Life as we knew it since NYCOM’s last Advocacy Update is dramatically different and the staff at NYCOM sincerely hope everyone is staying safe and well. We also want to thank you for your patience as we try to address the hundreds of calls and inquiries we have received this week related to the coronavirus pandemic.

2020-21 State Budget
In addition to the bill passed yesterday providing sick leave and benefits to those individuals impacted by COVID-19, the State Legislature continues to work on the state budget as they are hoping, given the circumstances, to get it done as quickly as possible. We took the opportunity earlier today to send every legislator a letter, not only thanking them for their commitment to the people of New York, but also to remind them there are proposals we believe should – and should not – be included in the budget. We do anticipate that legislators and their staff will be working through the weekend (remotely) and that the Senate and Assembly will be back next week to finalize the budget.

Paid Leave and Other Benefits
The state law signed yesterday (Chapter 25 of the Laws of 2020) provides sick leave and other benefits to all employees who are subject to a mandatory or precautionary quarantine or isolation due to the coronavirus. Eligible employees are entitled to a certain amount of paid sick leave, paid family leave and temporary disability benefits. The benefits are not intended for those individuals who are at home due to the Governor’s Executive Order No. 202.4 directing local governments, effective March 17, 2020, to allow all non-essential personnel to work from home or take leave without charging accruals. Rather, these benefits are intended for those affected by the coronavirus and, as a result, are under a mandatory or precautionary quarantine or in isolation. It should be noted, however, that employees are not eligible to take sick leave if they are deemed asymptomatic or have not yet been diagnosed with a medical condition and are physically able to work remotely while under a mandatory quarantine or isolation.

At the federal level, Congress passed and the President signed H.R. 6201, Families First Coronavirus Response Act, which provides sick leave and family
medical leave to both public and private sector employees (see this fact sheet from the National League of Cities). NYCOM staff is reviewing both the state and federal laws on paid leave and other benefits to fully understand what they offer and how the two laws interact. We will provide you with more information in the coming days on this as well as the status of any federal and state grants and other assistance for local governments and small businesses.

COVID-19 Resources
Finally, NYCOM staff has developed a significant amount of material regarding COVID-19 and local government operations, all of which can be found on the home page of our website. This includes information about conducting public meetings, the village budget process, and the ability and/or necessity to declare a state of emergency in your communities. We remain committed to getting you the answers and information you need to assist you and your residents as we make our way through this very challenging time.