

3. EXECUTIVE BRANCH

Eligibility and Term of Office. The County Executive is the chief administrative officer of County Government and is elected directly by the voters of Suffolk County. The term of office is four years, from and including the first day of January following election. The County Executive must (1) be a citizen of the United States; (2) be a resident of the County for at least one year prior to election; (3) reside in Suffolk County during the entire term of office; and (4) devote full time to the office.

The Governor of New York State may remove the County Executive from office in accordance with New York State Law. A vacancy in the office of the County Executive is filled by special election within 90 days after the vacancy occurs. The Chief Deputy County Executive becomes Acting County Executive, serving in the interim with full powers, should the office of the Executive become vacant.

Appointments. The County Executive has the power to appoint Deputy County Executives who assist the Executive with major responsibilities. Legislative approval is not required for Deputy appointments. With the Legislature's approval, the County Executive appoints the majority of the County's departmental directors, and appoints members of County boards and commissions.

Duties. The County Executive serves as budget officer of the County, and is responsible for the preparation and submission of an annual Operating Budget, a Community College Budget, and a three-year Capital Budget and Program.

The County Executive reports to the County Legislature annually, after the close of the fiscal year (January 1-December 31), on the financial and other affairs of the County. The County Executive may submit legislation to the County Legislature for review and approval and, as Executive Officer, has the power to veto resolutions. The County Executive is charged to ensure that Federal and State laws applicable to the County, as well as local laws and resolutions of the County, are enforced.

The County Executive investigates and reports to the County Legislature any failure on the part

of County officials to perform their duties and may make recommendations to the Legislature concerning the affairs of the County.

The County Executive has authority and control over the rules for the administration of the Suffolk County Salary Plan and labor contracts.

Local Laws and Resolutions. No County law or resolution may take effect until it has been submitted to the County Executive for approval; if approved, it is then considered to be adopted. The County Executive may veto and return a local law to the County Legislature with a statement of reasons for not approving it. If not returned to the Legislature within 30 days, it becomes law. The County Legislature can override an Executive veto by a vote of two-thirds of the Legislature.

OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

The Executive Department, headed by the County Executive and his Deputies, has four main divisions: Budget, Intergovernmental Relations, Program Services and Labor Relations.

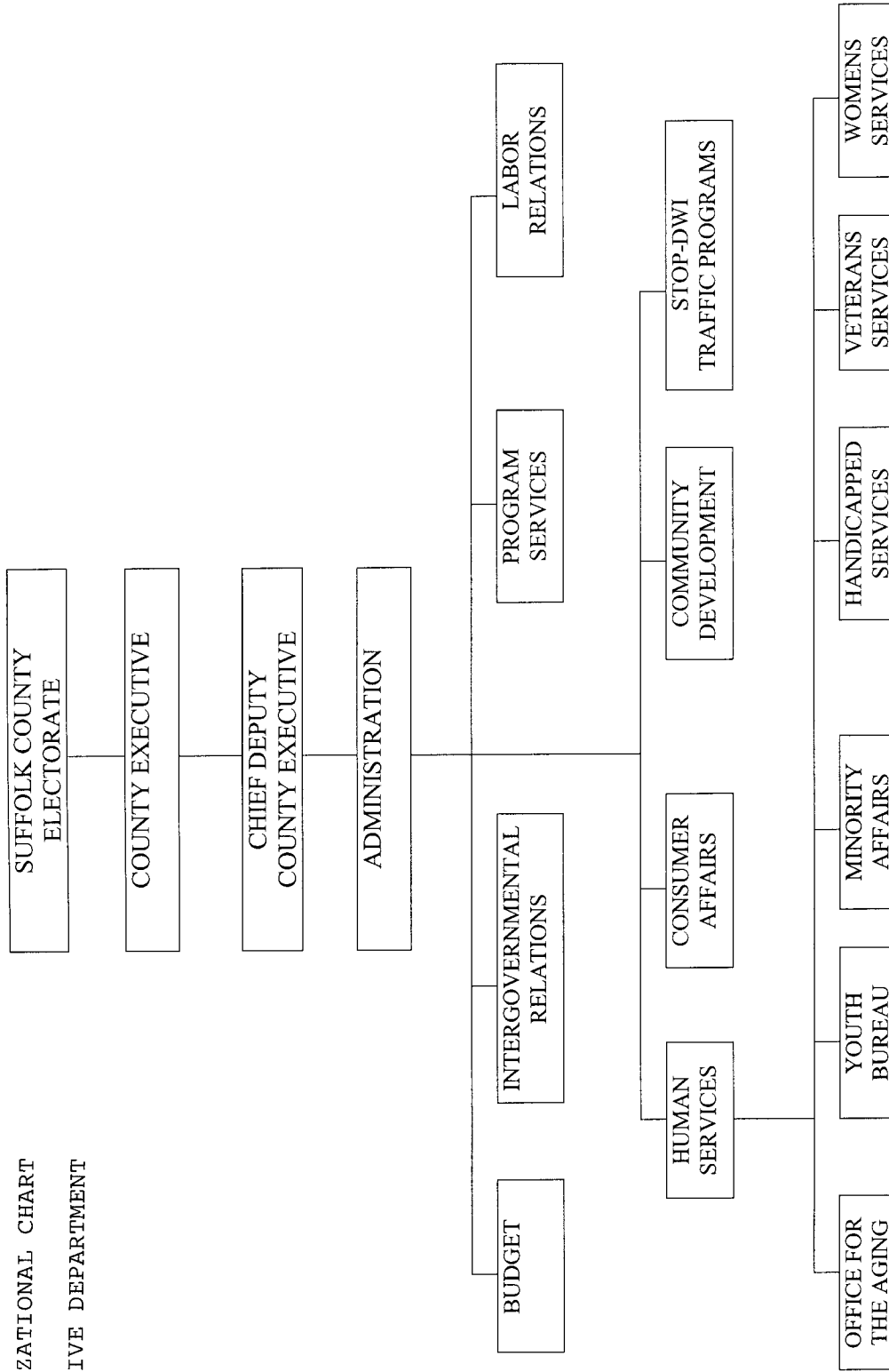
Budget Division. The County Charter requires the County Executive to manage the entire budget-making procedure for Operating, Community College and Capital Budgets. The Operating Budget is the largest and most complex budget prepared by this division.

The Executive is required by law to prepare the Operating Budget in a format that is divided into mandated and discretionary spending. County departments typically submit their requests and the Budget Division prepares a recommended budget for submittal to the Legislature in September. The Executive is required by law to hold two public hearings on the proposed Operating Budget during August, prior to submission to the Legislature in September: (1) one hearing must be during the day and one at night; (2) one must be in the western portion of the County and one in the eastern portion of the County; (3) one must be during the first 15 days, one during the last 15 days of the month of August.

For any fiscal year, the discretionary spending portion of the Operating budget may not exceed

FIGURE 3.1

COUNTY OF SUFFOLK
 ORGANIZATIONAL CHART
 EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT



the approved budget for the prior year by more than 4%, or the amount of the increase in the GNP price deflator, whichever is greater, as measured by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. The County Executive may approve the County Budget as amended by the County Legislature or may disapprove one or more amendments to the Budget made by the County Legislature.

Intergovernmental Relations. The functions of this division are described in detail in Chapter 8.

Program Services Division. The County Executive has a division of Consumer Affairs, Community Development, STOP-DWI, and Human Services.

Consumer Affairs: The Office of Consumer Affairs was established to ensure equity in the marketplace and promote high standards of commercial integrity in the manufacture, distribution and sale of consumer goods and services in Suffolk County. The Office of Consumer Affairs has three major bureaus: The Bureau of Consumer Complaints; the Bureau of Licensing and the Bureau of Weights and Measures.

Community Development: The Community Development Office staff works with municipalities to develop block grant applications, pro-

jects, and housing assistance plans to be submitted to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development for funding.

STOP-DWI: This program, which is totally funded by fines and bail forfeitures collected from alcohol related traffic convictions, continues to be a model for other jurisdictions in the fight against drunk driving. A specially designed STOP-DWI program developed in cooperation with BOCES has proven to be very successful with high school students in the five east end towns. STOP-DWI will continue to work toward the reduction of drinking and driving in Suffolk through its support of increased enforcement, swift and certain prosecution, sound and cost effective rehabilitation, tough probation, and public information and education campaigns.

Human Services: Under the auspices of the County Executive's Office, the Human Services Division provides necessary and essential services to senior citizens, youth, women, veterans and persons with disabilities.

The Office for the Aging acts as an advocate on behalf of Suffolk County's senior citizens. The Office supports senior citizens to help them maintain their maximum economic and personal



Photo © Adam Gaus

The Bluffs at Gardiners Island, NY



Photo © Adam Gaus

Museums of Historic Southold, North Fork

independence, while providing a continuum of care for those individuals in need of such services.

The Youth Bureau, in coordination with other County departments, strives to protect the rights and welfare of the children in Suffolk County. It also acts to ensure their physical, social and educational well being. Of special note, Suffolk County has the largest youth population of any county in the state outside of New York City. Approximately 387,700 persons under the age of 21 reside within the boundaries of the County. This amounts to nearly 30% of the County's total population.

The Veterans Services Agency provides a direct in-person service to veterans, their dependents and survivors, by counseling and advising them as to their full entitlements under law, and by working to obtain the fullest benefits available. Veteran counselors assist claimants in completing and submitting applications, obtaining necessary documentation and filing for a broad spectrum of federal, state, local and private veterans benefits. This includes follow-up correspondence and appeals of unfavorable rulings.

The Office of Handicapped Services (OHS) works for the benefit of 261,000 disabled persons in Suffolk County. The Office's responsibilities

include coordinating County services for the handicapped, developing programs to assist the handicapped in becoming more self-sufficient, advocating for changes to solve problems facing the handicapped, and providing specialized services not provided by other County departments. In addition, the Office ensures County government compliance with federal mandates under the American with Disabilities Act (ADA). Information and referrals are also provided to Suffolk County residents.

The Women's Services Unit provides a focal point from which to address the needs of women in Suffolk County. The role of this unit is to provide services to women in need and to coordinate and facilitate programs and resources that are available in the County.

The County Executive recognizes the many special needs of the various ethnic groups within Suffolk County. The Office of Minority Affairs provides oversight and support to a number of coalitions and committees which pursue the interests of their respective communities.

Labor Relations. The Labor Relations Division of the Executive Office has the responsibility for negotiating contracts with the County's nine labor unions and ensuring the proper implementation of these agreements.