

STATE OF NEW YORK

9872

IN SENATE

April 9, 2026

Introduced by Sen. GRIFFO -- read twice and ordered printed, and when printed to be committed to the Committee on Commerce, Economic Development and Small Business

AN ACT to amend the economic development law, in relation to establishing the central New York passport program to promote regional tourism, economic development, and cultural engagement across the central New York region

The People of the State of New York, represented in Senate and Assembly, do enact as follows:

1 Section 1. The economic development law is amended by adding a new
2 article 5-G to read as follows:

ARTICLE 5-G

CENTRAL NEW YORK PASSPORT PROGRAM

5 Section 181-j. Short title.

6 181-k. Legislative findings and intent.

7 181-l. Establishment of the central New York passport program.

8 § 181-j. Short title. This act shall be known and may be cited as the
9 "central New York passport act".

10 § 181-k. Legislative findings and intent. The legislature finds that
11 the central New York region--encompassing the cities of Syracuse, Utica,
12 Rome, and Cooperstown, and the surrounding towns and villages along
13 routes 20 and 90--possesses a wealth of cultural, artistic, agricul-
14 tural, and recreational assets.

15 Despite the strength of these attractions, including the Boilermaker
16 Road Race, the Glimmerglass Opera Festival, the Theater at Woodshell,
17 local farmers markets, art galleries, museums, music venues, sporting
18 events, and other community programs, the region lacks an integrated
19 mechanism for cross-promotion, coordinated event awareness, and visitor
20 retention.

21 It is therefore the intent of the legislature to establish a regional
22 initiative to promote the collective economic and cultural interests of
23 central New York municipalities, support local businesses, and enhance
24 tourism through a unified mobile platform--known as the "Central New
25 York Passport".

EXPLANATION--Matter in italics (underscored) is new; matter in brackets
[-] is old law to be omitted.

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1 § 181-1. Establishment of the central New York passport program. 1.
2 The commissioner shall develop and implement a "Central New York pass-
3 port" promotion program. Within one year of the effective date of this
4 article, the commissioner, in conjunction with Empire State Development
5 and the New York state tourism advisory council, shall develop, operate,
6 and maintain a mobile application and web-based platform to promote
7 tourism in central New York that:

8 (a) provides a comprehensive calendar of regional events, attractions,
9 and activities in central New York;

10 (b) integrates timetables, maps, and travel itineraries for visitors
11 to central New York;

12 (c) enables cross-promotional ticketing deals, discounts, and sponsor-
13 ships among participating venues, including but not limited to restau-
14 rants, farmers markets, local museums, theaters, art galleries, movie
15 theaters, breweries, wineries, sporting events, and music venues;

16 (d) promotes seasonal festivals and regional tourism corridors along
17 New York state routes twenty and ninety;

18 (e) allows users to create customized "passports" collecting stamps,
19 digital rewards, or points for visiting participating sites; and

20 (f) encourages community engagement and local commerce by linking
21 small businesses and nonprofit institutions to regional event traffic.

22 2. Municipalities and organizations eligible for inclusion in the
23 central New York passport program shall include, but not be limited to,
24 those within: (a) Oneida, Madison, Onondaga, and Otsego counties; (b)
25 the cities and towns of Syracuse, Utica, Rome, Cazenovia, Skaneateles,
26 and Cooperstown; and (c) adjacent villages and townships along the New
27 York state route twenty corridor and the New York state route ninety
28 corridor.

29 3. The department shall enter into memoranda of understanding with
30 municipal governments, tourism boards, and participating private enti-
31 ties eligible for inclusion in the central New York passport program to
32 ensure equitable representation and promotional access. Participation
33 shall be voluntary, and incentives may be offered through marketing
34 grants or shared advertising revenue.

35 4. The commissioner may designate a regional advisory board composed
36 of representatives from county tourism offices, arts councils, chambers
37 of commerce, and community organizations.

38 5. The program shall be eligible for state tourism and economic devel-
39 opment grants, and may receive public-private sponsorships and federal
40 matching funds where applicable. The department may contract with tech-
41 nology vendors or local universities for app development, data manage-
42 ment, and platform maintenance.

43 6. The department shall coordinate a regional launch campaign, in
44 partnership with the "I Love NY" brand and participating municipalities,
45 which shall prioritize digital inclusion and ensuring accessibility for
46 both residents and visitors. Promotional materials shall emphasize the
47 central New York passport as a means of discovering local culture,
48 supporting endemic small businesses, and connecting visitors across
49 central New York's arts, agricultural, and recreational sectors.

50 7. The commissioner shall submit an annual report on the program to
51 the governor and the legislature no later than December thirty-first of
52 each year. Such report shall include, but not be limited to, information
53 on program participation rates, tourism revenue impact, and user engage-
54 ment.

55 § 2. This act shall take effect immediately.