



OFFICE OF FAITH & NONPROFIT DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

March 2026 Newsletter

Greetings and welcome back! Please use this newsletter for information on upcoming events, funding opportunities, and resources to ensure your organizations can thrive.

Called to Lead: Women Advancing Communities Through Faith and Service



The March 2026 Office of Faith and Non-Profit Development Services (OFNDS) Newsletter “Called to Lead: Women Advancing Communities Through Faith and Service” celebrates Women’s History Month by uplifting women leaders across New York’s faith and nonprofit sectors, including a Faith Leaders Spotlight featuring Sister Ani Kunga (Sakya Temple, Dutchess County), Reverend Janice Moore (Community Presbyterian Church of Malverne, Nassau County), and Rabbi Sara Rich (Temple Beth Tzedek, Erie County). This edition also highlights mission-driven organizations strengthening women and families statewide through the Nonprofit Spotlight, including Fearless! Hudson Valley, Hope Empowerment and Development Zone (HEADZ), SACSS, Fund for Women of the Southern Tier, WERC, WNY Women’s Foundation, Heart Well Homestead, and Bethany House. Readers are invited to a timely OFNDS webinar “Your Language Access Rights in New York State” on Wednesday, March 18, 2026 at 10:00 AM, featuring the NYS Office of Language Access, alongside grant information and 1:1 application support, Direction to a plethora of Grant Resources including New York State African American Heritage Grant Program, partner resources from the Office for New Americans, recent highlights, and a helpful calendar of interfaith dates in March, plus links to submit community events and stay connected with OFNDS.



Faith Leaders Spotlight: Women's History Month



Sister Ani Kunga - Sakya Temple (Liaison, Dutchess County)

Q: What New York State resource, program, or partnership has made the biggest difference for the women you serve and why?

A: *I see the very important and helpful impact of New York's generous family-focused public benefits programs, especially Medicaid. New York offers the most generous Medicaid benefits and eligibility criteria among the 50 states. This makes good healthcare available to many hardworking New York women and families near the edge who otherwise would be forced to choose between getting medical treatment for themselves or their children or spiraling further into debt. I pray that someday a program like Medicaid will be available to everyone, everywhere.*

Q: This Women's History Month, what does it mean to you to lead as a woman of faith in New York State, and how can institutions (including government) better recognize, support, and invest in women-led faith and nonprofit institutions?

A: *Leading in faith means to serve others. To serve effectively, we need not only compassion but also knowledge and wisdom. The Office of Faith and Nonprofit Development Services provides faith leaders the knowledge to help us serve others more wisely. We learn ourselves through the information that OFNDS shares concerning programs, training, and grant opportunities and we can pass that on to the people and communities that we serve.*

Q: What specific issues are you most proud of working on currently and how should New Yorkers support?

A: *I join so many other faith leaders in striving to live in and share love and kindness with others. Many people walk through their daily lives with a normal face but heavy hearts. Even small acts of kindness, not to mention large ones, can lift the spirits of others, and by doing that, our own hearts are uplifted. Kindness is easy, joyful, and contagious. Let's try to spread it to every person we meet!*



Faith Leaders Spotlight: Women's History Month



Reverend Dr. Janice Moore - The Community Presbyterian Church of Malverne (Liaison, Nassau County)

Q: What New York State resource, program, or partnership has made the biggest difference for the women you serve and why?

A: I've seen tremendous benefit from the Joint Admissions program between Nassau Community College and SUNY schools such as Farmingdale, Albany, Old Westbury, and Stony Brook. It has opened doors for young women in my congregations who might not otherwise have access to college. Many work full time and support families. With scholarship support to Nassau, they can begin immediately and continue toward four-year degrees in fields like education, nursing, and business.

Q: This Women's History Month, what does it mean to you to lead as a woman of faith in New York State, and how can institutions (including government) better recognize, support, and invest in women-led faith and nonprofit institutions?

A: Leading as a woman of faith in New York means continuing a long tradition of women who quietly hold communities together. As chair of the Long Island Council of Churches, I see faith communities addressing food insecurity, supporting immigrants, and providing care. Government can strengthen this work by recognizing women-led faith organizations as trusted partners and investing in their community impact.

Q: What specific issues are you most proud of working on currently and how should New Yorkers support?

A: I'm especially proud of partnerships helping bring food to people who may not feel safe or able to visit traditional food pantries. Across Long Island, faith communities and local organizations are working together to reach families where they are. New Yorkers can support this work by volunteering, donating to local food programs, and advocating for policies that address food insecurity.



Faith Leaders Spotlight: Women's History Month



Rabbi Sara Rich – Temple Beth Tzedek (Liaison, Erie County)

Q: What New York State resource, program, or partnership has made the biggest difference for the women you serve and why?

A: As mothers, daughters, and caretakers, New York State's Paid Family Leave Act has made a big difference for the women that I serve. Although our country lags behind in providing ample leave after birth or adoption, I am proud that NY State's policy is generous compared to other states. PFLA gives New Yorkers a safety net that allows them to be present for their loved ones in times of need. Caretaking responsibilities are a major source of stress for my congregants, and I hope that NY State can continue to set a high bar for policy and resources.

Q: This Women's History Month, what does it mean to you to lead as a woman of faith in New York State, and how can institutions (including government) better recognize, support, and invest in women-led faith and nonprofit institutions?

A: I believe that clergy must carry themselves with integrity and practice what they preach. As the first female rabbi in my congregation's history, I aim to empower women to embrace more leadership opportunities in our worship services and across Jewish life. However, our progress is held back when members of the community do not feel safe. In response to today's climate of rising antisemitism and hate crimes, we need New York State to create physical buffer zones around houses of worship and expand funding for religious and non-profit security.

Q: What specific issues are you most proud of working on currently and how should New Yorkers support?

A: My congregation and Jewish community foster an inclusive culture. Years ago, we founded a group home for Jewish women with disabilities. A blessing of my position is the time I spend with these women, their families, and caregivers. Today, additional community members need a group home. We have an ideal site near my synagogue and a Universal Design architectural plan. I call upon the necessary New York State and local agencies and officials for their support. The group home will protect these vulnerable individuals once their families can no longer provide them with care.



New York's Nonprofit Spotlight: Women's History Month



Region: Mid-Hudson | County: Orange & Sullivan

Fearless! Hudson Valley is an organization dedicated to building an informed, just, and accountable society so all people can experience supportive and safe relationships free from abuse, exploitation, and oppression. They provide confidential, comprehensive services to victims and survivors of domestic violence, human trafficking, sexual assault, interpersonal violence, and other types of crime victimization. Services include a 24-hour hotline, emergency shelter, legal advocacy, trauma-informed counseling, prevention education, and much more. Through strong community partnerships in both counties, Fearless! enhances safety, stability, and long-term empowerment for women and families.

These partnerships also extend into prevention education programs that teach youth about healthy relationships, respect, and life skills, helping to interrupt cycles of violence and build safer communities for generations to come. In 2025, Fearless! answered more than 12,000 hotline calls and served over 8,000 individuals across all programs. Nationally, 1 in 3 women will experience physical violence by an intimate partner in their lifetime - a powerful reminder that violence against women is a critical issue in our local communities and across New York State.

Email: admin@fearlesshv.org | 24-Hotline: 845-562-5340



Region: New York City | County: Kings

Hope Empowerment and Development Zone, Inc. (HEADZ) equip individuals and families with tools to close the wealth gap, build self-reliance, and prepare the next generation for success. Through holistic programming, HEADZ addresses food insecurity, access to mental health care, maternal wellness, and education through initiatives such as Hope Market, the ZOE Mental Health Program, community baby showers, and the Deacon Roy L. Coleman Scholarship and Summer Internship Programs. Hope Market, its monthly supermarket-style food distribution, has delivered more than 400,000 pounds of fresh food to over 100,000 residents, helping families access nutritious meals while easing financial strain. ZOE provides free counseling services that foster emotional healing, stability, and resilience. In partnership with Hope City Church, HEADZ supports expectant mothers through community baby showers, offering education, doula resources, and essential supplies. The Deacon Roy L. Coleman Scholarship and Summer Internship Program has awarded over \$70,510 in scholarships while creating educational and workforce pathways for young adults.

For 20 years, HEADZ has strengthened community well-being through trusted partnerships and sustainable impact.

Email: headz@hopecitychurch.com



South Asian Council
for Social Services

Region: New York City | County: Queens

SACSS (South Asian Council for Social Services) is a community-based nonprofit organization that serves more than 300,000 underserved New Yorkers each year. SACSS; empower and integrate underserved South Asians and other communities into the economic and civic life of New York. They champion healthcare access for all, operate a vibrant senior center, and advance food justice through a culturally responsive food pantry. They also equip community members with workforce development skills- offering basic and advanced English classes and digital literacy training- and help women achieve economic independence through our Wednesdays for Women initiative and Stitch with SACSS tailoring program. SACSS provide free legal assistance through our legal clinic, cultivate youth leadership, and engage community members in exercising their civic rights. Their multilingual staff speaks 20 languages; 12 South Asian languages. All our services are free.

Email: sacss@sacssny.org | Phone: (718) 321-7929



New York’s Nonprofit Spotlight: Women’s History Month



Region: Southern Tier | County: Steuben

Fund for Women of the Southern Tier, Inc. (FFW) exists to help girls and women achieve economic self sufficiency and realize life goals through grants in education, health, wellness, career, and life skills. Established in 2009, FFW is the first and only funding stream dedicated to improving the lives of girls and women in the area. FFW’s individual grants include \$2500 Achieve scholarships for women pursuing postsecondary education, \$500 education grants that help cover critical expenses like textbooks or licensing exams, and \$500 Aspire scholarships awarded annually through 20 high schools. Year-round Health and Wellness \$500 grants support women experiencing the financial toll of cancer treatment, helping with transportation, childcare, wigs, and prosthetics. Through its annual grants cycle, Feminine Care grants throughout the year, and a three-year Empower Grant partnership—currently supporting Twin Tiers Baby Bank’s work to address diaper insecurity—FFW strengthens nonprofit organizations advancing girls’ and women’s educational and health opportunities across the region. During Women’s History Month and throughout the year, FFW honors women by investing in the next generation of girls and women.

Email: info@ffwst.org | Phone: 607-542-7558



Region: Capital District | County: Albany

The Capital District Women’s Employment & Resource Center (WERC) advances women’s economic independence by building skills, confidence, and clear pathways to sustainable employment. Since 1988, WERC has supported more than 10,000 displaced homemakers experiencing financial hardship through comprehensive, free workforce development services. The organization primarily serves women who have lost their primary source of income due to death, divorce, separation, disability, or dislocation of a spouse, as well as single mothers working to stabilize and strengthen their families’ financial futures. WERC provides individualized job search and placement assistance, career readiness preparation, computer and digital literacy training, professional development workshops, and access to critical community resources. Serving more than 300 women annually, WERC equips participants with practical tools and ongoing support to secure and retain meaningful employment. These efforts promote long-term financial stability for families while contributing to workforce growth and economic vitality across New York’s Capital Region. In addition, the Women’s Fund, a program of WERC, partners with local educational institutions to provide financial assistance and supportive services to economically insecure and non-traditional female students, increasing employment opportunities, wages, and career advancement outcomes.

Contact: Elizabeth Miller Guthier, Executive Director | Director@cdwerc.org | 518-225-3131



Region: Western New York | County: Erie

The WNY Women’s Foundation transforms systems, culture, and policy to create opportunities for each woman to thrive. Across Western New York, the Foundation invests in women to strengthen families and build lasting prosperity. Through initiatives such as mPower: From Education to Employment and ALL IN, women gain access to education, leadership development, and pathways to greater economic security. By partnering with employers, community organizations, and generous supporters, the Foundation works to remove barriers and expand opportunity. Investing in women creates measurable progress for families and meaningful growth for our region.

Email: wnywfdn@wnywfdn.org | Phone: 716-217-9056



New York's Nonprofit Spotlight: Women's History Month



Region: North Country | County: Clinton

Heart Well Homestead (HWH) is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization whose mission is to provide a residential program that empowers unstably housed pregnant and parenting mothers by supporting their physical, emotional, educational and spiritual needs so they can thrive. Having begun in July of 2022, HWH is currently in its pre-launch phase, with actions primarily focused on establishing our community network, planning operations, and fundraising prior to our planned opening in mid 2027. HWH will empower unstably housed pregnant women and their babies by providing safe housing and tailored support services so that both may thrive. Our plan is to open our maternity home which will be the only facility of its kind within a 150-mile radius. HWH will be unique in the provision of trauma-informed care for this population, parenting and nutrition education, and facilitating vocation training. Further, the emphasis on intergenerational engagement, collaborative partnerships and community outreach will give our mothers the greatest opportunity to achieve lifelong success and allow them to raise healthy children.

Email: heartwellhomestead@gmail.com | Phone: 833-534-8433



Region: Long Island | County: Nassau

Bethany House offers a safe haven for healing and personal growth for women with children facing homelessness. Their foundation is built on community support, creating a continuum of care that guides individuals from uncertainty to stability. Through strong partnerships, they deliver trauma-informed services, comprehensive health care—both in-house and community-based—and dedicated case management that focuses on educational and employment growth opportunities. Their goal is to empower their guests on their journey toward permanent housing and self-sufficiency. Bethany House is committed to ensuring that every woman and child feels a profound sense of self-worth and belonging, nurtured by our compassionate staff and dedicated volunteers.

Email: info@bhny.org | Phone: 516-868-6866



MARCH 2026 OFNDS WEBINAR: Your Language Access Rights in New York State

Date: Wednesday, March 18th, 2026

Time: 10:00 AM

REGISTRATION LINK: [Register Here for FREE](#)

The New York State Office of Language Access (OLA) invites you to this webinar to learn more about the New York State language access law and resources to promote equitable access to critical information and services for all New Yorkers regardless of their English proficiency or preferred language. The session will also highlight opportunities for collaboration between the OLA and faith-based organizations to inform community members of their rights and reduce barriers when they are accessing state government services and programs.



Alejandro Cintron Carrasco

Executive Director for the NYS Office of Language Access (OLA)

Alejandro Cintron Carrasco is the Executive Director for the NYS Office of Language Access (OLA), within the NYS Office of General Services. In this role, Alejandro is responsible for leading the office and ensuring the state is providing linguistically and culturally appropriate services for people who prefer a non-English language when accessing public state services, per NYS Language Access Law Section 202-A. This includes overseeing, coordinating, and providing guidance to state agencies in implementing language access mandates and best practices. Prior to joining the OLA, Alejandro worked in various New York City agencies, including NYC Health + Hospitals, NYC Department of Education, and the NYC Mayor’s Office of Immigrant Affairs, to lead in the delivery and support of language services. Alejandro received his BA from Stony Brook University and his MPA from Baruch College.



Ahram Kim

Community Collaborations and Outreach Manager for the NYS Office of Language Access (OLA)

Ahram Kim is the Community Collaborations and Outreach Manager for the NYS Office of Language Access (OLA), within the NYS Office of General Services. In this role, she focuses on building partnerships with community-based and nonprofit organizations and language access advocates, overseeing outreach efforts to inform New Yorkers about their language access rights, and strategizing with government agencies and partners to improve language services. As an immigrant and

a child of immigrants from Korea, Ahram takes pride in building her career toward language justice and protecting immigrant rights. She brings over 10 years of experience working on language access and diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility initiatives in nonprofit organization, NYC government, healthcare and higher education. Ahram received her BA in Politics and Spanish Literature from New York University. When she is not working, she likes to travel, bake, watch Korean dramas, and play fetch with her cat.



GRANT INFORMATION

All of our grant information and grant application assistance information can be accessed by visiting our website.

Please click [HERE](#) for further details OR visit <https://dos.ny.gov/ofnds>

Book a 1:1 with our Grant Program Manager Xamayla Rose to enroll in SFS:

[CLICK HERE TO BOOK](#)

Grant Highlight:

New York State African American Heritage Grant Program

The New York State African American Heritage Grant Program (NYSAAH) provides grants to assist nonprofit organizations and local governments in documenting, interpreting, and preserving places and stories of historical and cultural importance to the African American experience in New York. The program is administered by the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation's [Division for Historic Preservation](#), in partnership with the [New York State Commission on African American History](#) and the [New York State Department of State](#).

[CLICK HERE TO LEARN MORE](#)



Recent Highlights





RESOURCES FROM OUR PARTNERS AT THE OFFICE FOR NEW AMERICANS ARE AVAILABLE TO YOU

 Department of State
Office for New Americans

KNOW YOUR RESOURCES

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS



Resources are available to everyone, including immigrants:
dos.ny.gov/know-your-rights



New Americans Hotline:

 **1-800-566-7636**
MULTI-LINGUAL AND ANONYMOUS

NEW EXTENDED HOURS
Monday – Friday, 8 AM – 8 PM EST
Saturday – Sunday, 9 AM – 5 PM EST



To share information regarding federal government action in New York State:
ag.ny.gov/federal-actions-form



ASSISTANCE FOR IMMIGRANTS

FREE SERVICES:

- Legal Assistance
- Naturalization Support
- Community Workshops
- Developmental Disabilities Services
- Mental Health Support
- Learn English
- Job Training



dos.ny.gov/Office-New-Americans

 Department of State
Office for New Americans

For referrals to free immigration-related legal help and other programs, please call the **New Americans Hotline** at:

 **1-800-566-7636**
Monday – Friday, 9 AM – 8 PM EST
MULTI-LINGUAL AND ANONYMOUS
 Department of State
Office for New Americans
dos.ny.gov/Office-New-Americans

VISIT THE OFFICE FOR NEW AMERICANS' WEBSITE
AT <https://dos.ny.gov/office-new-americans>



Recent Highlights





CONNECT WITH US!



Important Interfaith Dates in March (2026)

- March 1st-March 19th: (Islam) Ramadan
- March 2nd – March 20th: (Bahá'í): Nineteen Day Fast
- March 3rd: (Buddhism) Sangha Day & (Judaism) Purim
- March 4th: (Hinduism, Jainism, Sikhism) Holi
- March 4th : March 6th: (Sikhism) Hola Mohalla
- March 16th: (Islam) Lailatal Qadr
- March 29th: (Islam) Eid al-Fitr
- March 20th: (Pagan/Wiccan) Ostara
- March 21st: (Bahá'í/ Zoroastrian) Nowruz
- March 26th: (Hindu) Rama Navami
- March 29th: (Christian) Palm Sunday
- March 31st: (Jain) Mahavir Jayanthi

Does your organization have public events coming up?

Fill out our form to have your event included in our next newsletter.

Need to be added to our database of Faith Leaders?

Please fill out this form.