

# **PRESS RELEASE**

**October 13, 2017**

## **ESSEX COUNTY FREEHOLDERS PASS RESOLUTION TO ENCOURAGE VENDORS TO HIRE LOCALLY**



(Newark, NJ) – During the Essex County Board of Chosen Freeholders’ Wednesday, October 11, 2017, Board meeting at Maplewood Town Hall, the Essex County Board of Chosen Freeholders passed a Resolution [“Establishing The County Of Essex Aspirational Goal Initiative To Increase The Participation Of A Diverse And Qualified Essex County Workforce In County Projects.”](#)

Amidst new reports from the *New York Times* detailing President Donald Trump’s hopes to ban former President Barack Obama’s plan to ensure local hiring for public works projects, the Resolution serves to counteract President Trump’s new plan. District 5 Freeholder Cynthia D. Toro of Bloomfield proposed the Resolution to encourage vendors that hold or seek to hold contracts with the County to hire local.

During the meeting, Freeholder Toro explained that Essex County is home to the highest number of foreclosed properties, poverty rates, and one of the highest levels of unemployment in the State of New Jersey. She expressed that the Board’s obligation is to improve the quality of life for Essex County residents, and in an effort to fulfill this purpose, she proposed this Resolution to confront these significant issues. In response to the passage of this Resolution, Freeholder Toro stated, “It has been my observation that it is not that vendors don’t want to help in our cause, but instead, there’s a lack of awareness on the issue. This Resolution will gauge their participation, as well as provide the Freeholder’s with the opportunity to gain specifically targeted information from Vendors’ workforces.” She went on to add, “I’m happy to see this Resolution pass, as I believe it will make a difference in creating job opportunities for Essex County residents.”

By passing this Resolution, the Freeholders encourage vendors that hold contracts with the County to have a workforce comprised of 35% of Essex County residents, including county contracts in construction, solid waste removal, recycling, parks maintenance, and specialty trade work (i.e., plumbing and electrical, etc.), to name a few.

Through this Resolution, the County adopted a new procedural policy that will be implemented within 30 days, whereas awarded bidders and vendors will receive acknowledgement and disclosure forms to gain awareness of Essex’s economic disadvantages. This will allow the vendors and bidders to become active partners in the ongoing effort to improve the livelihood of residents and consider hiring workers from the vast and diverse pool of qualified and experienced people that reside in Essex.

Essex County Executive Joseph DiVincenzo, Jr., also added, “We are supportive of Freeholder Toro’s resolution to encourage companies that do business with the County to hire Essex County residents. This initiative can help our residents economically and is another tool for us to get our workforce into jobs.”

The Resolution was co-sponsored by the Board’s Economic Development Committee members: Freeholder Vice President At-Large Brendan W. Gill, Freeholder At-Large Rufus I. Johnson, and Freeholder Wayne L. Richardson of District 2, and by Freeholder President Britnee N. Timberlake of District 3

In support of the Resolution, Vice President Gill stated, “This resolution takes an important step toward helping lift up our communities by creating employment opportunities and strengthening our local economy. It’s vital for Essex County vendors to be committed to the well-being of the communities they serve.” Freeholder Richardson also stated, “This Resolution is surely needed here in Essex County. I’m hopeful that vendors will do a better job of hiring our residents.” Freeholder At-Large Rufus Johnson noted, “This

Resolution directly coincides with the Affirmative Action legislation the Board recently passed, reinforcing the idea that we should bring jobs back to communities of qualified individuals in Essex.”

Freeholder President Timberlake also expressed her support for the Resolution, stating, “Encouraging vendors who are awarded contracts with the County to hire local may help reduce the unemployment rate.”

The Board often questions vendors who appear before them for approval of various contracts, challenging vendors to share if they employ Essex County residents. However, the passage of this Resolution officially serves to encourage vendors to hire local, bridging together County Executive Joseph DiVincenzo, Jr., the members of the Board, and the Essex County Office of Purchasing to see that more jobs are brought back to Essex County.

For more information regarding this Resolution, please visit the Essex County Board Chosen Freeholders’ website, [www.essexcountynj.org/freeholders](http://www.essexcountynj.org/freeholders).

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