

From *Kimball* to the Failla Commission: New York State Unified Court System as Case Study
2021 Lavender Law Conference panel

Takeaways Based On Lessons Learned in New York

1. Support and strengthen your local LGBTQ bar association. Do joint programs with them. Have them join the call for proactive efforts by your court system to fight LGBTQ discrimination. If you do not have a big enough population for a standalone bar association, start by creating or reviving a LGBTQ committee within a local or state bar association.
2. Support the creation of a nonjudicial LGBTQ staff and allies group, and have them host receptions honoring judges and court administrators.
3. Have LGBTQ judicial, bar, and nonjudicial court staff groups work together to sponsor Pride Month programs and participate in other training and diversity, equality, and inclusion programs sponsored by the court system.
4. Encourage the staff group, aided by the bar group, to publicize job openings in the court system to the LGBTQ and other minority communities.
5. Launch a continuing and constant outreach by the staff group to court administrators, including development of safe and effective handling of discrimination complaints. Stay in close touch with these administrators to apprise of both successes and problems.
6. Get involved in your communities politically and eventually use the clout you have built up when appointments of top administrators and chief judges are made.
7. Partner with similar groups serving other minorities for social and educational programming (racial minorities, women in the courts, persons with disabilities, etc.).
8. Continuously build and support a pipeline of candidates for appointed and elected judicial offices. Once they are in office, look for opportunities for them to advance to appellate courts or administrative posts.
9. Draft a realistic strategic plan and hold yourselves accountable. Publish an annual report with accomplishments from the past year.
10. Utilize modern tools of communication and spread your message via a newsletter, website, social media accounts, videoconferencing, and video sharing platforms.

