

Governor Phil Murphy

Governor Murphy Announces Jacquelyn Suárez to Serve as Acting Commissioner of the Department of Community Affairs

09/14/2023

Governor Will Submit Suárez's Nomination to the Senate

TRENTON – Governor Phil Murphy today announced his intention to nominate Jacquelyn A. Suárez as Commissioner of the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs (DCA). Suárez's nomination follows the unexpected passing of Lieutenant Governor Sheila Y. Oliver in August, who had served as DCA Commissioner since the start of the Murphy Administration.

Suárez currently serves as Director of DCA's Division of Local Government Services (DLGS) (https://urldefense.com/v3/_https://t.e2ma.net/click/3jg60j/nrdedit/76alp5_!!J30X0ZmC1o0tbA1KNQ2FuJ5XW5jR2u_Y6PuM_05nZZzwi8mhFK8Zs3HjGvKyntgg9KwuaHAEndaf) and, effective Monday, September 18, will serve as Acting Commissioner of the department pending her confirmation by the Senate, making her the first Hispanic Commissioner to lead DCA. Suárez will lead the department in its 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.

"Jacquelyn has skillfully served our state for many years – lending her expertise to important legal and policy matters affecting municipalities throughout New Jersey," said **Governor Murphy**. "When local governments were faced with tremendous challenges as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, she stepped up as head of the Division of Local Government Services and provided local leaders with the support they needed during a difficult time. While Sheila Oliver can never truly be replaced, Jacquelyn will undoubtedly carry on Sheila's legacy of passionate, dedicated leadership of this department on behalf of New Jersey's communities."

"I would be remiss to not extend my deepest gratitude to Kim Holmes, who has played a vital role in leading the department over the last several years and swiftly stepped up to the plate to head the department in one of our state's darkest times," **Governor Murphy continued**. "I appreciate her remarkable leadership in the month following Sheila's passing and her firm commitment to the critical work of the Department of Community Affairs."

"It is a true honor to be nominated as the Department of Community Affairs' next Commissioner. Having worked under the remarkable leadership of Lieutenant Governor Oliver, it is my pleasure to continue moving her legacy forward in serving the communities of our great state," said **incoming Acting Commissioner Suárez**. "DCA plays a pivotal role in enhancing the quality of life for New Jersey residents, municipalities, and businesses – and I will remain steadfast in my commitment to honor each and every one of our communities with the utmost respect and dedication."

Since she began leading the DLGS in January 2021, Suárez has served as an advocate for local government interests and provided them with technical and financial assistance in a number of areas – including joint services, purchasing, and management issues. She has also overseen the review and approval of all municipal, county, and fire district budgets, worked to uphold the financial integrity of local government units, and guided the conduct of local government officials.

As Director of DLGS, Suárez also served as Chair of the State's Local Finance Board since January 2021.

Prior to serving as the Director of DLGS, Suárez provided legal advice to Governor Murphy on matters affecting his Administration as an associate counsel in the Governor's Office. During her time in the Governor's Office, Suárez advised on pending legislation, statutory responsibilities, litigation, the development of administrative regulations, and various proposals impacting the Governor's public policy agenda. With a focus on issues related to the Departments of Community Affairs, Human Services, Children and Families, and the Administrative Office of the Courts, Suárez was integral to advancing the Governor's agenda in these areas and, in particular, to spearheading many of the State's COVID response policies such as the eviction moratorium. It was Suárez's proven aptitude and successful track record that gave Lieutenant Governor Sheila Y. Oliver the confidence to name her as the director of the DLGS.

Before joining the Governor's Office, Suárez was a legislative liaison, making her DCA's point person for all communication with the State Legislature, drafted bill language, spearheaded the implementation of newly signed legislation at DCA, and helped review and advise on various decisions, orders, settlements, and other matters impacting the Department.

Suárez is a New Jersey native who earned her Juris Doctor from Rutgers School of Law in Camden and her bachelor's degree in communications, legal institutions, economics, and government from American University in Washington D.C. She is a member of both the New Jersey and New York bar associations. She is also a member of the Hispanic Bar Association of New Jersey.

"I've witnessed firsthand Jacquelyn's dedication in her current role as Director of Local Government Services at DCA," said **Senator Nellie Pou, Senate Majority Caucus Chair**. "As she steps into her new role, she not only carries the torch of our beloved Lt. Governor Sheila Oliver but also carries her vision for housing and community development in New Jersey. I look forward to continuing working with Jacquelyn in her new role as Acting Commissioner of DCA, while awaiting confirmation by the Senate."

"Lieutenant Governor Oliver's impact on the Department of Community Affairs will be felt for generations to come and I am glad that Governor Murphy has nominated such an incredible individual to take the helm of the Department," said **Assemblywoman Yvonne Lopez, Chair of the Assembly Housing Committee**. "Jacquelyn's knowledge and experience, especially her role in assisting our local governments makes her an ideal candidate for the position and I am confident that she will continue our shared mission of ensuring housing opportunity for all. As Chair of the Housing Committee, I look forward to working and meeting with Acting Commissioner Suárez."

"As a fellow attorney who holds a deep respect for the late Lt. Governor Sheila Oliver, I am genuinely enthused to witness someone with a remarkable career, like Jacquelyn, stepping up to continue the Lt. Governor's great legacy. I look forward to connecting with Jacquelyn and I wish her the very best in her new role," said **Assemblywoman Annette Quijano, Assembly Majority Conference Leader**.

"We want to commend Governor Murphy on the nomination of Jacquelyn Suárez as Commissioner of the DCA. Jacquelyn is one of the best we have worked with and we are excited to continue our efforts working with her in her new role," said **Senator Vincent Polistina, Assemblywoman Claire Swift, and Assemblyman Donald Guardian, representatives of Atlantic City**.

"Director Suárez is the consummate professional and an exemplary public servant. My administration is elated about her elevation to the position of Acting DCA Commissioner," said **Paterson Mayor Andre Sayegh**.

"I'm thrilled that Governor Murphy has appointed Jacqueline Suárez to lead DCA as Acting Commissioner. I have enjoyed my relationship working closely with Director Suárez to strengthen the state's ties to the Capitol City and improve the lives of Trentonians. Jacqueline's vast knowledge of government services and her hands on approach will be an asset for the State. I look forward to working with her in her new role," said **Trenton Mayor Reed Gusciora**.

"I wholeheartedly support Governor Phil Murphy's nomination of Jacquelyn Suárez as Department of Community Affairs Commissioner," **said Camden Mayor Victor Carstarphen**. "In her role as the Director of Local Government Services, Jacquelyn has been incredibly professional, knowledgeable, and fully responsive to the fiscal health needs of our municipality. Her nomination will lead to a tremendous improvement in the quality of life for so many throughout New Jersey."

"I am very pleased to hear that Jacquelyn Suárez is being named Acting Commissioner of Community Affairs. Jacquelyn has a strong background in state government serving in several administrations. The wealth of knowledge and experience will provide a smooth transition. My congratulations to Jacquelyn," **said Seaside Heights Borough Mayor Anthony E. Vaz**.

"I applaud Governor Murphy for his appointment of Jacquelyn Suárez as Acting Commissioner of the DCA," **said Plainfield Mayor Adrian Mapp**. "Jacqui is a highly skilled professional who is well qualified and perfectly suited for the role. I congratulate her and wish her the very best as she assumes this very important position."

"We are happy that Jacquelyn Suárez is the new DCA Commissioner. Jacquelyn has been a GREAT Partner to my administration in her prior role as Director of Local Governmental Services. We worked in partnership to bring The GREAT City of Atlantic City, where it is today, as she supported our plan for the city. I look forward to her continued leadership and commitment as we take The GREAT City of Atlantic City to Greater Heights," **said Atlantic City Mayor Marty Small**.

"Succeeding Sheila Oliver is no easy task, but Jacquelyn Suárez's experience makes her the ideal choice. The League is pleased to learn of her appointment to be the Acting DCA Commissioner. We have worked with her both when she was with the Governor's Office and as DLGS Director. We very much look forward to continuing our partnership in advancing the interests of local governments and our taxpayers," **said League of Municipalities Executive Director Michael Cerra**.

For a photo of Jacquelyn A. Suárez, please click [here](https://urldefense.com/v3/_https://t.e2ma.net/click/3jq60j/nrddit/nzblp5_!!J30X0ZrnC1o0tbA!KNO2FuJ5XW5jR2u_Y6PuM_05nZZzwi8mhFK8Zs3HjGvKyntgg9KwuaHAEndaf)
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