

Bio for Barrie Gewanter:

Barrie Gewanter is a professional civil rights advocate. From August 2015 to Sept. 2020, she served as the Director for Human Rights, as well as the Title VI and ADA Coordinator, for Onondaga County in Syracuse, New York. From August 2015 to February 2020, she also served as the Administrator for Onondaga County's new Jail Oversight Committee. Before assuming these roles, she served as the Director of the Central New York Chapter of the New York Liberties Union (ACLU) and as the Director of the Central New York Council on Occupational Safety and Health. During her time with the NYCLU, Gewanter served on the Legislative Advisory Committee that revised the enabling legislation for the dormant Citizen Review Board in Syracuse. That new legislation was enacted; the oversight board was reconstituted and is still functioning today. Then, in the wake of two tragic deaths at the Onondaga County Jail, Gewanter convened a cross-cultural coalition that called for the creation of a jail oversight entity. She worked closely with legislative leaders to craft the enabling legislation for this new entity. She left the NYCLU in 2015 to take on the dual challenges of standing up this new oversight entity, and resurrecting the local Human Rights Commission office and board. Ms. Gewanter has played key roles in the passage of several other significant local legislative and policy measures related to civil liberties, LGBT rights and economic justice. She has received public recognition for her work from several Syracuse area organizations, including the local chapters of the NAACP and Peace Action, and from the Human Rights Commission she now supports. Gewanter has a Master's Degree in Sociology and a B.F.A. in Stage Management. She has worked professionally in both fields.

Gewanter is an experienced public speaker. She was the lead strategist for the coalition that pushed for a jail oversight entity in Onondaga County in the wake of two inmate deaths. She worked closely with legislative leaders to craft enabling legislation. She left a long term position with the NY State ACLU affiliate to establish this entity and re-establish the Human Rights Commission. Previous to this, Gewanter worked with a Syracuse City Councilor to resurrect the dormant Syracuse Citizen Review Board. She served on the Committee that rewrote the enabling legislation, and was a resource for the re-established board.