



Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance

KATHY HOCHUL
Governor

MICHAEL P. HEIN
Commissioner

BARBARA C. GUINN
Executive Deputy Commissioner

October 5, 2021

Dear Governor Hochul,

I hereby tender my resignation as Commissioner of the New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance, effective October 8, 2021.

It has been an honor to serve as Commissioner and I am tremendously proud of the meaningful work we have done on behalf of New York's most vulnerable residents. I leave knowing that this agency has accomplished so much during my tenure and that it is well positioned for continued success in the future, with a talented, innovative, and caring team.

The Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance's core mission is to help vulnerable New Yorkers by ensuring essential services for families and individuals that help them advance economically by providing meaningful opportunities for stable employment, better access to affordable housing and quality nutrition for both themselves and their families.

This mission has never been more vital than it has over these past 18 months. Confronted with an unprecedented public health crisis, and a resulting economic crisis, our agency rose to the challenge, taking extraordinary steps to reimagine the way we do business while consistently going above and beyond to help our fellow New Yorkers.

As Commissioner, I served as the Chairman of the Homeless Housing Assistance Corp. (HHAC) and oversaw the doubling of this critical funding to provide supportive housing to those most in need. I was also proud to lead the Hudson Valley's reopening, leading the regional control room as part of New York State's COVID 19 response. Working closely with dedicated elected officials and community leaders in the seven counties comprising the region, we successfully navigated some of the most challenging and uncertain times in our history with the common goals of fighting this terrible virus and devising a viable pathway to economic growth.

The Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA) also acted quickly at the outset of the pandemic to secure billions of dollars in COVID-specific funding to provide additional supports for New Yorkers facing food insecurity, including those receiving Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits, as well as families with school-age children who were unable to access free school meals while school buildings remained closed, due to COVID.

More recently, OTDA took on the monumental task of creating and administering an entirely new program to distribute more than \$2 billion in federal funding to help tenants at risk for eviction to stay in their homes and help struggling landlords to recoup unpaid rent. I firmly believe New York's program has now evolved into the best state plan in the nation.

Many states chose not to use a legislative process to create their rental assistance programs and instead launched their programs as early as February. New York selected a different path utilizing the state budget for enabling legislation that took time but resulted in a stronger program that prioritized assistance for those most in need while establishing some of the strongest eviction protections in the

country. This resulted in more tenants being protected from eviction in New York than in any other state in America.

I am proud that OTDA's program now ranks number one, nationally, in the amount of assistance paid or obligated, quickly approaching \$2 billion. As of the end of this week, more than three-quarters of a billion dollars in direct payments will have been issued to property owners on behalf of over 60,000 households.

New York is a remarkably resilient place with amazing, diverse, and compassionate people and I have been honored to serve them. I am forever grateful to our team at OTDA, whose competence and compassion are unmatched, for the work they have done through incredibly trying times and without which none of this would have been possible.

And I am grateful most of all to my amazing family for their unending love and support, and for the countless sacrifices they have made that have enabled me to fully commit myself to this role.

I look forward to remaining engaged in these important issues and continuing to work on behalf of others in need and this amazing place we all call home.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Hein', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Michael P. Hein
Commissioner