The stunning success of the Excluded Workers Fund (EWF) let our communities survive and recover from the pandemic. Working families across New York were able to finally pay down debt, address medical needs, buy school supplies, put food on the table, and have the freedom to leave abusive partners and unsafe working conditions.

Yet the $2.1 billion only covered a fraction of total eligible workers. Adding $3 billion to the fund will make it easier for all workers who could be eligible for the fund to get access to it.

Why More Funding?
- While many workers received life-changing support from the EWF, tens of thousands of New Yorkers were left out:
  - Just nine weeks after opening applications, the Department of Labor closed applications for the fund, following surging demand that depleted the full $2.1 billion allocated. The DOL has estimated that 75,000 applicants were denied due to insufficient funds.
  - Outside of NYC, community organizations did not have enough time to hire staff, complete sufficient outreach, and assist workers with applications.
  - The EWF absorbed the pitfalls of other programs, and served a larger population than anticipated. Workers who should have had access to unemployment or Pandemic Unemployment Assistance, but didn’t know they qualified and thus didn’t apply for them, successfully applied for EWF.

Who Will Be Covered?
- Workers who would have been eligible under the first iteration of the EWF, but were denied due to outstanding policy issues.
- People paid off the books, workers not listed on their lease or utility bills, and New Yorkers affected by Hurricane Ida who struggled to apply.
- By addressing policy issues that impeded the distribution of funds in 2021, we can strive closer to geographical equity and serve hundreds of thousands more workers – including the 75,000 denied due to insufficient funds.

How Much Will It Cost?

Second-Year Cost: $3 Billion

New York State is experiencing a surge in revenue: it has received $7B more in taxes than expected last year, and for the first time, the state doesn’t anticipate any budget gaps in the next 4 fiscal years. There is enough incoming revenue to ensure everyone, including excluded workers, can take part in the economic recovery.