

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 over 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 nearly 500 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 & SVP- Canals 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/compensation management, 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, media relations, planning and public programs, and strategic projects. The Canal Corporation's communications team has a public information officer and regional public engagement representatives. They support the Canal Corporation's projects, programs, and initiatives, and manage communication with constituents, intergovernmental affairs, and the media. In 2025, they coordinated activities for the Erie Canal bicentennial, including over 400 events and the journey of the Seneca Chief, a 73-foot replica of the original canal boat that first traveled from Buffalo to New York City in 1825.

The planning and public programs team manages capital investments and programs to stimulate economic growth and climate resilience, connecting downtown areas with the Canal and Empire State Trail. They oversee the On the Canals (OTC) program, partnering with local vendors for free outdoor excursions like cycling and hiking. In 2025, OTC welcomed over 6,000 participants and expanded to include an Accessibility Education Program. The Artist-in-Residence (AIR) program, started in 2023, showcases the Erie Canal's significance through photography and storytelling. The Canalway Grant Program awards funding for Canal-related projects, requiring a 50% match from awardees. The strategic projects group supports updates to the NYPA VISION2030 Renewed plan and facilitated various technology projects in 2025.