

2021 -- S 0428

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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2021

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A N A C T

RELATING TO STATE AFFAIRS AND GOVERNMENT -- DEPARTMENT OF
ADMINISTRATION

Introduced By: Senators Cano, Miller, Goldin, Goodwin, McCaffrey, Lawson, Raptakis,
Quezada, Seveney, and DiMario

Date Introduced: February 25, 2021

Referred To: Senate Labor

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Section 42-11-2.7 of the General Laws in Chapter 42-11 entitled "Department
2 of Administration" is hereby amended to read as follows:

3 **42-11-2.7. Office of diversity, equity and opportunity established.**

4 (a) The office of diversity, equity and opportunity (ODEO) shall be established as a
5 division within the department of administration. The purpose of the office shall be to ensure
6 nondiscrimination, diversity, equity, and equal opportunity in all aspects of state government,
7 including, but not limited to, employment, procurement, policy and practices relative to state
8 programs, services, and activities.

9 (b) The head of this division shall be known as the associate director of ODEO, who shall
10 be appointed by the director of administration, in the classified service of the state, and shall be
11 responsible to, and report to, the director. The associate director of ODEO shall oversee the ODEO
12 in all aspects, including, but not limited to, coordination of the provisions of chapter 14.1 of title
13 37 (minority business enterprise) and chapter 5.1 of title 28 (equal opportunity and affirmative
14 action) wherein the ODEO shall have direct administrative supervision of the state's equal
15 opportunity office.

16 (c) ODEO shall have the following duties and responsibilities:

17 (1) Develop, administer, implement, and maintain a statewide diversity plan and program,
18 including an equity, equal-opportunity, minority business enterprise, and supplier-diversity

1 program, as well as other related plans and programs within the office;

2 (2) Provide leadership in the development and coordination of recruitment and retention
3 activities in order to promote diversity and encourage the use of bias-free methods and practices in
4 the hiring process, performance reviews, and promotions, and to ensure compliance with applicable
5 federal and state laws, rules, regulations, and policies;

6 (3) Support the growth and development of the state's minority business enterprise program
7 by engaging in concerted outreach programs to build relationships, maintaining effective programs
8 to promote minority business enterprise utilization, and facilitating minority business enterprise in
9 State procurement activities;

10 (4) Develop, coordinate, and oversee the recruitment, selection, and retention efforts and
11 initiatives to promote and achieve the state's diversity goals and objectives, developing and
12 recommending recruitment strategies, and assisting with special recruitment efforts directed toward
13 ethnic minorities, women, and other underrepresented groups; ~~and~~

14 (5) Provide leadership in advancing management's understanding, capacity, and
15 accountability for embedding diversity and equity in employment and human resource management
16 practices as an integral part of the state's employment opportunities; ~~and~~

17 (6) Create and execute a strategic plan for increased cultural competency for all state
18 employees;

19 (i) ODEO shall prescribe by regulation a cultural competency model training program;

20 (ii) ODEO shall require all state employees to annually receive said training program
21 beginning July 1, 2021;

22 (iii) ODEO shall make said training available to municipal employees, upon request; and

23 (iv) For the purposes of this section "cultural competency" means an understanding of how
24 institutions and individuals can respond respectfully and effectively to people from all cultures,
25 economic statuses, language backgrounds, races, ethnic backgrounds, disabilities, religions,
26 genders, gender identifications, sexual orientations, veteran statuses and other characteristics in a
27 manner that recognizes, affirms and values the worth, and preserves the dignity, of individuals,
28 families and communities.

29 (d) The director of administration may promulgate rules and regulations recommended by
30 the associate director in order to effectuate the purposes and requirements of this act.

31 SECTION 2. This act shall take effect upon passage.

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EXPLANATION
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
OF

A N A C T

RELATING TO STATE AFFAIRS AND GOVERNMENT -- DEPARTMENT OF
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1 This act would require the office of diversity, equity and opportunity (ODEO) to create and
2 for all state and municipal employees to receive annual training in cultural competency. It would
3 define "cultural competency" as an understanding of how institutions and individuals can
4 respectfully respond to people from all different backgrounds such as race, language, economic,
5 gender, veterans and disabilities.

6 This act would take effect upon passage.

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