

SPEAK UP FOR YOUR COMMUNITY:

A Guide to Engaging Your City and County Leaders on Florida's Anti-Diversity in Local Government Law

It's Time to Speak Out

Florida's Anti-Diversity in Local Government law takes effect on January 1, 2027, but cities and counties across Florida are already deciding what to cut and what to keep. Residents have an important opportunity to speak out and be heard as local governments consider whether to cancel or change longstanding programs, cultural festivals, sponsorships and funding, inclusive policies, and critical services under the law's new restrictions.

The law is designed to create uncertainty and fear–particularly when it comes to minority programming and interests–but community members can help ensure that local decisions are based on careful legal analysis, thoughtful public engagement, and the actual language of the statute, not assumptions or unnecessary over-compliance. Whether you've never attended a city council meeting or you've testified dozens of times, your voice can help shape how your community responds.

Why the Implementation Fight Matters

Every local government will approach implementation differently. Some are taking careful, measured approaches to comply with the law's requirements and go no further. These local governments are continuing to show up for their communities as much as they can. Others are considering ending programs, partnerships, policies, and funding that the law does not actually require them to eliminate. This is classic over compliance: self-sensoring or self-restricting beyond the law's requirements out of misunderstanding or excessive precaution.



Many implementation decisions will be made locally, including whether to:

- Discontinue partnerships with nonprofit community service organizations
- Stop recognizing Pride Month, Black History Month, and other community observances
- Terminate grants and sponsorships to minority-serving organizations
- Defund and refuse to host community events and observances that reflect diversity
- Revise nondiscrimination policies and guidance
- Modify or discontinue advisory boards and volunteer commissions
- Participate in or support of litigation challenging the law

Community engagement can help ensure these decisions are based on the statute itself, not uncertainty or fear of liability.

What is the "Anti-Diversity in Local Government Law"?

The "Anti-Diversity in Local Government Law" was part of the bill sponsors' strategy to "make Florida where DEI goes to die." It attempts to scare and punish local governments out of acknowledging, celebrating, and responding to the diverse contributions and needs of their communities.

The law prohibits local governments from directly or indirectly funding, promoting, or taking any official action related to "diversity, equity, and inclusion" (DEI), which is broadly and vaguely defined. This prohibition includes, but is not limited to, adopting or enforcing ordinances, resolutions, rules, regulations, programs, or policies. The law also voids any existing policies or programs that constitute DEI and prohibits funding DEI offices or officers.

DEI is defined as (1) using certain inclusive hiring practices, (2) "preferential treatment" or "special benefits" on the bases of race, color, sex, ethnicity, gender identity, or sexual orientation, and (3) training, programming, or activities "designed or implemented with reference to" race, color, sex, ethnicity, gender identity, or sexual orientation. The lack of clarity for these terms is leading some local governments to overly self-censor or pull back to avoid risk of enforcement.



Good Government Starts with Clear Laws

Implementation should be guided by the law as written, not by assumptions about what the law might prohibit.

Responsible implementation means identifying what the statute requires, understanding the authority local governments continue to have, and avoiding unnecessary changes that could reduce services or community engagement without a clear legal basis. Good government is built on clear laws, not uncertainty.

What Local Governments Can Still Do

Despite the law's new restrictions, local governments retain significant authority when it comes to so-called DEI. This is where we want to ensure they continue standing up for their communities.

First, many topics usually considered "diversity, equity, and inclusion" are not within the bill's definition of DEI. For example, disability, age, national origin, veterans status, and religion are not within the definition of DEI. Thus, the law imposes no restriction on policies, programming, activities, or funding related to those characteristics.

Second, advocacy by the public and champion lawmakers secured numerous important exemptions from the law. For example, under these exemptions, local governments may continue to:

- Promote state and federal holidays (e.g., MLK Jr. Day, Juneteenth, and Florida Jewish History Month)
- Issue permits for community events, including Pride celebrations, and provide public safety services to support those events
- Support single-sex nonprofits for at-risk youth (e.g., Pace Center for Girls)
- Ensure access to public health programs based on sex, race, or ethnicity
- Target HIV outreach to disproportionately impacted minority groups
- Maintain volunteer advisory boards and commissions, with limits on staffing support
- Support organizations like minority chambers of commerce as long as their membership and benefits are open to everyone
- Promote national patriotic observances (e.g., National Hispanic Heritage Months and Asian/Pacific American Heritage Month) and recognize the events and individuals related to those observances
- Honor groups or individuals recognized by state monuments, museums, and memorials in Florida Statutes Chapter 265 and 267 (e.g., Florida Black History Museum, Florida Women's Hall of Fame, the Cuban Heritage Trail, or the French Heritage Trail)
- Operate, maintain, and support the Pulse Memorial in Orlando
- Abide by state and federal nondiscrimination protections (a requirement, not optional)

Also importantly, the law does not infringe on contracts that are executed before the law's effective date. While the law expressly voids ordinances, regulations, programs, and policies, contracts are not included among the subjects voided. Thus, even if these are long-term contracts that extend beyond the January 1, 2027, effective date, they are not governed by the new law.

Many implementation decisions involve local discretion. Before eliminating a longstanding program, partnership, or community tradition, local governments should carefully determine whether the law actually requires that result. Local governments must continue to serve every member of their community fairly, professionally, and respectfully.

Preparing to Provide Public Comment at a Local Government Meeting

You do not need to be a lawyer or policy expert to participate. The most effective public comments are often the simplest and explain why the issue matters to you, your family, or your community.

A strong public comment usually includes:

- Your name and where you live
- Why you're speaking
- One or two key messages
- A specific request
- A respectful closing

Most public comment periods are limited to three minutes.

Questions You Can Ask

Questions encourage transparency, create a public record, and help decision-makers explain their reasoning.

Consider asking:

- Has the city or county completed a legal analysis before making this change?
- What specific provision of the law requires this action?
- Is this an example of unnecessary over-compliance?
- What authority does the local government still retain?
- Were alternatives considered?
- Have community stakeholders been consulted?
- How will residents be affected?
- Will this decision be revisited if courts provide additional guidance?

These questions encourage thoughtful implementation while helping ensure important decisions are made transparently.









Messages That Resonate

Good Government Requires Careful Implementation

- Please base implementation on the actual language of the statute.
- Before ending longstanding programs, determine whether the law actually requires that change.
- If legal questions remain, seek clarity before making permanent decisions.

Avoid Unnecessary Over-Compliance

- Please evaluate programs individually instead of adopting blanket bans.
- Uncertainty should not become a reason to eliminate lawful programs.
- Communities lose valuable services and partnerships when governments go beyond what the law requires.

Preserve Local Authority

- Local leaders know their communities best.
- The Legislature preserved important authority for local governments.
- Please continue serving residents to the fullest extent permitted by law.

Remember the People Affected

- These decisions affect real people, not abstract policies.
- Community partnerships, advisory boards, and public programs strengthen local government.
- Every resident deserves to feel welcomed, respected, and served by their local government.



Tell Your Story

Legal arguments matter, but personal experiences leave the greatest impression.

Consider sharing:

- How a local nonprofit or community partnership has helped your family
- Why community recognition or cultural celebrations matter to you
- How advisory boards give residents a voice in local government
- Why local programs have strengthened your neighborhood
- What your community could lose if longstanding programs or traditions disappear

If Your Community Is Considering Litigation

Some cities and counties may consider participating in or supporting legal challenges to the law.

If that occurs, community members may respectfully encourage elected officials to:

- Fully understand what local programs, partnerships, or policies may be affected
- Carefully evaluate all available legal options
- Seek judicial clarity before making permanent implementation decisions
- Protect the authority local governments retain under the law
- Make litigation decisions based on sound legal analysis and the interests of their residents

Frequently Asked Questions

Does this law prohibit Pride events?
No. Local governments may continue issuing permits and providing public safety services on a content-neutral basis.

Does it eliminate advisory boards?
No. Volunteer advisory boards are expressly excluded from the statute.

Does it apply to schools or school boards?
No. The law applies to counties and municipalities, not Florida school districts.

Does it require ending partnerships with LGBTQ organizations?
No. Partnerships should be evaluated individually rather than automatically discontinued.

Stay Engaged

Consistent civic engagement makes a critical difference.

You can also:

- Meet directly with your elected officials
- Call or email city council or county commission members
- Submit written comments
- Attend workshops or implementation discussions
- Invite neighbors and community organizations to participate
- Write letters to the editor of your local newspaper
- Share accurate information with your community
- Follow local government agendas and implementation decisions
- Volunteer with local organizations working to educate communities about the law, including Equality Florida

Make Fixing the Law a Local Priority in 2027!

As local governments prepare to implement the law, it is increasingly clear that the Legislature needs to address its shortcomings. The 2027 legislative session is an opportunity to clarify what local governments can continue doing, protect important community priorities, and address provisions that create unnecessary legal uncertainty. Residents have an important role in making sure their voices, and their communities' priorities, are heard in Tallahassee.

There are two important ways to help bring attention to the need for a legislative fix.

Make It A Priority in Your Community

Before each legislative session, cities and counties develop legislative agendas identifying the issues they want their state representatives and senators to address in Tallahassee. These priorities help communicate what local governments and their residents need from the Legislature.

Ask your mayor, city and county commissioners, and other local leaders to include fixing SB 1134 in their jurisdiction's 2027 legislative agenda.

You can:

- Raise the issue during public comment at city council or county commission meetings
- Contact your local elected officials and ask them to make a legislative fix a formal priority
- Encourage local businesses, community organizations, and other stakeholders to speak up
- Ask your local government to share this legislative priority with its county legislative delegation and urge lawmakers to champion a fix

Take Your Message to State Legislators

Before each legislative session, state representatives and senators hold County Legislative Delegation meetings to hear from constituents, local elected officials, businesses, and community stakeholders about issues affecting their districts. Attend your County Legislative Delegation meeting and let your legislators know about how the law affects your community, and encourage them to make a legislative fix a priority in 2027.









What Should the Legislature Fix?

Protect Programs & Services Open to Everyone

Clarify that programs, services, events, and opportunities available to all members of the public are not prohibited simply because they address particular communities, reference certain characteristics, or are especially relevant to certain populations.

Protect Local Economic Development & Community Events

Preserve local governments' ability to fund, sponsor, promote, and partner with cultural festivals, tourism events, and other initiatives that attract visitors, support small business, and generate local economic activity.

Address Other Serious Problems

Revisit provisions that create unnecessary legal exposure and administrative burdens for local governments, including the private right of action, disproportionate enforcement mechanisms, and ambiguous statutory requirements.

Messages That Resonate

When speaking with local and state elected officials, consider emphasizing:

- Local governments need clear, workable laws that allow them to serve their communities without unnecessary legal uncertainty.
- The Legislature has a responsibility to address problems created by the law it passes.
- Local officials should be able to make good-faith decisions in the interests of their residents without facing disproportionate consequences for interpreting unclear laws.
- The Legislature should clearly protect publicly accessible programs and services.
- Florida should not undermine cultural events, tourism initiatives, and community partnerships that support local businesses and strengthen local economies.



Your community's voice matters in Tallahassee. Ask your local elected officials to make fixing SB 1134 a 2027 legislative priority for your community, and make sure your state representative and senator hear directly from you.

Florida Communities Are Showing What's Possible

Across Florida, local governments are demonstrating that implementing the Anti-Diversity in Local Government Law does not have to mean abandoning important community programs, partnerships, events, and investments. From preserving funding to using statutory exemptions and seeking legal clarification, local leaders are finding ways to continue serving their communities while navigating the new law, offering examples residents can point to when encouraging their own local governments to take a thoughtful, measured approach.

Key West: Investing in LGBTQ History & Culture

In September 2026, Key West's City Commission approved a recommendation to allocate $25,000 toward a public art installation celebrating the community's LGBTQ history and culture. The project demonstrates how local governments can continue making community investments through their ordinary public processes before the law takes effect.

Jacksonville: Restoring Support for Minority Chambers of Commerce

After initially moving to rescind previously approved funding for the Jacksonville Black Chamber of Commerce, Asian Chamber of Commerce of North Florida, and First Coast Hispanic Chamber of Commerce because of questions about the new law, Jacksonville's City Council sought clarification from the bill sponsor. In May 2026, Senator Clay Yarborough confirmed that the law does not prohibit support for these organizations simply because their names identify the communities they primarily serve, as their memberships and benefits are open to everyone. Following that clarification, the City reinstated the funding.

Lake Worth Beach: Securing a Long-Term Home for Compass

In October 2026, Lake Worth Beach's City Commission approved a new 20-year lease for Compass Community Center, extending the LGBTQ community center's use of its city-owned home through November 2046. The previous lease was scheduled to expire in 2028. The City Attorney explained that the new lease complied with the law, noting that it was executed before the January 1, 2027 effective date and included strong nondiscrimination provisions ensuring the space remained available regardless of characteristics identified in the statute. The City also recognized Compass's broader community benefits, including its work with neighborhood associations, HIV outreach organizations, and other community groups.

Miami Beach: Preserving LGBTQ Community Funding

In September 2026, the Miami Beach City Commission unanimously preserved funding for several important LGBTQ community programs and services in its FY 2027 budget, including:

- $250,000 for Miami Beach Pride
- $47,000 for Pridelines Community Center
- $25,000 for the Miami-Dade County LGBTQ Chamber of Commerce
- $12,500 for Miami Beach Police Department LGBTQ Outreach Initiatives

Rather than automatically eliminating these investments, commissioners worked through individual funding requests and made adjustments where necessary. They also committed to seeking additional legal clarity around multi-year funding arrangements.

Tallahassee: Keeping Community Events & Advisory Commissions

In September 2026, Tallahassee's City Commission preserved FY 2027 support for community events including Tallahassee Pride, Experience Asia, and the Filipino Festival. When questions arose about whether certain festivals could continue, the City Attorney's Office identified a statutory exemption protecting the City's ongoing support.

The City also maintained contract funding and staffing for the Tallahassee Commission on the Status of Women and Girls, preserving its ongoing work rather than eliminating the advisory body.

Wilton Manors: Protecting Local Authority & Supporting Stonewall Pride

Shortly after the law's passage, Wilton Manors began exploring ways to protect its local governance structure. In response to concerns about the possibility of all five elected commission seats becoming vacant simultaneously, the City Commission advanced a charter amendment establishing a local process for filling those vacancies rather than leaving the appointments to the governor, which was approved by voters in the 2026 general election.

The City also continued its financial and operational commitment to Stonewall Pride by approving a $50,000 sponsorship for the annual festival and parade, along with additional assistance for event planning, permitting, public safety, road closures, and logistical support.

What These Examples Show

These local actions demonstrate that implementing Florida's new Anti-Diversity in Local Government Law does not have to result in automatic cuts to programs, funding, contracts, or community events. Residents can point to what is already happening in communities across Florida and ask their local leaders to take the same thoughtful approach.

Local governments should carefully examine what the law requires, identify the exemptions and protections available to them, and avoid assuming that a program is prohibited simply because it serves a particular community. They can also continue making lawful decisions before the law takes effect, honor existing commitments where permitted, work with community organizations to address potential concerns, and seek legal clarity when the law raises questions.

Our communities are strongest when local governments continue recognizing, supporting, and serving all the people who call it home.

EQUALITY FLORIDA®

SHOW UP. SPEAK UP. STAY ENGAGED!

HELP YOUR COMMUNITY GET IMPLEMENTATION RIGHT.

Implementation of Florida's Anti-Diversity in Local Government law will shape local government for years to come. Residents have an important role in helping ensure decisions are based on careful legal analysis, meaningful public engagement, and the actual requirements of the statute, rather than uncertainty about its impacts or unnecessary over-compliance.

When communities stay engaged, local governments are better equipped to preserve lawful programs, protect important community partnerships, and continue serving every resident.

Make your voice heard, take our Community Impact Survey today!