

DEI Funding Request: FY2024

Background

The City of Newburyport's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) efforts began in earnest in 2020 following the murder of George Floyd, when institutions and individuals across the country looked for ways to address systemic racism and create better outcomes for historically marginalized groups. The City began by forming the DEI Alliance, a diverse group of City employees, residents, and other community members dedicated to creating a more welcoming city, ensuring fair treatment for all, and building an environment in which all people feel valued and respected. In FY2021, the City allocated \$20,000 for DEI initiatives, which was mostly used for trainings and support for the DEI Alliance. The FY2022 budget included the same funding level to continue the work of the Alliance and support community outreach and awareness initiatives.

In FY2023, the City Council approved a request for \$50,000 to begin taking the work being done in the Alliance and in the community and address processes and policies in City Hall, while also continuing the external work of the Alliance and others. The City began holding trainings for department heads on DEI principles and facilitating conversations around how to continue this work in city government. The City Council also allocated funds for a scope of work with the HR Department to evaluate its job descriptions and hiring practices to look for ways to improve diversity of City staff. This scope is ongoing and will be finished in FY24.

The City's DEI funds also included support for programming and events, which this year included the Know Your Neighbor Campaign, the Community Iftar, Yellow Brick Road Screening, Juneteenth and Pride. These events are important not just for visibility, but as a means to connect with residents and community members who may not otherwise get involved in city initiatives.

For FY2024, we are asking for level funding of \$50,000 for DEI initiatives. We have positive momentum from the last year, and the DEI Alliance is still engaged and invested in this work. The Administration has started bringing DEI initiatives into City Hall, and additional funding will help advance this further. The DEI Coordinator continued to expand partnerships with local non-profits and began 1:1 and group discussions about how we can all do our part to advance DEI work in our city therefore changing the culture of our community.

Staffing Proposal for FY2024

In FY2023, Tina Los served as the DEI Coordinator in addition to her position as Associate Director of Services and Supports in the Youth Services Department. This did not give her enough time to manage these initiatives and bring new efforts forward. The city will post a 19-hour per week position of DEI Coordinator, who will take on the daily tasks of organizing DEI Alliance involvement, event management, follow up from DEI Alliance meetings, and coordinating with volunteers and community partners. This coordinator will report to Tina in her role as Associate Director of Services and Supports, and both of them will meet regularly with the Mayor, as DEI will be fully under the Mayor's Office. Tina will continue to supervise to community DEI work and serve as a thought-partner to city DEI initiatives. The city will seek a year-long contract with a DEI Trainer/agency who will work with our city team to create a strategic plan and weave in 4-5 training opportunities for staff in line with that vision. The Mayor's Office will oversee this contract.

To support this work and these goals the following funds are being requested for FY2024.

\$25,000 for Stipend for DEI Coordinator: This will provide for a 19-hour a week position at \$25/hour to coordinate DEI initiatives, including events, meetings, community participation, and scheduling with City Hall staff.

\$20,000 for strategic plan and trainings: This line item will allow us to define the DEI Alliance's priorities and build a plan to realize them in the coming years. This budget will also support both internal and external trainings that will be run for City staff and volunteers, some of which will also be open to the public. These trainings may include some one-off sessions, but the majority will be intensive workshops that are run by experienced partners specializing in this field.

\$5,000 for programming, materials, and other support: This line will be used for materials necessary to run external facing programs and events to help fulfill the community education mission of the DEI Alliance. This may include speaker fees and event rentals as needed. As the DEI Alliance is made of volunteers and there is no full-time staff or standing materials budget line attached to this work, this line item will allow some flexibility in the use of funds to support the Alliance's work. This may be for mailings or other communication tools, or for temporary help around major initiatives.