

The New York State Canal Corporation has responsibility for operating, maintaining, improving, and promoting New York State's 524-mile network of four connected Canals – the Erie, Champlain, Cayuga-Seneca, and Oswego Canals which has been in continuous operation for nearly 200 years. The largest state-run inland waterway system in the United States, today's New York State Canal System traces its roots to the opening of the Erie Canal in 1825. The Canal Corporation employs approximately 470 people at the various facilities, as well as a seasonal workforce that helps support Canal operations.

The Canal Corporation, which was originally created as a subsidiary of the New York State Thruway Authority in 1992 pursuant to the Thruway 2000 legislation, was continued and reconstituted as a subsidiary corporation of the New York Power Authority (NYPA) in 2016.

NEW YORK CANAL CORPORATION MAJOR UNITS

OPERATIONS

Operation and maintenance of the Canal System is the responsibility of Canal Operations. The Canal System is comprised of over 2,000 structures including 57 locks, multiple movable bridges and water control structures (taintor gates, guard gates, and movable dams) and adjacent property. The Regional Manager oversees Canal Operations with oversight from NYPA Operations.

Canal Operations is divided into the Waterways Maintenance Division, the Engineering Services Division and Administrative Services and Technical Services. The Waterways Maintenance Division is divided into two regions (Eastern and Western), with each region comprised of four sections and two floating plants. The Engineering Services Division includes three functional areas – Design, Construction Management, and Asset Management & Inspection.

Administrative Services and Technical Services both provide the support necessary to facilitate the achievement of the Canal Corporation's strategic mission by working with all Canal Corporation Departments. Administrative Services includes back-office support functions such as purchasing, office services, and compliance reporting. Technical Services also includes back-office support functions such as real property and, as shared services with NYPA, Information Technology and records management.

HUMAN RESOURCES

As a shared service with NYPA, Human Resources is responsible for employee relations, bargaining unit contract negotiations, benefits, recruitment/position management, salary calculations, and managing leaves for all Canal employees. Human Resources staff provide guidance to managers to ensure compliance with New York State Civil Service Law rules, merit system requirements, and the applicable bargaining unit contracts.

PUBLIC AND GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

Public and government relations includes community relations, the office of the Public Information Officer and *Reimagine the Canals* (RTC), an initiative that commenced in 2020 with the goal of enhancing the economic, climate resilience, and tourism benefits of the Canal System. Led by NYPA and supported by Canal staff, RTC is a true collaborative effort between the enterprises.

The Canal Corporation's communications functional area includes a public information officer and a team of regional public engagement representatives. The team is responsible for supporting Canal Operations as well as RTC for any project, program, or initiative where public and/or government relations are needed. They are also the front line of communication with constituents, intergovernmental affairs, and the media.

The RTC team oversees a portfolio of capital investments and programs centered on stimulating economic growth and climate resilience across the system. A theme across these capital investments is projects that strategically connect downtown areas with the Canal and the Empire State Trail to enhance quality of life and to encourage recreational tourism.

The RTC team also oversees the public-facing *On the Canals* (OTC) program. First established in 2020 as *Staycations*, OTC partners with local vendors to offer free outdoor excursions including cycling, paddling, hiking, history, art, snowshoeing, and more to encourage Canal recreation and grow small businesses. The program welcomed over 7,100 participants in 2024, and more than 37,000 participants since the program's inception. The 2024 program prioritized excursions that are accessible to all participants regardless of physical ability. Nearly 80 percent of the 2024 excursions were fully accessible.

The RTC team also oversees the Artist-in-Residence (AIR) program which began in 2023 with one artist. The AIR program, a partnership between the Canal Corporation and the Erie Canal Museum, highlights the past and present significance of the Erie Canal through photography and storytelling. In 2024, the program expanded to include three photographers.

The Canalway Grant Program, administered through New York State's Consolidated Funding Application (CFA), competitively awards funding to counties, municipalities, units of local government, 501(c)(3) non-profit organizations, and/or Federally recognized Native American Tribes for Canal-related capital projects and events across the NYS Canal System. Grant awards range between \$25,000 and \$150,000, and require a 50% match from awardees.