

New Rochelle Review



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New Rochelle High School Celebrates 128th Commencement

New Rochelle High School (NRHS) marked its 128th commencement exercises with 590* graduating seniors receiving their diplomas at the Westchester County Center in White Plains. The Class of 2026 - the 100th to graduate from the NRHS building on Clove Road - has garnered a long list of academic, athletic, and artistic achievements.

"No two people in this room were ever supposed to have the same story. We all started at different places, we faced different challenges, we carried different dreams," said Class of 2026 President Stone Pride. "This isn't just a graduating class. It's a room full of possibilities, and that's what makes this moment so exciting. The future is waiting for us to build it."

Valedictorian Corey Seelenfreund said, "Embrace the new, the challenges, and the independence. By having the opportunity to make your own decisions, you'll have the opportunity to explore what matters most to you. I'm so incredibly excited to see what we all accomplish."

"Know that you are loved by your families, by your communities, by this city, and that this



Valedictorian Corey Seelenfreund

love travels with you wherever you go," said Mayor Yadira Ramos-Herbert. "Know that we are so very proud of each and every one of you; not just today, but every day when you show up and work hard."

"With every breath you are given on this earth, I dare you to love," Student Government President Carlos Del Aguila challenged his classmates. "While you are still young, while

your heart still beats, and while you can still speak, love. Because that is what the little child that still lives in each of you would have done."

NRHS Alumnus and Board of Education President William Iannuzzi advised the graduates to face the adversity that life brings and succeed in spite of it. "Your future is not defined by what has happened to you. It is not defined by your mistakes or your setbacks. It is defined

by what you choose to do next. Your class has already shown that. You have shown that young people are not the leaders of tomorrow. They are the leaders of today."

"You have lived, breathed, and championed what we call that 'One New Rochelle' spirit," Superintendent Dr. Corey W. Reynolds said to the graduates. "We see that brilliant spir-

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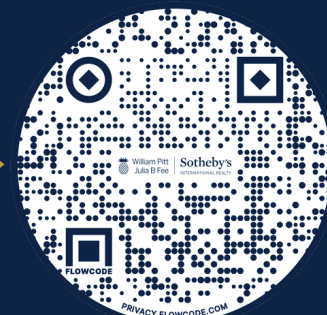
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Source: OKMLS, 2025, total dollar volume of single family homes sold by agent, New Rochelle school district. Jocelyn ranks in the Top 1% in Westchester County by single family homes sold, total dollar volume, 2025. Top 1.5% in the United States by Real Trends, America's Best.

From the Office of the New Rochelle City Manager



NEW ROCHELLE CITY MANAGER
WILFREDO MELENDEZ

Dear Neighbors,

I hope Summer 2026 has been a great one for you and yours. July had no shortage of excitement in New Rochelle and we've been able to create great moments for residents and push forward important projects to improve our City.

One of the signature events of the Summer is our annual "Spark the Sound" fireworks show, which was more special this year as we celebrate America 250. This year's event saw our Downtown Summer Sizzle Concert Series head to Hudson Park, with live musical performances entertaining the crowds before the night sky glowed from the firework over the Long Island Sound after a brief rain delay. Just

one week later, the America 250 festivities continued at City Hall, where the New Rochelle America 250 Committee hosted "Voices of 'We the People'", a community reading marking the first public reading of the Declaration of Independence in Westchester County that took place on July 11th, 1776. Members of the community gathered on the dais of City Council Chambers and read the preamble to the Declaration of Independence in multiple languages, and other presenters read texts from Civil Rights leaders, suffragettes and the Indigenous people of our area. The event was a great showcase of the diversity of our community and the spirit that continues to make America what it is.

While the aforementioned storm activity over the July 4th weekend didn't stop the fireworks display, the massive rainfalls that hit our region in early July did test our Department of Public Works teams, who worked around the clock to respond to emergencies and monitor any flood-prone areas. In July DPW was also hard at work pushing ahead with a number of Stormwater Mitigation Projects to address trouble spots across the City. One of these is a Drainage Improvement project along Wiltshire Road. 17 new catch basins were installed, along with new piping

to help convey runoff and prevent surges during heavy rain events.

We also met with neighbors on the North End to discuss another planned project along the Sheldrake River corridor. Our City Engineer Gino Frabasile showed off designs for the project, which will include two new culverts at Pinebrook Boulevard and Tulip Lane, as well as an overflow bypass culvert that should significantly reduce flooding nearby.

July's storms also caused a few headaches for residents as the rains and high winds downed a number of trees onto power lines, blocking parts of vital roadways like Pinebrook Boulevard and Quaker Ridge Road. While our Police Department and DPW teams work hard to respond to these situations, clearing a downed tree on a line is complicated by the fact we have to wait for the utility that owns and maintains those lines to assess the condition before a tree can be safely removed. If you happen to see a downed tree, you can notify the NRPD's non-emergency hotline at . And if you ever lose power call Con Edison at 1-800-75-CONED (26633)

Our Parks Department has also been in hard at work over the past few months. Last month, the team celebrated the ribbon cutting at the newly renovated 1923

Building at Flowers City Park. Thanks to funding provided through a 2021 American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) federal grant, the facility now features dedicated locker rooms, ADA-accessible restrooms and showers, and flexible gathering space to support coaches, athletes, and game officials during sporting events. This investment enhances one of Westchester County's busiest athletic destinations, providing modern amenities that match the park's growing popularity as a premier venue for tournaments, leagues, and athletic rentals over the past decade. The Parks Department also celebrated the opening of a new playground at Maplewood Park, including new climbing equipment, swing-sets and a basketball court. These additions, along with a new walking path at - - -, were the result of ARPA funding and the support of NY State Senator Shelley Mayer and the City of New Rochelle's Capital Plan over the course of less than 2 years.

Our Summer of Soccer slate of programming was a great opportunity to capitalize on the excitement of the world's biggest Soccer tournament arriving to our area. From the Kickoff at Skidelsky Field in Flowers City Park, to our Community

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Boys & Girls Club of New Rochelle World Cup Viewing Party Brings Community Together, Leaves Lasting Impact on Local Youth

While the final whistle has blown on the 2026 summer of soccer, its impact continues to be felt in New Rochelle. Through the support of the New York Life Foundation, the Boys & Girls Club of New Rochelle welcomed more than 300 youth and families for a World Cup Watch Party that celebrated cultural pride, strengthened community connections and inspired healthy, active lifestyles long after the tournament concluded.

“The Boys & Girls Club of New Rochelle was thrilled to welcome and host our community, who clearly had a wonderful time and engaged in a fun shared experience in a safe, supportive, family-friendly environment,” said Club Chief Program Officer Will Iannuzzi. “The Watch Party also demonstrated the powerful lessons of teamwork, resilience and leadership through healthy competition, all helping create memories and foster friendships and understanding.”

Hosted in partnership with Boys & Girls Clubs of America and the New York

Life Foundation, the celebration invited youth and families to experience soccer clinics, freestyle soccer play, games, art activities, esports, and the championship match in a welcoming environment that reflected the diversity of the New Rochelle community.

To extend the impact beyond the event, Boys & Girls Clubs of America also donated foosball tables and FC 26 esports gaming equipment, creating new opportunities for Club members to stay active, build friendships and engage in healthy competition year-round. Free soccer balls and slippers were also donated, as were make-your-own tacos from a Tacos El Carrito of New Rochelle food truck, pizza, snacks and beverages.

“This celebration is about bringing the community together and welcoming everyone into the Boys & Girls Club of New Rochelle,” said Eric Osborne, the Boys & Girls Club of America’s Senior Director, Sports & esports. “Thanks to partners like the New York Life Founda-



tion, we’re able to create meaningful experiences like today’s Watch Party while continuing to invest in programs that help young people thrive.”

Robert D., 16, a counselor in training at the Boys & Girls Club of New Rochelle Mascaro Clubhouse, helped administer the giveaway of 300 soccer balls and 100 pairs of slippers. A “Club kid” since the age of 5, said it was inspiring to award free items and see recipients’ appreciation. He noted that the Club has been vital to his growth, education and maturity. “I’m surrounded by people who have helped me find myself,” he said, noting his interest in

becoming an electrician. “I’m surrounded by ideas, and given that experience, it can help me narrow down what I’d like to do moving forward.”

Boys & Girls Club of New Rochelle is proud to be affiliated with Boys & Girls Club of America, widely considered as both the leading youth organization and among the top nonprofits in the United States. Learn more at bgcnr.org and donate at bgcnr.org/donate. Visit bgca.org to learn more about the Boys & Girls Club of America and newyorklife.com/foundation to learn about the New York Life Foundation.

New Firefighters Graduate from The Westchester County Career Fire Chiefs Firefighters Academy

Thirty-five recruits from 12 fire departments in Westchester and beyond graduated last month from the Westchester County Career Fire Chiefs Firefighters Academy.

The new firefighters are going to work for nine departments in Westchester, two in Dutchess, and one in



Orange. They were awarded their certificates before a packed house at the Chappaqua Performing Arts Center in New Castle.

Deputy County Executive Joan McDonald congratulated the graduates for successfully completing the rigorous academic and physical demands of their Academy training. She noted that firefighters need a broad range of skills to handle incidents ranging from building fires to hazardous materials to rescue and recovery efforts following severe storms.

McDonald said, “To Class 01-2026, best of luck to you as you make your way in this demanding, rewarding and noble profession you have chosen. On behalf of County Executive Jenkins, I wish all of you long, safe and successful careers.”

She also thanked the career chiefs, Academy commanding officers, Academy instructors, and staff from the Department of Emergency Services for preparing the new firefighters for the challenges ahead.

Other speakers who lauded the graduates were DES Commissioner Susan Spear; Fairview Fire Chief Howard Reiss and Eastchester Fire Department Lt. Dominick DiRienzo, who served as one of the Academy’s commanding officers.

The local graduates and their departments are: Eastchester: Kevin Lee; New Rochelle: Michael Acocella, Rameek Boyd, Lonnie Jones, Anthony Petrone; Pelham: Anthony Romano; and Scarsdale.

From the Office of the New Rochelle City Manager

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Coed Soccer Tournament where 6 teams faced off for bragging rights at the best squad in the City, there was a palpable energy at each event. We capped it all off on Sunday, July 19th with a Finale Festival at Ruby Dee Park and Lawton Street where hundreds gathered to watch Spain take an extra-time victory over Argentina. It was the culmination of a lot of planning from our Parks & Recreation team, collaboration with the Downtown Business Improvement District and [MW1.1] the New Rochelle Chamber of Commerce, as well as a reminder of the spirit of community that makes New Rochelle special.

Community is a huge part of two annual [MW2.1] traditions in New Rochelle. The New Rochelle Police Department is hosting National Night Out on Tuesday, August 4 at City Hall and New Rochelle Police Headquarters from 5 PM to 8 PM. The family-friendly event is open to everyone, with food, music and the opportunity to get to know some of the people who help keep our City safe. On August 29, New Rochelle’s West End community welcomes everyone to sample the flavors of its locals at The Taste of Union Avenue. From First Street to Fourth Street,

Restaurants on Union Ave. will offer some of their signature dishes as families can shop with local vendors, family friendly activities and live performances from 1 PM to 7 PM. It’s a much-anticipated event that brings smiles to faces with plenty of food and fun to go around.

We want to remind you of all the ways to connect with us. You can sign up for our NewRo Alert system at <http://www.newrochelleny.gov/newroalert> to receive calls, texts and/or email updates. The MobileNR app, available on the Apple App Store Google Play Store, is also a great tool to let us know about any non-emergency concerns in your neighborhood. You can also look to our City social media accounts on Facebook, Instagram and X. And, check out my monthly City Manager Update to learn more about City’s initiatives, projects, and programs. To view the update, visit: newrochelleny.gov/citymanager.

As we keep working for you and our City, we welcome any feedback and all feedback. I encourage all residents to reach out to my office with any questions, comments or suggestions. Thanks for your continued support and partnership and I look forward to connecting with you.

Former Visa CEO Elected Chair of Iona University Board of Trustees

Iona University recently announce that Alfred F. Kelly Jr. '80, '81MBA, '19H, retired executive chairman and chief executive officer of Visa, has been elected chair of the Iona Board of Trustees.

A distinguished alumnus whose career has spanned some of the world's most influential organizations, Kelly succeeds Michael P. Hegarty '66, whose years of dedicated leadership have helped to steer Iona through a period of growth and transformation.

As chair, Kelly will work closely with President Seamus Carey, Ph.D., fellow trustees and University leadership to advance Iona's strategic vision, strengthen its national profile and continue to expand opportunities for students in an increasingly competitive landscape.

"I have had the privilege of working closely with Al over the past several years. His counsel is always thoughtful, incisive and deeply informed. Yet what impresses me most is his enduring commitment to the institutions and values that helped to shape his success," Carey said. "We are deeply grateful and fortunate for his leadership as we continue to build upon the

momentum and develop future leaders of character and purpose at Iona."

An active and engaged alumnus, Kelly, who earned a Bachelor of Arts in Computer and Information Science and an MBA from Iona, is a familiar presence on campus – whether sharing career insights with students or sitting courtside in the Hynes Athletics Center cheering on the Gaels alongside his wife and fellow alumna, Peggy Kelly '81, '84MBA.

Having served as a trustee previously, Kelly rejoined the Iona Board in 2024, bringing a wealth of C-suite experience to the role. From 2016 to 2023, Kelly served as CEO of Visa, leading the company through a period of remarkable growth with annual revenues climbing from roughly \$15 billion to nearly \$33 billion. He was elected chairman of the board in 2019 and became executive chairman in 2023 before retiring the following year.

Yet his commitment to Iona extends



Alfred F. Kelly, Jr.

far beyond his professional accomplishments. A graduate of Iona Preparatory, Kelly has long championed the transformative power of Catholic education. Most recently, he played a key role in shepherding the partnership between Iona University and NewYork-Presbyterian, which led to the creation of the NewYork-Presbyterian Iona School of Nursing & Health Sciences. He and Peggy also generously supported the development of the

Kelly Center for Health Sciences, a state-of-the-art facility that serves as the centerpiece of Iona's growing Bronxville campus.

"It is an honor to be elected chair of the Board of Trustees," said Kelly, who originally joined the Board in 1995 and was reelected multiple times to serve for 13 years. "Iona's mission is as relevant today as it has ever been. The University is providing students with a world-class education rooted in faith, service and opportunity while preparing graduates to lead in an increasingly complex world. I look forward to working alongside President Carey, my fellow trustees, University leadership and the Iona community as we build upon the momentum already underway."

As the University welcomes new leader-

ship, it also recognizes the contributions of outgoing Board Chair Michael P. Hegarty '66.

"Mike's leadership and guidance have been invaluable in shaping Iona into the institution it is today," Carey said. "Mike challenged us to think boldly and act confidently as we pursued a path of innovation across the University, always remaining focused and faithful to our mission. The success we enjoy today is due in no small part to Mike's unwavering commitment and we are profoundly grateful for the countless lives he has impacted along the way."

"It has been a privilege serving Iona University as both a trustee and especially as Board chair," Hegarty said. "Enrollment is growing, opportunities are expanding, students are thriving and the University's financial strength is among the nation's best. At the same time, the core values that have always guided Iona remain central to its mission. I am deeply grateful for my time spent on the Board and look forward to all the ways the University will continue to flourish in the years ahead."

"We stand upon a foundation at Iona that has been strengthened over generations, rooted in a legacy and a Catholic tradition that date back centuries," Carey said. "Today, we are eager to carry this work forward as we continue to elevate the University."

Visit iona.edu

New Rochelle High School Celebrates 128th Commencement

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it in your diverse talents, our artists, musicians, and performers who fill our spaces with color and soul. We see it in our student leaders, our National Honor Society inductees, and in our fierce advocates who refuse to stay silent and always stand up for what is right."

"The future of New Rochelle High School and the City of New Rochelle is bright," said Principal Dr. Dagoberto Artiles. "It is even brighter for what is yet to come. This is just the beginning, not the end of a journey. We will always be here for you. You are a small group of young people who have taken the first step in preparing for your future. The best is yet to come."

Seven members of the NRHS Class of 2026 are headed to Ivy League schools: Brown University (2), Harvard University, University of Pennsylvania (3), and Yale.

Other noteworthy achievements from the class include:

- One National Merit Scholar and three National Merit Scholarship Program Finalists
- Five QuestBridge full-ride scholarships to Colgate University, Harvard University, Hamilton College, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and the University of Pennsylvania. Together, their scholarships are valued at more than \$2 million.
- One All-America Soccer Team member and Division I Player of the Year
- One New York State Singles Tennis champion
- Twenty-one students committed to play their sport at a Division I, II, or III college or uni-

versity

- One Metro Award winner for Outstanding Performance in a Featured Female-Identified Role
- One All-State Symphony Orchestra musician
- Approximately one-third* of students graduating with a grade point average of 3.75 or higher
- The Class of 2026 took 2,140 Advanced Placement courses throughout the course of their high school years
- 88 students earned the New York State Seal of Biliteracy; 70 students earned the New York State Seal of Civic Readiness
- 38 students will attend highly selective schools, which include

In all, 420 Class of 2026 graduates will attend college or university.

The diverse career paths of the Class of 2026 also extend beyond traditional four-year campuses.

- Twenty-two of this year's graduates will immediately enter careers in the trades
- Eleven students are joining the United States Armed Forces (Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marines)
- Thirty-four graduates will begin their careers in the workforce
- Four students will take a structured gap year

*The number of students graduating and final GPA are unofficial pending the results of Regents Exams and the final marking period grade submissions.

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Calendar of Events



Historic Hudson Valley Summer Saturdays Series

Philipsburg Manor, Sleepy Hollow
The weekly family-friendly series featuring hands-on crafts, live demonstrations and interactive family activities through September 5 with programming that connects regional colonial history with hands-on learning and fun through themed activities, art projects, and self-guided tours of the Na-

tional Historic Landmark.

August 8 – Clay & Creation: Participants can create pinch pots and paint tiles inspired by Dutch Delftware. The event features a one-day-only exhibition of original ceramics by Thomas Commeraw, a free Black potter active in colonial New York.

August 15 – The Big Play Date: Features 18th-century recreational activities, including ninepins, stilts, and hoop-and-stick. Workshops include historic toy making and a percussion session led by KoSankofa.

August 22 – Seeds & Sprouts: Focusing on botany, horticulture, and historic medicine, the day’s programming includes guided garden tours, marigold potting, and the assembly of traditional herbal remedies.

August 29 – Preserves & Pickles: Exploring historic food preservation methods, visitors will learn about drying, canning, and smoking while pickling radishes and making sachets.

September 5 – Global Grains: The day features cooking demonstrations of grain-based dishes from around the world with chefs Rene Leon and Voila Afrique. Kids can create their own grain collage, paint with flour paste, and hear stories about bread from around the world.

Visit <https://hudsonvalley.org/events/summer-saturdays-at-philipsburg-manor/> for tickets.

Hospice of Westchester

“In Celebration” Gala Cocktail Reception

September 17, 2026, 5:30 p.m. — 7:30 p.m.

Westchester Country Club, 99 Biltmore Avenue, Rye

In support of The Anna & Louis H. Shereff Caregiver, Complementary Care and Bereavement Programs. This year’s event will honor Susan Fox, President & CEO, White Plains Hospital and Regional Senior Vice President, Hudson Valley, Montefiore Einstein. The event will also feature a Celebration of Life for James P. O’Toole, a steadfast supporter, former Board Chair, and cherished member of the Hospice of Westchester family. A special recognition will be given to longtime supporter and Grand Sponsor of the event, Rochelle E. Shereff. Individual tickets (\$400), journal ads, and sponsorships are available. The evening will feature a vast array of culinary delights, an open bar, and entertainment. For more information, contact Holly Benedict at hbenedict@hospiceof-westchester.com or 914-682-1484, ext. 122.



The Great Jack O’Lantern Blaze

New York’s most highly anticipated fall tradition is back and bigger than ever. The Great Jack O’Lantern Blaze® returns to Van Cortlandt Manor with its longest trail of illuminated pumpkin displays in event history. At The Great Jack O’Lantern Blaze, running for 44 nights in Croton-on-Hudson from September 18 through November 8, the expanded path features exciting new

attractions. The Creature Feature Forest pays tribute to Van Cortlandt Manor’s history as home to a drive-in movie theater in the mid 20th-Century, inviting visitors to meet a cast of classic movie monsters carved entirely from pumpkins. Nearby, Literary Lane reimagines familiar fables, giving classic children’s tales a whole new glow. On the lawn of the site’s regal manor house, visitors are invited to an interactive dance party. As part of its 2026 expansion, Blaze is more accessible than ever, with expanded value pricing of just \$24 on select evenings. The Great Jack O’Lantern Blaze is presented by Con Edison. Contributing Sponsors include JPMorgan Chase and Northwell Phelps Hospital.

Hospitality Partners are Windrose on Hudson and Tarrytown House Estate. Beverage Sponsors include Captain Lawrence and Hudson North Cider Co. Media Sponsors are WHUD and The Peak. All events have limited capacity and regularly sell out; advance ticket purchase is required. Tickets went for all the activities went on sale on July 30 at www.hudsonvalley.org. Presales began July 27 for Historic Hudson Valley members, followed by app users on July 28, and social media fans and past ticket buyers on July 29. (Download at hudsonvalley.org/app to access the app presale).

Pelham Art Center

August Figure Drawing

August 7, 6:00 pm – 8:00 pm

Enjoy a relaxed evening of creativity and artistic exploration. Artists of all experience levels are welcome in this supportive, low-pressure space. A nude figure model will provide a range of timed poses for two hours. Please bring your own art supplies; all mediums are encouraged.

Cost: \$20 | Tickets available at <https://pelhamartcenter.app.neoncrm.com/nx/portal/neonevents/events?path=%2Fportal%2Fevents%2F41793>

Junk Journal Night

August 14, 6:00 pm – 8:00 pm

Turn scraps and keepsakes into unique collaged pages. We encourage participants to bring their own journal and collage materials, though additional supplies will be available if needed. This event is free and open to the public.

Visit pelhamartcenter.org for further details.

Westchester County Parks and Share Creative present

The Robison Summr Concert Series

Kensico Dam Plaza, Valhalla, 7 to 9pm



August 13 -- **Captain Jack** (Billy Joel Tribute)

August 21 -- Uncaged (Zac Brown Tribute)

August 27 -- Damn the Torpedoes (Tom Petty Concert Experience)

Free admisstion and parking. Visit parks.westchestercountyny.gov

Liberty Tree Commemorating America 250

In celebration of America’s 250th anniversary, the Village of Pelham Manor, Village of Pelham, Town of Pelham, Pelham Public Schools, and community organizations are announcing a community-wide Liberty Tree Initiative to honor our shared history while investing in our shared future.

Inspired by the historic Liberty Trees of the American Revolution, these native, climate-resilient trees will serve as living symbols of civic engagement and community stewardship while strengthening Pelham’s tree canopy, supporting biodiversity, reducing urban heat, and improving climate resilience.

This October, coordinated Liberty Tree plantings will take place across the Pelhams, coinciding with Pelham Public Schools’ commemoration of the Battle of Pell’s Point and America’s 250th anniversary.

The Liberty Tree Initiative is intended to continue the broader community effort to expand Pelham’s tree canopy. In April 2027, that effort will continue with a community Earth Month tree seedling giveaway in partnership with ConEdison, giving residents the opportunity to plant free trees in their own yards and neighborhoods.

Together, these efforts will create a living legacy that honors our history, strengthens our environment, and benefits future generations.

Stay tuned for additional information as planning continues.

Table Hopping with Morris Gut: Tasty Summer Drives

Hit the road this summer with a good food destination in mind...



dessert. www.alex577.com

Alex's Bar & Grille: I have been enjoying Alex's Bar and Grille, 577 North Broadway, White Plains, for more than a decade. Proprietor Alex Ahmetaj has matured this restaurant beautifully. You can sit in the warm dining room with its cozy nooks and crannies or take a seat in the bustling bar/lounge. The classic Italian American fare coming out of this strong kitchen are hearty and pleasing. Check out the Oysters Rockefeller, delicious fresh Halibut with seafood, an awesome **Osso Bucco** the size of Mt. Vesuvius. Steaks and chops here rival the very best. There is a big juicy burger on the menu, too. The smooth house made cheesecake is a must for

Mumbai Katta: Anita Gawde is a dynamo! The owner of Mumbai Katta Indian Restaurant, 227 Westchester Avenue, Port Chester, is always on the move. At one moment, she greets guests at the door, the next she disappears into her kitchen, the next she is on the dining room floor touting her dishes. It is her heartfelt tribute to the tasty street foods of regional India. Anita and her husband Jayant have been marking a second anniversary with a newly expanded menu that now includes Tandoori and regional Kebabs. The dishes are loaded with flavor. Reserve ahead for a traditional Thali banquet. www.mumbaikatta.com

Tesoro D'Italia: I first met Peter Lucaj when he was managing Ciao in Eastchester. Just over a dozen years ago, he and his brothers Mark and Don took over Tesoro d'Italia, 160 Marble Avenue, Pleasantville. I have enjoyed watching them evolve this expansive multi-faceted restaurant into a destination for fine regional Italian cuisine and full service catering. You can sit along the handsome wine wall. Lovely private rooms are available for groups. Dive into such specialties as Chicken Payard, Black Linguine Pescatore, Chicken Scarpariello, Broiled Veal Chop, or Grilled Pork Chops with the works. Happy hours in the bar/lounge are most inviting starting at 3 PM weekdays. There is a weekday luncheon special: \$24.95, noon to 3 PM. www.tesoroditaliany.com

Squire's: Squire's, 94 North State Road, is approaching a milestone 60 years in Briarcliff Manor. Kudos to owner Kurt Knox and his team. You may have heard about their classic Burgers and massive Prime Rib (served on weekends). They offer a big menu filled with delightful tavern specialties. There is literally something for everyone in your group from tasty finger foods and sandwiches to a giant portion of Fish & Chips. All reasonably priced. www.squiresofbriarcliff.com

Las Mananitas: This Mexican restaurant on top of Route 684 in Brewster offers dramatic views of the East Branch Reservoir and a multi-tiered outdoor patio for relaxing and picture taking. There are plenty of window seats and a fireplace room for comfort, too. They often host Mariachis, DJ and drink specials at their big bar. Look for such kitchen specialties as: El Aquacate, avocado stuffed with crabmeat and shrimp; Carnitas, three soft pork tacos; Sizzling Fajitas; and Sinaloa, jumbo shrimp wrapped in bacon stuffed with Manchego cheese. Ample free parking. www.lasmananitasrestaurant.com

Morris Gut is a restaurant marketing consultant and former restaurant trade magazine editor. He has been tracking and writing about the food and dining scene in greater Westchester for 30 years. He may be reached at 914-235-6591. E-mail gutreactions@optonline.net.



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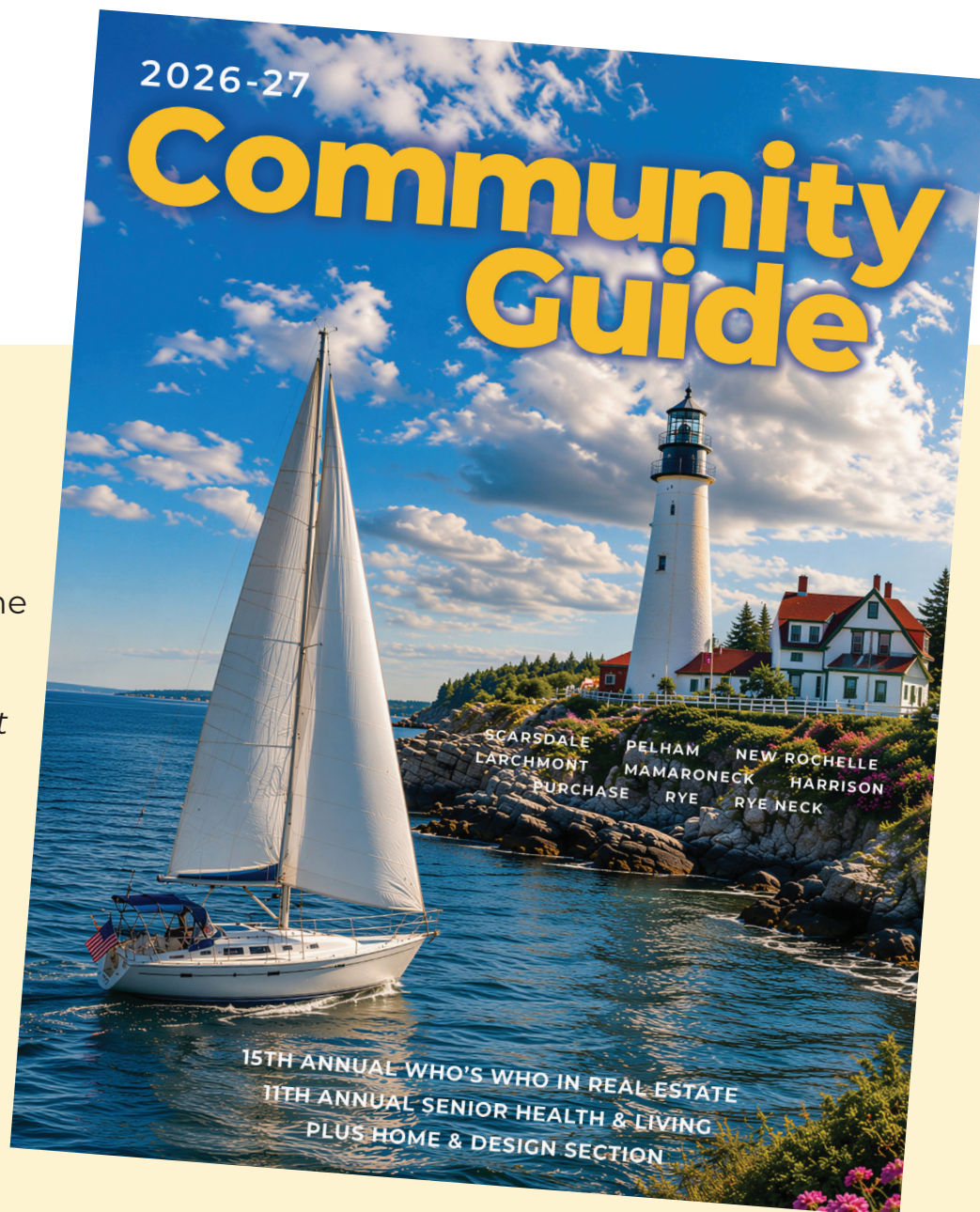
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Do You Need to File a New York Estate Tax Return? Understanding the 2026 Rules, the Tax Cliff, and Common Filing Confusion

BY BERNARD A. KROOKS,
CERTIFIED ELDER LAW ATTORNEY
SPECIAL GUEST CONTRIBUTOR:
JOEL KROOKS, ESQ.

Does an Estate Need to File a New York Estate Tax Return?

When a person dies, one of the first tax questions an Executor or Administrator must consider is whether the estate must file an estate tax return. In New York, the answer depends on the size of the estate, the decedent's residency, certain lifetime gifts, and whether the estate owns New York property.

Importantly, the requirement to file a New York estate tax return is separate from whether estate tax is actually owed.

The 2026 New York Estate Tax Exclusion – For individuals dying in 2026, New York's basic estate tax exclusion amount is \$7,350,000. Generally, a New York resident's estate must file a New York State estate tax return if the decedent's federal gross estate, plus certain includible taxable gifts, exceeds that amount. The exclusion is adjusted over time based on the decedent's date of death. For comparison, the exclusion was \$7,160,000 for deaths in 2025.

The federal gross estate generally includes all property in which the decedent had an interest at death, including real estate, bank and brokerage accounts, retirement accounts, business interests, tangible personal property, certain trust interests, and life insurance owned by the decedent or payable to the estate.

This is a gross value test. The estate must first consider the total value of assets before deductions are applied to determine whether tax is ultimately owed.

Lifetime Gifts and the Filing Threshold – New York also requires estates to consider certain taxable gifts made during the decedent's lifetime. These gifts may need to be added back when determining whether the estate exceeds the New York filing threshold.

As a result, making large gifts shortly before death does not necessarily eliminate a New York estate tax filing requirement or potential estate tax liability.

Nonresidents Who Own New York Property – A nonresident's estate may also be required to file a New York estate tax return if the decedent owned real property or tangible personal property located in New York and the federal gross estate, together with certain includible gifts, exceeds the New York basic exclusion amount.

For example, if a Florida resident dies owning a New York cooperative apartment, house, or other New York real property, the estate may have a New York filing obligation even though the decedent was not domiciled in New York.

What Form Is Filed and When Is It Due?

When a New York estate tax return is required, the estate files Form ET-706, New York State Estate Tax Return. The return is generally due nine months after the decedent's date of death, and any tax due is generally payable within that same period.

An estate may request an extension of time to file and/or pay when additional time is needed. However, interest may apply if tax is paid late.

When Is New York Estate Tax Actually Owed?

Whether estate tax is actually owed depends on the taxable estate after allowable deductions and credits are applied. Common deductions may include funeral and administration expenses, debts, mortgages, certain charitable transfers, and the marital deduction for qualifying transfers to a surviving spouse.

Therefore, an estate may be large enough to require a New York estate tax filing but still owe no New York estate tax after deductions are applied.

The New York Estate Tax "Cliff" – One of the most important features of New York's estate tax is the so-called "cliff." If the taxable estate is at or below the basic exclusion amount, no New York estate tax is owed. If the taxable estate is slightly above the exclusion amount, some tax may be owed. However, once the taxable estate exceeds 105 percent of the basic exclusion amount, the estate loses the benefit of the New York exclusion entirely.

For 2026, 105 percent of the \$7,350,000 exclusion is \$7,717,500. Once the taxable estate exceeds that amount, the estate may be taxed from the first dollar rather than only on the amount above the exclusion.

This rule can produce a significant tax liability from a relatively modest increase in the taxable estate. Careful planning is particularly important for New York residents whose estates are near or above the exclusion amount.

Estate Tax Rates and Portability – New York's graduated estate tax rates can reach 16 percent. New York also does not provide por-

tability between spouses. This means that if the first spouse to die does not use his or her New York estate tax exclusion through proper planning, the unused exclusion is not automatically transferred to the surviving spouse.

This is an important consideration for married couples whose combined estates may exceed the New York exemption amount.

Form 706 vs. Form 1041 – Executors and beneficiaries often confuse Form 706 and Form 1041, but they address different taxes.

Form 706 is an estate tax return. It reports the value of the decedent's assets at death, applies allowable deductions, and determines whether estate tax is owed. For New York estate tax purposes, Form ET-706 serves a similar function.

Form 1041, by contrast, is an income tax return for an estate or trust. It reports income earned after death during the administration of the estate, such as interest, dividends, capital gains, rental income, or other taxable income.

For example, a brokerage account may be reported on Form 706 at its date-of-death value, while dividends or capital gains earned by that account after death may later be reported on Form 1041.

An estate may need one form but not the other. A smaller estate may have no estate tax filing obligation but may still need to file Form 1041 if it earns sufficient income during administration. Conversely, a larger estate may need to file Form 706 or New York Form ET-706 even if it earns little or no post-death income.

Conclusion – Determining whether a New York estate tax return is required can be complex. Each estate must be reviewed based on its assets, debts, deductions, residency, New York property, lifetime gifts, and post-death income.

Proper estate planning may help individuals and married couples reduce or avoid unnecessary estate tax, preserve available exemptions, and simplify administration. Executors and Administrators should work with an experienced estate attorney and coordinate with the estate's accountant to determine which filings are required, identify available deductions, meet deadlines, and address probate, creditor claims, taxes, and distributions.

Because relying on general assumptions can lead to costly mistakes, professional guidance can help ensure that the proper filings are made and the estate is administered as efficiently and properly as possible.

Bernard A. Krooks, Esq., is a founding partner of Littman Krooks LLP. He was named the 2021 "Lawyer of the Year" by Best Lawyers in America® for excellence in Elder Law and has been honored as one of the "Best Lawyers" in America since 2008. Krooks may be reached at 914-684-2100 or through the firm's website at www.littmankrooks.com.

Westchester County Departments of Senior Programs and Services and Parks, Recreation and Conservation to Host Senior Dance Party

The Westchester County Department of Senior Programs and Services (DSPS) and Westchester County Parks, Recreation and Conservation are hosting a Senior Dance Party on Wednesday, August 19 from 10 a.m. – 1:30 p.m. at Glen Island Park, located at Weyman Avenue in New Rochelle. This year's event is open to all seniors, who are encouraged to come out and enjoy a dance-filled day.

Commissioner of the Westchester County Department of Senior Programs and Services Mae Carpenter said: "The best dance partners are laughter, friendship and great music. A little music, a little movement, and good company can turn strangers into friends."

Attendees will enjoy a day that includes a live DJ, dance lessons and a complimentary lunch. The Senior Dance Party is free to attend, but reservations are required. Complimentary parking at Glen Island Park will be made available.

To attend this year's Senior Dance Party, please call Events To Remember at (914) 218-3968 and make your reservation by Wednesday, August 5. For information about the Westchester County Department of Senior Programs and Services, call (914) 813-6300.



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