

A LOCAL LAW ADOPTING A HUMAN RIGHTS LAW FOR SULLIVAN COUNTY

BE IT ENACTED by the Legislature of the County of Sullivan as follows:

Section 1: This Local Law adopts a Human Rights Law for Sullivan County and describes the roles and responsibilities of the Office of Human Rights and the Human Rights Commission.

Section 2: A new Article X of the Sullivan County Administrative Code is hereby adopted to read as follows:

ARTICLE X Office of Human Rights/Human Rights Commission

§ A10A- 1 Office of Human Rights; Director of Human Rights; appointment; qualifications; powers and duties.

There shall be an Office of Human Rights (“Office”) headed by a Director of Human Rights (“Director”) appointed by the County Manager, following consultation with the Sullivan County Human Rights Commission (“Commission”), and subject to confirmation by the Sullivan County Legislature. The Director shall be appointed on the basis of professional experience and other qualifications appropriate to the responsibilities of the Office. The Director shall be directly responsible to the County Manager for the implementation of policies established by the Sullivan County Legislature.

The Director shall have the power to appoint such deputies, assistants, and employees of the Office as may be necessary to perform the duties of the Office as shall be authorized by the Sullivan County Legislature. All deputies, assistants, and employees of the Office shall be directly responsible to the Director.

§ A10A-2 Director of Human Rights; powers and duties.

The powers and duties of the Director of Human Rights shall be to:

- (a) Educate the public on issues involving human rights; and
- (b) Receive and respond to inquiries regarding human rights; and
- (c) Refer complaints of discrimination and other issues to other organizations where deemed appropriate; and
- (d) Advise persons on how to file complaints with appropriate state and federal agencies dealing with discrimination and, in appropriate circumstances, provide facilities and equipment to assist persons in filing such complaints; and
- (e) Speak on behalf of the Office to various local, state, and federal organizations to implement the educational function of the Office and the Commission within the community; and

(f) On or before March 1st of each year the Director shall make an annual report to the County Legislature for the immediately preceding calendar year covering generally the work of the Office. The Director shall make such other reports at such times as may be required by the County Legislature, the County Manager, or any applicable law. Copies of all reports shall be filed with the Clerk of the Legislature; and

(g) Submit regular reports to the County Manager and the Commission outlining the work of the Office. The report will include a summary of the Office's outreach activities, trends or important issues, and any other information deemed important by the Director. All case information shall be without names of involved parties or any other identifiable characteristics.

Except as otherwise provided in this Local Law, the Office shall have all the powers and perform all the duties now or hereafter conferred or imposed by applicable law upon it.

§ A10A-3 Office of Human Rights; powers and duties.

(a) Foster mutual respect and understanding among diverse groups such as, but not limited to, those characterized by race, color, gender, religion, sexual orientation/LGBTQ+ status, gender identity and expression, national origin, citizen status, age, disability, veteran status, and prior conviction status; and

(b) Conduct studies and surveys of community relationships as in the judgment of the Office will aid in effectuating the general purpose of the Office; and

(c) Inquire into incidents of tension and conflict among or between various diverse groups such as, but not limited to, those characterized by race, color, gender, religion, sexual orientation/LGBTQ+ status, gender identity and expression, national origin, citizen status, age, disability, veteran status, and prior conviction status and make recommendations or take such action as may be designed to alleviate such tensions and conflict; and

(d) Conduct and recommend such educational programs as, in the judgment of the Office, will increase goodwill among community members and open new opportunities into all phases of community life for community members; and

(e) Advise persons on how to file complaints with appropriate state and federal agencies dealing with discrimination and, in appropriate circumstances, provide facilities and equipment to assist persons in filing such complaints and, in matters and complaints within the jurisdiction of the Office, but outside the jurisdiction of Federal and State agencies, investigate, as may be needed, and prepare its own plans with a view to reducing and eliminating such alleged discrimination through the process of conference, conciliation, and persuasion; and

(f) Issue human-rights related publications and reports to carry out the purposes of this Local Law; and

(g) Enlist the cooperation and participation of the various racial, religious and nationality groups, community organizations, industry and labor organizations, media and mass communication, fraternal and benevolent associations, and other groups in an educational campaign devoted to fostering among the diverse groups of the community mutual esteem, justice and respect for human rights, equity and opening new opportunities into all phases of community life for all individuals.

§ A10A-4 Human Rights Commission

There shall be a Human Rights Commission. Article 12-D of the General Municipal Law provides State enabling legislation for the Commission.

The Commission shall:

- (a) Foster understanding and respect for human rights in Sullivan County; and
- (b) Encourage equality; discourage discrimination, advocate for fair and equal treatment; and
- (c) Serve as an advisory board to the Office and to the Sullivan County Legislature.

§ A10A-5 Human Rights Commission; composition; appointment; term.

The Commission shall be composed of nine (9) five (5) members. Each of these shall be appointed by the Sullivan County Legislature for a term of three (3) years and may be reappointed. The membership should consist of individuals who possess demonstrated experience and knowledge in the promotion and protection of civil and human rights, and elimination of unlawful discrimination. Members shall be residents of Sullivan County.

§ A10A-6 Human Rights Commission; roles and responsibilities.

The roles and responsibilities of the Commission and/or the Commissioners, under the aforementioned legislation are as follows:

- (a) Perform studies and surveys of community relationships as in the judgment of the Commission will aid in effectuating the general purpose of the Commission; and
- (b) Refer complaints of alleged discrimination to the Office; and
- (c) Conduct and recommend such educational programs, that in the judgment of the Commission, will increase goodwill in the community and encourage opportunities for involvement in all phases of community life for everyone; and
- (d) Offer leadership to the community that promotes positive change as it relates to civil and human rights; and

- (e) Encourage and stimulate agencies and advisory boards under the jurisdiction of the Sullivan County Legislature to take action that will fulfill the purposes of Article 12-D of the General Municipal Law; and
- (f) Advise the Sullivan County Legislature on issues involving human rights; and
- (g) Advise the Director on operations of the Office; and
- (h) Submit an annual report to the Sullivan County Legislature and the Office and to report as appropriate to the relevant standing committee of the Sullivan County Legislature; and
- (i) Upon approval of the Sullivan County Legislature, raise funds that are not included in the Office's budget and are necessary to support the work of the Commission. All funds raised will be administered by the Office.

Section 3. All prior Resolutions of the Sullivan County Legislature creating a Commission of Human Rights and the position of Director of Human Rights as well as all Resolutions adopting policies or granting authority to the Commission and the Director shall be rescinded on the effective date of this Local Law. These shall include, but not be limited to, Resolution No. 490-04, adopted December 16, 2004; Resolution No. 376-05, adopted October 20, 2005; Resolution No. 141-06, adopted May 4, 2006; Resolution 345-08, adopted September 18, 2008; Resolution No. 198-09, adopted May 21, 2009; and Resolution No. 82-17, adopted February 16, 2017.

Section 4. This Local Law shall be filed immediately with the New York State Division of Human Rights.

Section 5. This Local Law shall take effect immediately upon filing with the Secretary of State.