

Governor Phil Murphy

# Governor Murphy Signs Executive Order Enabling State Certification of Businesses as LGBTQ+-Owned

05/3/2022

**LAMBERTVILLE** – Governor Phil Murphy today visited Union Coffee in Lambertville, an LGBTQ+-owned coffee shop, to sign Executive Order No. 295 instructing the New Jersey Department of the Treasury to establish a State-backed certification program for LGBTQ+-owned business enterprises. Certification, which will be free of charge, would expand access to public and private contracting opportunities and enable businesses to proudly identify as LGBTQ+-owned in their advertising.

Today's executive order reflects the Governor's ongoing support for the LGBTQ+ community and affirms that LGBTQ+ businesses are welcome and encouraged to grow and thrive in New Jersey.

"Enabling the certification of businesses as LGBTQ+-owned will encourage the success of these enterprises by enhancing their visibility, providing them with an extra layer of authenticity in their business ventures, and demonstrating that they are welcome and vital participants in our economy," **said Governor Murphy**. "I am honored to support the endeavors of entrepreneurs from a historically underrepresented community through the creation of this certification program. New Jersey will always value the contributions of our LGBTQ+ community."

"From day one, Treasury has been committed to opening doors for all businesses to grow and thrive. In 2021, as businesses faced unique challenges amid the COVID-19 pandemic, Treasury waived certification fees for small, minority, women and veteran-owned businesses," **said Treasurer Elizabeth Maher Muoio**. "By expanding this benefit to help LGBTQ+ -owned businesses, we can help more enterprises successfully launch and gain a foothold in their respective industries."

The State already has certification programs in place for small businesses and businesses owned by minorities, women, veterans, and disabled veterans. Last year, Treasury began waiving the \$100 fee for these businesses to become certified. Under the program to be established by Treasury per Executive Order No. 295, businesses that are majority-owned and operated by one or more individuals who identify as LGBTQ+ can become certified for free as an LGBTQ+-owned business. Certification provides State-backed documentation of a business' status, which can be beneficial in pursuing contracting opportunities at the local, state, and federal level, as well as in the private sector.

"We couldn't agree more with Governor Murphy's statement in 2018 that 'Social progress cannot be achieved without economic progress,'" **said National LGBT Chamber of Commerce Co-Founder & President Justin Nelson**. "And now New Jersey continues its tradition as a leader in LGBT rights by living up to its promise and creating greater access to the American Dream. We thank Governor Murphy's administration for their commitment to the LGBT community – and to all business owners – throughout New Jersey. This victory for inclusivity has once again proved our core values that 'diversity is good for business' and that 'if you can buy it, a certified LGBT-owned business can supply it.' We are excited to see LGBT business enterprises in every field, from construction to catering and everything in between, help grow the economy of New Jersey and beyond."

"We at the New Jersey Pride Chamber of Commerce are grateful for Governor Murphy's continued dedication to advancing the interests of the LGBT business community throughout the Garden State," **said New Jersey Pride Chamber of Commerce President Stephen Blazjewski**. "LGBT entrepreneurs are statistically likely to encounter a number of socioeconomic hurdles when starting their own business. Thanks to Governor Murphy's leadership, LGBT-owned businesses in New Jersey will now be included in the state's economic development initiatives, helping ensure more equitable access to bids and contracts that could completely change the trajectory of their companies."

"New Jersey has once again proven itself to be a proud ally of the LGBT community," **said Augusto Penaranda, Executive Director of the NJ Pride Chamber of Commerce**. "Including LGBT-owned businesses in Treasury's Uniform Certification System, currently used by SMWBE businesses, will allow more equitable participation for these businesses in the state's economic initiatives and hopefully attract new LGBT businesses to relocate to New Jersey."

"This Executive Order will make it easier for companies to identify which businesses are owned by the LGBTQ+ community and help ensure diversity in contracting," **said Christian Fuscarino, Executive Director of Garden State Equality.** "By taking this step, Gov. Murphy once again ensures that New Jersey is one of the most progressive states in the nation when it comes to LGBTQ+ equality."

"As the Mayor of Lambertville and a member of the LGBTQ+ community, I am grateful for Governor Murphy's ongoing commitment to diversity, inclusion, and economic progress for all New Jerseyans," **said Lambertville Mayor Andrew Nowick.** "Our little city on the Delaware is home to many LGBTQ+ owned businesses that will benefit from the governor's executive order and we deeply appreciate his dedication to equity in economic growth and vitality."

"One of the most rewarding things about owning a small business is having the opportunity to create an openly inclusive space for my employees and customers alike," **said Carolyn Gadbois, owner of Union Coffee.** "I feel so proud that Union Coffee has become known as a haven for the LGBTQ+ community, and I believe Gov. Murphy's executive order will help open even more doors on our collective path toward visibility and equality."

Treasury will establish rules and regulations to effectuate the Executive Order and work to ensure the procedures used to certify LGBTQ+-owned businesses are on equal footing with the procedures used to certify other types of businesses. Treasury will also be authorized to enter into reciprocal agreements with, or accept certifications by, other public and private certifying entities whose standards are similar to the ones developed by the department.

For a copy of Executive Order No. 295, click here (<https://nj.gov/infobank/eo/056murphy/pdf/EO-295.pdf>).

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