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New York State Gender Specific Language Policy

Guidelines for State Entities for Drafting Measures
Without the Use of Gender-Specific Language

A. Gender Specific Language Policy

- (i) State Entities are encouraged to avoid the use of gender-specific language -- such as, "he," "she," "his," and "her" -- and should adhere to the following guidelines when drafting laws, proposed legislation, rules, regulations, reports, and policies, where possible.
- (ii) State Entities are (i) all agencies and departments over which the Governor has executive authority and as defined in subdivision 3, section 2-a of the State Finance Law; and (ii) all public benefit corporations, public authorities, boards, and commissions for which the Governor appoints the Chair, the Chief Executive, or at least 50% of the Board Members

B. Gender-Specific Nouns

- (i) State Entities should avoid using nouns that are gender-specific, and should, where possible, use substitutes of the same meaning.

- a. Gender-specific nouns and possible substitutes include but are not limited to:

Brother, Sister	Sibling
Daughter, Son	Child
Father, Mother	Parent
Wife, Husband	Spouse
Fireman	Firefighter
Policeman	Police Officer
Foreman	Supervisor
Businessman	Business person

b. For example:

"For the purpose of this section, the term FIRE FIGHTER ~~fireman~~ shall mean a member of a fire department whose duties include fire service..."

C. Gender-Specific Pronouns

- (i) State Entities should avoid using gender-specific pronouns wherever possible.
- (ii) Alternatives for drafting measures without the use of gender-specific pronouns include:
 - a. Repeat the subject of the sentence or substitute a noun for the pronoun.
 - i. Examples of noun substitutes include but are not limited to, the employee, the supervisor, the customer, the candidate, the interviewee, the commissioner, the officer, the member.
 - ii. For example:
 1. A person may be eligible for a waiver if ~~he~~ THAT PERSON applies.
 2. The applicant must pay the fee for ~~him~~ THAT APPLICANT to be considered.
 3. Once ~~he~~ THE INDIVIDUAL submits an application, the agency has 30 days to respond.
 4. Once a judge reviews a case, ~~he~~ THAT JUDGE will issue a decision.
 - b. Rewrite sentences to eliminate the pronoun or use an article such as "a," "an," "the," or "that" instead of the pronoun.
 - i. For example:
 1. The employee holds ~~his~~ A position until notice of ~~his~~ resignation.
 2. The individual must submit ~~his~~ THE application before 5pm on December 31.
 3. A person who CARRIES ~~has in his possession~~ a weapon will not be allowed in the building.
 4. An officer may issue a license after DETERMINING ~~he determines~~ that the application meets the requirements.