



Connecticut General Assembly's Commission on Equity & Opportunity  
18-20 Trinity Street, Hartford, Connecticut

## **Commission on Equity and Opportunity**

### **Chapter 23h**

Sec. 2-127. Commission on Equity and Opportunity. Membership. Quorum. Staff. Policy divisions. (a) There is established a Commission on Equity and Opportunity which shall be part of the Legislative Department. The commission shall focus on issues affecting each of the following underrepresented and underserved populations: African Americans, Asian Pacific Americans, and Latinos and Puerto Ricans. The Commission on Equity and Opportunity shall constitute a successor to the African-American Affairs Commission, Latino and Puerto Rican Affairs Commission and Asian Pacific American Affairs Commission in accordance with the provisions of subsections (b) to (d), inclusive, and subsection (f) of section 4-38d and section 4-38e.

(b) The Commission on Equity and Opportunity shall consist of sixty-three members, as follows:

(1) With respect to members appointed prior to July 1, 2016, to serve on either the African-American Affairs Commission, Latino and Puerto Rican Affairs Commission or Asian Pacific American Affairs Commission and whose term has not expired as of July 1, 2016, such members shall be deemed appointed to serve on the Commission on Equity and Opportunity until the expiration of the term of the member on such former commission or the occurrence of a vacancy, whichever occurs first. Upon the expiration of any such member's term or the occurrence of a vacancy, the vacancy shall be filled by the appointing authority who made the original appointment, except such appointment shall be made in accordance with the provisions of subdivision (2) of this subsection.

(2) With respect to members appointed on or after July 1, 2016, to serve on the Commission on Equity and Opportunity, such members shall be appointed as follows:

(A) Nine members appointed by a joint appointment of the speaker of the House of Representatives and the president pro tempore of the Senate, three of whom have experience in the field of African-American affairs, three of whom have experience in the field of Asian Pacific-American affairs and three of whom have



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experience in the field of Latino and Puerto Rican affairs, provided at least three of such members shall also be from the central region of the state;

(B) Nine members appointed by the president pro tempore of the Senate, three of whom have experience in the field of African-American affairs, three of whom have experience in the field of Asian Pacific-American affairs and three of whom have experience in the field of Latino and Puerto Rican affairs, provided at least three of such members shall also be from the northeastern region of the state;

(C) Nine members appointed by the speaker of the House of Representatives, three of whom have experience in the field of African-American affairs, three of whom have experience in the field of Asian Pacific-American affairs and three of whom have experience in the field of Latino and Puerto Rican affairs, provided at least three of such members shall also be from the southeastern region of the state;

(D) Nine members appointed by the majority leader of the Senate, three of whom have experience in the field of African-American affairs, three of whom have experience in the field of Asian Pacific-American affairs and three of whom have experience in the field of Latino and Puerto Rican affairs;

(E) Nine members appointed by the majority leader of the House of Representatives, three of whom have experience in the field of African-American affairs, three of whom have experience in the field of Asian Pacific-American affairs and three of whom have experience in the field of Latino and Puerto Rican affairs;

(F) Nine members appointed by the minority leader of the Senate, three of whom have experience in the field of African-American affairs, three of whom have experience in the field of Asian Pacific-American affairs and three of whom have experience in the field of Latino and Puerto Rican affairs, provided at least three of such members shall also be from the northwestern region of the state; and

(G) Nine members appointed by the minority leader of the House of Representatives, three of whom have experience in the field



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of African-American affairs, three of whom have experience in the field of Asian Pacific-American affairs and three of whom have experience in the field of Latino and Puerto Rican affairs, provided at least three of such members shall also be from the southwestern region of the state.

In the event of a vacancy for any member appointed pursuant to this subdivision, such vacancy shall be filled by the appointing authority.

(c) All initial appointments to the commission, other than appointments made pursuant to subdivision (1) of subsection (b) of this section, shall be made not later than July 31, 2016, and the term of such initial members shall terminate on June 30, 2018, regardless of when the initial appointment was made. The speaker of the House of Representatives and the president pro tempore of the Senate shall jointly select the chairperson of the commission from among the members of the commission. Such chairperson shall schedule the first meeting of the commission.

(d) Members of the commission appointed on or after July 1, 2018, shall serve for two-year terms which shall commence on the date of appointment. Members shall continue to serve until their successors are appointed. Any vacancy shall be filled by the appointing authority. Any vacancy occurring other than by expiration of term shall be filled for the balance of the unexpired term. The members of the commission shall serve without compensation, but shall, within the limits of available funds, be reimbursed for expenses necessarily incurred in the performance of their duties.

(e) A majority of the commission shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of any business. The commission shall meet as often as deemed necessary by the chairperson or a majority of the commission. Any appointed member who fails to attend three consecutive meetings or who fails to attend fifty per cent of all meetings held during any calendar year shall be deemed to have resigned from the commission.

(f) The commission shall have no authority over staffing or personnel matters. There shall be an executive director of the commission. The executive director and any necessary staff shall



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be employed by the Joint Committee on Legislative Management, which shall have authority over the hiring, termination and performance review of the executive director and any staff.

(g) The commission shall be organized into three policy divisions, one of which shall advise on policies affecting members of the African-American population, one of which shall advise on policies affecting members of the Asian Pacific-American population and one of which shall advise on policies affecting members of the Latino and Puerto Rican population.

Sec. 2-128. Commission on Equity and Opportunity. Duties. Status report. Powers. (a) The Commission on Equity and Opportunity shall:

(1) Focus its efforts on the following quality of life desired results for members of the African-American, Asian Pacific-American and Latino and Puerto Rican populations of the state: That all such members are (A) healthy, safe and achieve educational success; (B) free from poverty; and (C) free from discrimination;

(2) Make recommendations to the General Assembly and the Governor for new or enhanced policies, programs and services that will foster progress in achieving the desired results described in subdivision (1) of this subsection. Such recommendations shall, when applicable, include, but need not be limited to: (A) Systems innovations, model policies and practices which embed two-generational practice in program, policy and systems change on the state and local levels; (B) strategies for reducing family poverty, promoting parent leadership and family civics; (C) the promotion of youth leadership opportunities that keep youth engaged in the community; and (D) strategies and programs that address equitable access, impede bias, and narrow the opportunity gap for members of the African-American, Asian Pacific-American and Latino and Puerto Rican populations of the state. Such recommendations may include other state and national best practices, and recommendations on federal funding maximization;

(3) Review and comment, as necessary, on any specific proposed state legislation or recommendations that may affect members of



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the African-American, Asian Pacific-American and Latino and Puerto Rican populations of the state and provide copies of any such comments to members of the General Assembly;

(4) Advise the General Assembly concerning the coordination and administration of state programs that affect families and members of the African-American, Asian Pacific-American and Latino and Puerto Rican populations of the state;

(5) Gather and maintain, as necessary, current information regarding members of the African-American, Asian Pacific-American and Latino and Puerto Rican populations of the state that can be used to better understand the status, condition, and contributions of such populations. Such information, as appropriate and pertinent to the desired results delineated in subdivision (1) of this subsection, shall be included in the annual report submitted in accordance with subsection (b) of this section and shall be made available to legislators and other interested parties upon request;

(6) Maintain liaisons between members of the African-American, Asian Pacific-American and Latino and Puerto Rican populations of the state and government agencies, including the General Assembly; and

(7) Conduct educational and outreach activities intended to raise awareness of and address critical issues for members of the African-American, Asian Pacific-American and Latino and Puerto Rican populations of the state.

(b) Not later than January first, annually, the commission shall submit a status report, organized by policy division, concerning its efforts and any progress made in achieving the desired results listed in subdivision (1) of subsection (a) of this section to the joint standing committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to appropriations and the budgets of state agencies in accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a.

(c) The Commission on Equity and Opportunity may: (1) Request, and shall receive, from any state agency such information and assistance as the commission may require; (2) use such funds as



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may be available from federal, state or other sources and may enter into contracts to carry out its purposes; (3) utilize voluntary and uncompensated services of private individuals, state or federal agencies and organizations as may, from time to time, be offered and needed; (4) recommend policies to federal agencies and political subdivisions of the state relative to members of the African-American, Asian Pacific-American and Latino and Puerto Rican populations of the state; (5) accept any gift, donation or bequest for the purpose of performing its duties; (6) hold public hearings; (7) establish task forces or advisory committees, as necessary, to perform its duties; (8) adopt regulations, in accordance with chapter 54, as it may deem necessary to carry out its duties; and (9) inform leaders of business, education, state and local governments and the communications media of the nature and scope of the problems faced by members of the African-American, Asian Pacific-American and Latino and Puerto Rican populations of the state.

(d) The executive director of the commission may enter into any agreement with a state agency for the purpose of maximizing the receipt of federal funds by such state agency, provided such state agency shall utilize any federal funds received as a result of such agreement to perform those statutory duties of such agency that relate to the commission's duties. The commission may accept that portion of federal funds received by any such state agency as a result of any such agreement which federal law otherwise permits to be received by the commission.