



GOVERNOR'S OFFICE OF EQUITY

Office Newsletter
May/June 2024

HISTORIC CLEMENCY INITIATIVE LAUNCHED IN NEW JERSEY

“This new clemency initiative is a cornerstone of our Administration’s efforts to make New Jersey the State of Second Chances. Today, we pledge to take a responsible and equity-driven approach to pardons and commutations that will prioritize the most compelling cases.” - Governor Phil Murphy



On Juneteenth, Governor Murphy launched a comprehensive clemency initiative that establishes standards for expedited consideration of certain categories of clemency applications and establishes an advisory board to provide objective review of pardons and commutations. Through **Executive Order No. 362**, this clemency initiative provides relief from inequities that have existed and been perpetuated by the state’s criminal legal system.

- EO 362 sets clear standards for expedited review of clemency applications that include non-violent convictions, excessive trial penalties, and crimes against perpetrators of domestic or sexual violence.

- EO 362 also **establishes a Clemency Advisory Board** which will review applications and provide recommendations to the Governor. This will ensure that decisions regarding pardons and commutations are **informed by the advice of individuals with diverse experiences and expertise** relating to criminal justice and clemency.
- See nj.gov/clemency for application materials and more information on the clemency initiative.



As Governor Murphy signs EO 362, he is joined by Lt. Gov Way, members of the Clemency Advisory Board, and leading advocates including influencer Wallo267 and music artists Meek Mill and Eric B.

NEW NJDOC WOMEN’S FACILITY ANNOUNCED

The New Jersey Department of Corrections (NJDOC) announced plans for a new women's facility in Chesterfield Township, Burlington County. This effort advances the Administration’s commitment to construct a centrally-located, women’s facility. As plans for the facility develop, a collaborative, multi-agency working group is considering a trauma-informed approach to ensuring a safer and more secure environment. The project underscores the ongoing work to promote dignity and support successful reentry at NJDOC facilities.





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JACQUELYN SUÁREZ SWORN IN AS COMMISSIONER OF THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY AFFAIRS

On June 7th, Governor Murphy appointed **Jacquelyn A. Suárez as the Commissioner of the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs (DCA)**, making her the first Hispanic to lead the department. Suárez succeeds the late Lieutenant Governor Sheila Y. Oliver who served in the role until the time of her passing in August 2023.

- Suárez is committed to the department's ongoing mission to provide residents, local governments, businesses, and community development organizations with financial support, administrative guidance, and technical assistance to help improve the quality of life for New Jersey families.
- Suárez manages a budget that exceeds \$1 billion and oversees over 1,000 employees across seven divisions, along with five affiliated state agencies. She continues to serve as the Director of the Division of Local Government Services, a position she has held since 2021.



JOHN HOFFMAN NOMINATED TO THE NEW JERSEY SUPREME COURT

Governor Murphy nominated **John Hoffman** to the **New Jersey Supreme Court** to fill the seat vacated by retiring Associate Justice Lee Solomon. The court's partisan balance is maintained with this nomination, the fifth of the Murphy Administration.

- Born and raised in Middlesex County, Hoffman graduated from Colgate University and Duke Law School.
- He currently serves at Rutgers University as Senior Vice President and General Counsel.
- He was appointed as Acting Attorney General under Governor Christie in 2013. As Acting Attorney General, Hoffman led initiatives to combat opioids, reform law enforcement procedures, and promote community trust.

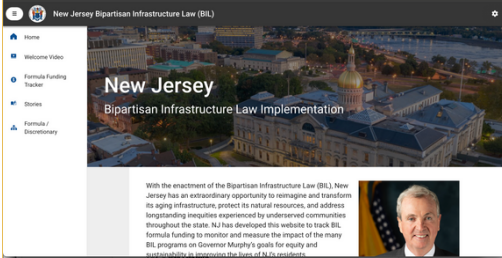




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NEW FEDERAL INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING DASHBOARD



In June, the Murphy Administration launched the Federal Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) Formula Funding Tracker, an interactive website that shows how federal BIL funds and state matching dollars are spent. New Jersey is among the first states to launch a tracker like this, which allows taxpayers to monitor federal and state investments online.

The tracker is updated quarterly and provides details like project locations, funding allocations, phases of work, and expenditures. It integrates data from several departments and authorities including the New Jersey Department of Transportation, the Department of Environmental Protection, and the Board of Public Utilities. The tracker will include equity and sustainability analyses in future updates.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATES

- **P.L.2024, c.14:** Establishes New Jersey Educator Evaluation Review Task Force and clarifies collection of student growth data
- **P.L.2024, c.10:** Establishes a procedure for certification of LGBTQ+ business.
- **P.L.2024, c.11:** Clarifies rules for motor vehicles overtaking certain pedestrians, persons operating bicycles, and personal conveyances.
- **P.L.2024, JR-1:** Designates the fourth Wednesday in May of each year as "Crisis Professionals Day."
- **P.L.2024, c.13:** Establishes the Stabilized School Budget Aid Grant Program to restore certain portions of State school aid reductions; permits certain school districts to exceed tax levy growth limitation in the 2024-2025 school year; appropriates \$44.7 million.
- **P.L.2024, c.12:** Requires Commissioner of Education to permit school districts losing State school aid to submit budgets after enactment of FY2025 appropriations act.
- **P.L.2024, c.15:** Mandates access to periodic cancer screenings for professional firefighters not enrolled in SHBP but who are eligible.

AGENCY ANNOUNCEMENTS

- **NJDA:** New Jersey Department of Agriculture Distributes Summer EBT Benefits to Over 555,00 Children ([read more](#))
- **DOL:** NJ Department of Labor Awards More Than \$6.3 Million in Grants to Support Apprenticeship and Pre-Apprenticeship Programs ([read more](#))
- **DOE:** New Jersey Department of Education Releases Resources to Help Schools Use Artificial Intelligence for Teaching and Learning ([read more](#))
- **DEP:** EPA Makes a Splash with Award of \$258,000 to New Jersey to Support Water Quality Monitoring at Beaches to Protect Public Health ([read more](#))
- **DCF:** NJ DCF Takes Action to Expand Family Connects NJ ([read more](#))
- **NJOAG:** Attorney General Platkin Co-Leads National Effort to Defend Title IX's Protections for Students ([read more](#))

Explore New Jersey's Trails Today!

Check out interactive online maps or printable trail guides of New Jersey's State Parks & Forests.





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Holidays and Observances

MAY

Asian American and Pacific Islander Month
Jewish-American Heritage Month
Military Appreciation Month
Preeclampsia Awareness Month
Maternal Mental Health Month

May 5th - Cinco de Mayo
May 5th - Orthodox Easter
May 12th - Mother's Day
May 18th - National Armed Forces Day
May 27th - Memorial Day

JUNE

Pride Month
Immigrant Heritage Month
Caribbean American Heritage Month
Men's Health Awareness Month

June 10 - Portugal Day
June 16th - Father's Day
June 19th - Juneteenth
June 20 - Summer Solistace
June 21st- (State Observed)
Juneteenth

JULY

Disability Heritage Month
French American Heritage Month



July 4th - Independence Day

CELEBRATIONS AND EVENTS

Governor Phil Murphy and First Lady Tammy Murphy hosted events to celebrate Pride Month and AAPI month.



The Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) and Pride Employee Resource Groups in the Governor's Office teamed up to host a joint gathering in June. The event promoted learning and sharing through trivia and other activities that explored the history of the Pride movement, influential AAPI and LGBTQ+ figures in New Jersey, and the contributions of the AAPI and LGBTQ+ communities in the state.

LUNCH AND LEARN

The Governor's Office Employee Resource Groups hosted a Juneteenth Lunch and Learn where William Trent House Museum Executive Director Sam Stephens discussed the history of slavery in Trenton, highlighting the enslaved people held by NJ Supreme Court Justice Willian Trent, for whom the city is named (Trent's Town). The learning continued with history trivia and lunch featuring local BBQ.



Jayné J. Johnson,
Director of the
Office of Equity

Thank you for connecting with the NJ Office of Equity! We appreciate your interest in learning more about our work.

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Many thanks to Helen Cashman and Mel Walker for their contributions to this issue!

