options are more limited this year, which makes it even more critical for seniors to check their coverage and make sure they are in the right plan for their health care needs," said **Richard Fiesta**, Executive Director of the Alliance. "Luckily, there are resources like star ratings, the 'Medicare & You 2026' handbook, and State Health Insurance Assistance Programs to make it easier for older Americans to evaluate their choices."

Retirees Welcome Second Round of Lower-Priced Drugs Negotiated Under the Inflation Reduction Act

The following statement was issued by Richard Fiesta, Executive Director of the Alliance for Retired Americans, regarding the [Administration's announcement](#) of lower, negotiated prices for people with Medicare:

"The requirement that Medicare negotiate lower prices for prescription drugs continues to pay dividends for older Americans and taxpayers. Today's announcement of lower drug prices for [15 high-priced drugs](#) is a win for the more than 5 million seniors who take these drugs to treat asthma, diabetes, lung disease, and other serious conditions, and will soon pay less for their medications.

"The 4.4 million members of the Alliance are pleased that the Trump Administration has followed the law, negotiated these prices, and defended this law in court.

"We call on the President to work with Congress to increase the number of drugs subject to price negotiation and use this common sense approach to deliver even more savings for the American people."

KFF Health News: Kennedy Sharpens Vaccine Attacks, Without Scientific Backing
By Céline Gounder

As the federal government prepares for the next meeting of its Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices, Health and Human Services Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. has intensified his attacks on aluminum vaccine components used in many shots to boost the body's immune response.

Kennedy, a longtime anti-vaccine activist before seeking public office, claims that aluminum adjuvants are neurotoxic and tied to autism, asthma, autoimmune disease, and food allergies.

But science and medicine advances a different view. Strong recommendations that parents introduce peanut-containing foods to infants early, for instance, have led to a drop in the incidence rate of peanut allergies.