



National Lieutenant Governors Association

NLGA State Strategies in Building, Supplying and Maintaining Communities

New Jersey Lt. Governor Sheila Oliver: Leading the Department of Community Affairs to Strengthen Local Governments and Serve New Jersey's Residents and Businesses

As a lifelong New Jerseyan and a former state legislator, I understand uniquely the importance of supporting and strengthening the state's relationship with New Jersey's local municipalities, as well as the businesses and other entities that operate in our state. Upon taking office, Governor Murphy appointed me to serve as the Commissioner of the Department of Community Affairs (DCA), a role that I utilize to help improve the quality of life for our citizens.

As Commissioner, I oversee the DCA's various grant programs to assist local governments with the costs of vital public functions, such as fire and building safety, housing production, and community planning and development. DCA also awards millions of dollars each year to nonprofits performing important work in our communities, supporting the most vulnerable residents across the state.

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought increasing focus to DCA's support of small businesses. This year, DCA has distributed hundreds of millions of dollars to communities, providing funds for eligible activities in response to the coronavirus, with special emphasis on supporting affected small businesses. These funds are distributed to counties and towns for approved projects that address COVID-related needs, including Personal Protective Equipment, creation/operation of testing sites or quarantine sites, and small business assistance.

DCA has two sister agencies, the New Jersey Housing and Mortgage Finance Agency and the New Jersey Redevelopment Authority, which recently launched the Small Landlord Emergency Grant and Small Business Lease Emergency Grant programs respectively to assist vulnerable renters and small businesses across the state impacted by COVID-19 by helping them cover missed rent or provide rent/lease assistance.

Additionally, DCA's Division of Codes and Standards has provided ongoing guidance and permits to support indoor/outdoor dining and other standards for safe economic and business activity in New Jersey.

A unique and important function under the purview of DCA is local government management and finance, used extensively to assist with the revitalization and financial success of the City of Atlantic City. Under a 2016 agreement, DCA has taken over management of the City, in partnership with the City's Council and administration, that has resulted in improved financial status – the City's operating budget has been reduced by 11.5% since 2016, and in 2020 the City approved a municipal property tax reduction. I hope to see our relationship with Atlantic City continue in the years to come.

These efforts and investments in New Jersey will strengthen the state's most vulnerable people, businesses and neighborhoods, while ensuring specific local COVID-19 response needs are met.

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