

Governor Phil Murphy

Governor Murphy Signs Executive Order Creating Greater Oversight and Accountability for Federal COVID-19 Resources

07/17/2020

Order Establishes Governor's Disaster Recovery Office and COVID-19 Compliance and Oversight Task Force

TRENTON – Acting to ensure greater oversight and accountability in the state's administration of federal COVID-19 resources, Governor Phil Murphy today signed Executive Order No. 166, which establishes the Governor's Disaster Recovery Office and COVID-19 Compliance and Oversight Task Force.

"We are fighting for every public dollar of COVID-19 relief possible, and every dollar we receive and properly invest in our recovery is one we do not have to borrow," **said Governor Murphy**. "With this step, we are putting in place the oversight we need for this moment, to give the public greater confidence in our work, and ensure that our restart and recovery moves forward."

Governor Murphy also announced that Daniel Kelly, current executive director of the Office of Recovery and Rebuilding, will lead the Governor's Disaster Recovery Office. Acting State Comptroller Kevin Walsh will lead the COVID-19 Compliance and Oversight Task Force.

"It's imperative that we have a robust compliance and Statewide coordination process in place to ensure that our federal COVID-19 resources are used properly," **said Daniel Kelly, Executive Director of the Governor's Disaster Recovery Office**. "I thank Governor Murphy for this opportunity, and I share his commitment to ensuring we continue to provide accountability and transparency for the residents of New Jersey."

"With the need so great and resources so limited, it is extremely important that COVID-19 relief funds are used as intended and in full compliance with state and federal law," **said Acting Comptroller Kevin D. Walsh**. "We will make sure contracts the State enters into are fully compliant with the law and protect New Jersey's interests. I look forward to leading the Governor's Task Force in our mission to prevent waste, fraud, and abuse of any kind from disrupting New Jersey's recovery from this crisis."

The Governor's Disaster Recovery Office (GDRO) will assume the responsibilities of the Governor's Office of Recovery & Rebuilding, which will no longer exist. The GDRO shall be responsible for the following activities, among others:

- Coordinating the work of "COVID-19 Accountability Officers," as described in the Order, to ensure cross-agency collaboration, compliance, and transparency;
- Developing a transparency website within ninety (90) days of the date of this order to track the State's eligible and planned uses of any funds disbursed by the federal or State government to help New

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Jersey residents, businesses, non-profit organizations, government agencies, and other entities respond to or recover from the COVID-19 pandemic;

- Coordinating and consulting with all relevant stakeholders regarding the disbursement of COVID-19 Recovery Funds and the administration of COVID-19 Recovery Programs; and
- Publishing an annual report summarizing the State's use of federal funds in response to COVID-19.

The Governor's Executive Order also directs the State Comptroller to review all COVID-related procurements above a certain dollar threshold (currently \$150,000), ensure internal controls, and provide compliance training to all agencies receiving COVID-19 funds.

The COVID-19 Compliance and Oversight Taskforce will establish an Integrity Oversight Monitoring program to ensure state agencies guard against fraud, waste, and abuse of any COVID-19 funds. Integrity monitors will also be required to submit quarterly reports to the Governor's Disaster Recovery Office, the Attorney General, the Comptroller, and both the Senate President and Assembly Speaker, and make the reports publicly available online.

The Order further states that the State Comptroller and the GDRO shall report to the Governor from time to time on the progress of the COVID-19 recovery and the compliance process, and, in doing so, shall indicate whether additional staff and assistance is necessary to ensure accountability, transparency, and the timely expenditure of federal resources.

For a copy of Executive Order No. 166, please click here (<https://www.nj.gov/infobank/eo/056murphy/pdf/EO-166.pdf>).

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