



Volume 2, Edition 6: February 2025

Commissioner's Corner

Dear Legislative Partners,

As we work our way toward the heart of this year's long legislative session, it has been my pleasure to see so many of you, both new and familiar. So far, I have had the opportunity to provide testimony at the Appropriations, Education, Public Safety, and Priority List Review Committees, and the department has provided written testimony on thirteen bills so far, with much more expected in the coming weeks. For those curious, you can always access DAS's testimony from current and past legislative sessions on our DAS Legislative Affairs website.

- [DAS Legislative Affairs \(CT.gov\)](https://www.ct.gov/das/legislative-affairs)

Our major legislative priorities continue to be updating language surrounding school building projects; modifying some provisions related to real estate and construction services, building officials, accessible EV parking spaces, and elevators; and making technical revisions to DAS-related statutes.

This edition of DAS Newsline highlights the interagency collaboration between DAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and the Department of Housing on a project to provide temporary housing for veterans; our celebration of Black History Month; the collaborative work of our new state fire marshal on community risk reduction; our work on the Indoor Air Quality in School Buildings Task Force, and much more.

As always, please feel free to reach out to me directly with any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Michelle Gilman
Commissioner, DAS
michelle.gilman@ct.gov

New Veterans' Transitional Housing



On February 3, The Department of Administrative Services joined the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Department of Housing to kick off a DAS-administered renovation project that will provide temporary housing for veterans and their families who are facing homelessness or are at risk of it.

The project will upgrade and modernize the interiors of an existing building on DVA's Rocky Hill campus and carry out limited exterior repairs. The Department of Veterans Affairs is also addressing the building's existing lead paint, asbestos, and PCBs.

We cannot thank our veterans enough for their service and sacrifices. This project is an example of state government agencies collaborating to make a positive impact on people's lives.

Special thanks to Representative Kerry Wood for her advocacy and leadership toward making this project a reality.

Celebrating Black History Month



On January 31, DAS proudly kicked off Black History Month a bit early with an inspiring event.

We were honored to hear Rev. Venton Forbes deliver an incredible presentation, highlighting the profound impact of three remarkable individuals: Benjamin Banneker, Harriet Tubman, and Dr. Charles Drew. And his heartfelt tribute to his late mother, Cecelia Lewis, for her immense contributions to her family and community truly resonated with us all.

The event also featured a captivating skit-dance-poetry performance by the talented TA Production Company

titled "Remembering Who We Are."

To top it all off, we paid tribute to the legendary musician Allen Toussaint, who is deserving of recognition as he is honored on this year's USPS Black Heritage postage stamp.

A huge thank you to DAS's Equal Employment Opportunity team for their hard work in bringing this amazing event to life! And a special thanks to DAS's Mary Taylor for a beautiful rendition of "Lift Every Voice and Sing."

Preventing Smoking Fires



Connecticut's new state fire marshal, Lauri Volkert, has hit the ground running, spearheading efforts to work across agencies, most notably with the State Police Fire and Explosion Investigation Unit and local fire officials, on community risk reduction projects.

The most recent PSA focuses on smoking fires, a specific priority area for fire officials throughout the state. Please feel free to share widely.

In the next month, the Office of the State Fire Marshal plans to launch a website with assets to assist local fire departments and fire marshals with public messaging.

[Here's how we can prevent smoking fires \(YouTube\)](#)

Indoor Air Quality



On February 21, Melissa Conway, DAS's director of special projects, led the Indoor Air Quality in School Buildings Task Force's discussion on DAS's legislative proposals related to HVAC.

In particular, DAS proposes moving the standalone HVAC grant program into the list of projects the commissioner can approve administratively. This would provide a permanent funding source, allowing applications on a rolling, monthly basis and through an application process that districts currently use for certain time-sensitive projects such as roof replacements.

This change would not affect the current awards granted under the existing program.

We would like to thank the task force's co-chairs, Senator Julie Kushner and Representative Jennifer Leeper, for their partnership on this important issue.

[Task Force to Study Indoor Air Quality in School Buildings February 21st Meeting.\(CT-N\)](#)

**Connecticut's Digital Government
Efforts on the National Stage**

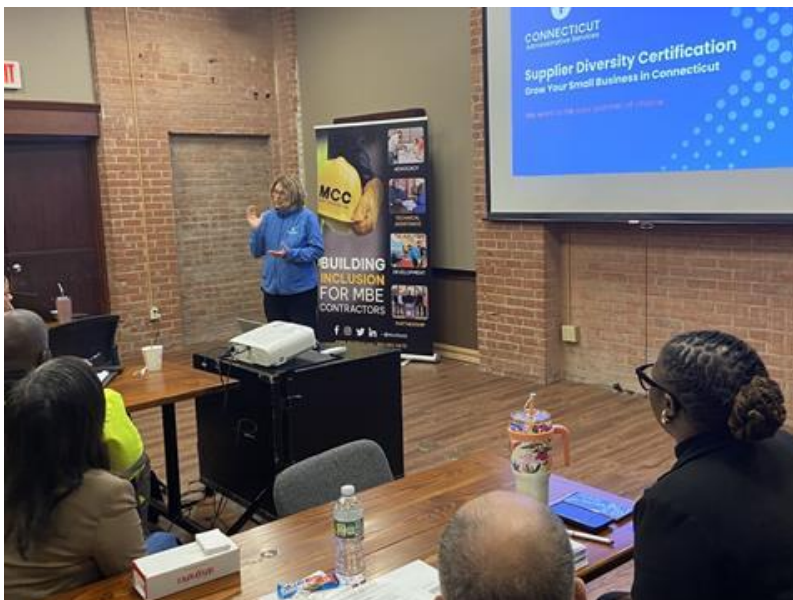


Earlier this month, Max Gige, DAS's deputy director of digital product, presented at Public Sector Network's Government Innovation Showcase in Atlanta, discussing the state's journey toward becoming an all-digital state government.

We have made real progress in this space in the past several years. In 2024, the Center for Digital Government recognized Connecticut as a leader with our second consecutive A- rating in the biennial Digital States Survey.

Connecticut's digital services team continues to receive national recognition for their steadfast commitment to improving the resident experience.

DAS Continues Outreach Efforts





This month, DAS talent solutions, equal employment opportunity, and procurement teams have been hard at work, attending career fairs and other events aimed at casting as wide a net as possible, creating opportunities for people of all backgrounds to apply for positions with executive branch state agencies, or do business with the state.

Pictured: DAS's Meg Yetishefsky speaks at the Minority Construction Council's February 10 event on doing business with the state (left). DAS talent solutions and equal employment opportunity teams (and Commissioner Gilman) participate in the January 11 all-majors career fair at Central Connecticut State University.

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