

DOS Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Accessibility

HAPPY DECEMBER!

Greetings from the DEIA team!

December is a very important time of year for many members of the DOS community, with Christmas Day and the start of Hanukkah on December 25th and the start of Kwanzaa on the 26th. It is also a time of year to reflect and consider how we can improve ourselves and our work for the coming new year.

As part of our end of year festivities, the DEIA team is excited to celebrate Kwanzaa! **Join Secretary Mosley and the DEIA team on December 30th from 1 pm to 1:30 pm for a Virtual Celebration and Learning Share about Kwanzaa.** Please see the flyer attached to this newsletter for more information on the event and how to register.

December 3rd was the International Day of Persons with Disabilities. Promoting the rights and well-being of persons with disabilities is something DOS cares deeply about, and we are dedicated to making our workplace a safe and inclusive space for all people across the spectrum of human ability. See the attached flyer to learn more.

The **Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Statewide Food Drive** is ongoing, so be sure to contribute to our local food banks this holiday season.

As mentioned in the last newsletter, **DEIJA-B Working Groups are forming soon!** If you are interested in forming a Working Group in your division or office, please email us at diversityandinclusion@dos.ny.gov.

The AAPI Commission had its inaugural meeting! Check out images from the event and more in the “Commissions Corner” section.

Thank you all for everything you do to make DOS a more diverse, equitable, inclusive, and accessible space for all. We are so excited for more DEIA events and programs coming in 2025 and can't wait to be with you all.

Yours in partnership and service,

Nicole Jean Christian and the DEIA Team

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UPCOMING EVENTS

December 30, 2024 **Kwanzaa Virtual Celebration and Learning Share**
1 pm to 1:30 pm
Webex Virtual meeting
See attached flyer to register

The New York Department of State strives to create an inclusive environment for all, which includes partnering to assist with any accessibility needs or requirements.

Reasonable accommodation requests may be sent via email to ReasonableAccommodationsMailbox@dos.ny.gov **at least two (2) business days before the event.**

Questions about Reasonable Accommodations?

Email Shannon Cornwall at diversityandinclusion@dos.ny.gov!



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HAPPY KWANZAA

Register below for a virtual interactive Learning Share event celebrating Kwanzaa!

Join **Secretary of State Walter T. Mosley, DEIA Officer Nicole Jean Christian, and the DEIA team** for a Cultural Awareness Kwanzaa presentation and discussion. During this event, we will share:

- The origin and history of Kwanzaa
- Principles and significance of Kwanzaa
- Activities, music, and art associated with the celebration



Monday, December 30th, 2024



1 PM to 1:30 PM **



Virtual Webex Meeting



Register by December 27th at the link below or with the QR code to receive a meeting link



<https://forms.office.com/g/yehVxQ3BjE>



Walter T. Mosley
SECRETARY OF STATE



The Department of State strives to create an inclusive environment for all, which includes partnering to assist with any accessibility needs or requirements. Interested attendees who may require reasonable accommodation must email ReasonableAccommodationsMailbox@dos.ny.gov to communicate their request at least two (2) business days before the event.



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We are here for *everyone!*

** There is no need to charge time to attend this event as it is part of our DEIA programming, but please remember to request and obtain supervisor **APPROVAL** before registering.

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International Day of Persons with Disabilities



International Day of Persons with Disabilities is an annual United Nations holiday that was celebrated on December 3rd. This event is about promoting the rights, well-being, and situation of persons with disabilities at every level of society and in all aspects of political, social, economic, and cultural life.

DOS reinforces the importance of securing rights for people with disabilities so they can participate fully, equally and effectively in society while facing fewer barriers to inclusion.

See the attached resources for more information:

- [Background Information on International Day of Persons with Disabilities \(UN\)](#)
- [Website of the Office of the Chief Disability Officer \(New York State\)](#)
- [Information about Health and Wellness for People with Disabilities \(NYDOH\)](#)

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National Grief Awareness Week

The first week in December (2nd to 8th) was National Grief Awareness Week, a time to raise awareness about bereavement and grief. This week also provides an opportunity to offer support to those who are grieving, foster understanding, and promote open conversations about this often-sensitive topic.

Grief is a natural response to loss, but some people have more difficulties processing grief and may need additional support. Resources are available to ensure people receive the appropriate care they need. You are not alone.

See the attached resources to learn more:

- [What Is Grief? \(Speaking Grief\)](#)
- [Shining a Light on Bereavement and Grief \(NAMI New York State\)](#)
- [Tools from the American Psychological Association on Dealing with Grief](#)



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National Grief Awareness Week

Supporting those who are grieving
Fostering understanding
Promoting open conversations

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Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Statewide Food Drive



DOS is proud to be one of over 30 State agencies participating in the 25th annual **Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Statewide Food Drive!**

Collection has officially started in the Albany and NYC offices (Buffalo coming soon!), with boxes located on the following floors:

Albany

- 5th floor – 1 box (front elevator only)
- 6th floor – 2 boxes
- 10th floor – 1 box (front elevator only)
- 11th floor – 2 boxes
- 15th – 2 boxes

NYC

- 2nd floor
- 20th floor



We are accepting unopened, unexpired food and pantry items. Monetary donations may be made directly to the Northeast Regional Food Bank or by using the QR code above. **Make sure to say you are donating on behalf of DOS for the MLK Food Drive in the comment section!**

Wondering what to buy? **Check out our Food Drive Shopping List!**

We hope that you will help us make a difference. Thank you for your generosity.

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Want to form a DEIJA-B Working Group in *your Division*?

DOS-wide Working Groups are coming in Spring 2025!

Following the successful pilot of the OPDCI Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Justice, Accessibility and Belonging (DEIJA-B) Working Group, the DEIA team is proud to announce that Working Groups are set to form across all of DOS in Spring 2025!

These Groups will use the existing DEIJA-B Working Group framework with supportive guidance and leadership from the DOS DEIA team. Groups will consist of Division members at every level working collaboratively within the Group and with the DEIA team to address agency-specific DEIA needs as well as developing potential actions and interventions.

If you are interested in forming a Working Group in your division or office, email us at diversityandinclusion@dos.ny.gov!



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Holiday Craft Idea: Swedish Paper Heart Baskets

Camilla Campisi shares a craft that the team did for the ONA holiday party!

Hej allihopa! For part of our ONA holiday staff celebration in Albany, we did a Swedish holiday craft. We made paper heart baskets:



Sharing a link that includes instructions and a template to give it a try!

<https://tikkido.com/blog/Swedish-paper-heart>

And also including some pictures of the crafters below! Happy holidays! ❤️



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Commissions Corner *with Kristopher Malone*

I am excited to share current news regarding the African American History and AAPI Commissions!

To review the NYSCAAH report from June, [click here](#).

Please feel free to reach out to me with any questions, comments, or concerns. I wish you all a very happy December and thank you all for your continued support.

Onward and upward,

Kristopher Malone (he/him)



African American History Commission

We presented at the Canal Corporation/NYPA offices on November 22nd for the [Erie Canal Bicentennial Commission](#). We were inspired by speakers Brian U. Stratton (NYS Canal Corporation), Saladin Allah (Niagara Falls Underground Railroad Heritage Center), and First Gentleman/Commission Co-Chair Bill Hochul. We see lots of connections between our work and the Underground Railroad Consortium, Cayuga County Convention and Visitors Bureau, and the Niagara Falls Underground Railroad Heritage Center. We will meet with the Erie Canal Commission in January to prepare for the Erie Canal Celebration in 2025 and the World Canals Conference.

Asian American and Pacific Islander Commission

On December 12th, the AAPI Commission had its inaugural meeting! The Commission presented their goals and charges, and the public comment listening session enabled the Commission to hear the critical needs facing AAPI communities across the State. It was a wonderful event filled with excitement and ideas. We've included photos from the event on the next page, so be sure to check them out! For more information, check out [the official website for the Commission](#).

Thank to everyone who made this meeting a success; from Team DOS to Chamber, Queens College, and the public! Please reach out if you have questions or feedback about the event.

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Thank you for attending the Asian American and Pacific Islander Commission Inaugural Meeting!

The inaugural meeting on December 12th was a wonderful time for the Commission to connect and begin looking to the future. We look forward to supporting the Commission in their work and efforts to make the State a better place for Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, as well as all New Yorkers.



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DEIA in Action with Lizzy Mogus Garcia

This section of the DOS DEIA newsletter is a space to highlight and celebrate different ways we are furthering the mission of DEIA in our work.

Please reach out to me with any questions or comments. Happy December to you all and thank you for all you do to further the mission of DEIA at DOS and beyond.

Sincerely,

Lizzy Mogus Garcia (she/they)



Native American Heritage Month Presentation at the OPDCI All-Staff Biweekly

The OPDCI DEIJA-B Working Group celebrated Native American Heritage Month in November with a presentation on the importance of storytelling as cultural remembrance and passing down wisdom from elders. The presentation featured the [Haudenosaunee creation story](#) as well as [ways to support Native Americans and Indigenous people during the holidays and beyond](#).

The powerful presentation moved all of us who attended. We are planning on sharing a recording of the presentation with all of DOS soon and highly recommend viewing it.

Partnership with EPA for Trauma-Informed/ERB Learning Share Series

OPDCI and the DEIA team have partnered with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to facilitate a series of Learning Shares about trauma-informed approaches to community engagement.

The first session introduced equitable resilience and planning, focusing on how “Equitable Resiliency Partnerships” address resiliency post-COVID. The second session focused on the impacts of trauma, storytelling, and introduced the [Equitable Resilience Builder \(ERB\) tool](#).

The final Learning Share is planned for January, and we look forward to seeing Team DOS participate!

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DEIA Holiday Party 2024

We had a wonderful get-together and potluck lunch on December 10th with the DEIA team, the OPDCI DEIJA-B Working Group, and several DOS allies and friends. This was a wonderful way to uplift the many different cultural traditions celebrated here at DOS. Happy holidays!



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DPM 100 - Be Counted!

The Department of Civil Service has improved self-identification options for demographic data collection, expanding options for gender, ethnicity/race, language, LGBTQ+, disability, and veteran status! **These changes make voluntary self-identification more inclusive and give New York State a better, more accurate picture of who employees are.** Better data means ensuring the State workforce represents the diversity of our state and **shapes statewide strategic planning to advance diversity, equity, and inclusion for the future.**

Want to be counted?

Update your demographic data [here](#) or scan this QR code to access the web app!



Regional Clusters

Regional Cluster visits allow teams to connect, learn from one other, share insights, and see each other as partners and collaborators regardless of agency titles and division affiliation.

Clusters are all about connection and advancing our core mission: “to provide a better quality of life and expand opportunities for all New Yorkers by fostering community revitalization [and] catalyzing economic growth”.

Regional Clusters are coming up in 2025, and we are looking forward to seeing you folk there!

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DOS's Anti-Discrimination Policy Monthly Notice

The Department of State and the Governor's Office of Employee Relations (OER) reminder of the policies and processes regarding investigation of employee discrimination complaints. This reminder will be sent out routinely to ensure that staff are aware of the State's anti-discrimination policy and how to file a complaint.

The OER Anti-Discrimination Investigations Divisions (ADID) is responsible for investigating allegations of protected class discrimination. Any employee who has been subjected to any discrimination, bias, prejudice, harassment or retaliation, based on any of the protected classes, may submit a complaint form directly to ADID via the webform located [here](#).

Employees, contractors, or interns at New York State Executive Agencies are not required to notify supervisors, human resources staff, or management before filing a complaint. Once you fill in the necessary information, the complaint is automatically submitted to ADID for review.

Additional information can be found in [the Equal Employment Opportunity Rights and Responsibilities Handbook for New York State Employees \(Handbook\)](#). The Handbook is the State's anti-discrimination policy.

Supervisory or other staff who are *required* to report allegations of discrimination (e.g., managers, agency Executive staff, Counsel's Office, Human Resources staff) are reminded that if an employee comes to you to report behaviors/interactions that could be protected-class employment discrimination, or if you witness such behaviors/interactions, you *must* report this to OER. You are required to report any such allegations, even if the employee asks you not to, says they were "just venting" or otherwise indicates they do not want the behaviors/interactions investigated. As an additional reminder, complaints and all parties involved must maintain the confidential nature of this process. Discussion outside of the formal investigation process is prohibited.

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Contact us!

Do you have any upcoming events that celebrate DEIA at DOS?

Want to contribute to the DEIA newsletter?

Contact Norie Wright at
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to let us know!



Please note January newsletter content deadline of January 10th

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