

Article 10 Support for a Town DEI Director

“Mr. Lee moves that the Town urge the Select Board to prioritize collaboration with the DEI Commission towards hiring a full time DEI Director.”

A yes vote shows your support for the Town’s DEI efforts and urges the Select Board to work with the Town Manager towards hiring a full time DEI Director as soon as possible.

Discussion

Article 10 is intended to accelerate Concord’s multiple efforts to create a more diverse, equitable, and inclusive community. In 2021, the Select Board created a nine-member DEI Commission (DEIC) with the goal “To research and implement diversity, equity, and inclusion best practices in town governance. Listen to diverse voices in the community and assess which additional DEI actions the Select Board should take.”

Since its launch, the DEIC has conducted the following activities:

- Regular public meetings
- Community coffee gatherings focused on specific topics
- Best practices DEI research on other towns in Massachusetts
- Collaborative meetings with other key groups in Concord (e.g., LWV, CPS, COAR, Concord 250)
- Town-wide DEI Survey

Findings of the '23 DEI Survey

626 people responded to the town-wide survey. Key findings include:

- 66% of respondents have experienced or witnessed bias and discrimination in Concord
- The #1 solution recommended by respondents was to hire a full-time DEI Director
- 68% of respondents have experienced unfair treatment from private venues in town
- 19% of respondents have experienced unfair treatment from a Town Office

Role of the DEI Director

The Director would be a central resource to coordinate and accelerate the complex set of activities around DEI in Concord. Specifically, the Director would work to:

- Serve as a leader who integrates and drives town-wide DEI results.
- Serve as staff liaison to the Town’s DEI Commission, providing administrative and management support, as needed, to assure that the preparations and follow-up for the Commission meetings and initiatives are handled thoroughly and professionally.
- Establish annual goals and prepare periodic reports measuring the achievement of these goals. Prepare periodic updates of the Commission’s progress and challenges in a format suitable for reporting to the Select Board.
- Suggest and develop town-wide events or activities that foster cultural awareness and increase diverse participation on government boards and committees.
- In conjunction with HR Director, develop a Diversity Hiring Policy for the Town. Reviews job descriptions and job notices for compliance with the Hiring Policy.
- Partner with department heads to review internal operations through a DEI lens.
- Oversee the development of recommended amendments to policies and procedures using this lens.

- Develops implement and maintain an incident reporting system.
- Leads and/or coordinate investigations, mediations, resolutions, and reporting around DEI incidents.
- In conjunction with the Town Manager, develop DEI training programs for Town employees, and board/committee members.
- In conjunction with the DEI Commission, facilitate discussions and education forums for Concord residents and employees about issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- Develop strategies and tools to assess the current racial climate in Concord and to measure progress.
- Identify ways to promote awareness, engagement, and community building around diverse experiences and to create a more inclusive, welcoming community.
- Serve as liaison with the school DEI Director to ensure effective communication and coordination of efforts.
- Serve as liaison with the Town's Council on Aging Board and Disability Commission, to assure that their issues are considered when establishing and implementing DEI policies and programs.

References

Diversity refers to population groups that have been historically underrepresented in socially, politically, or economically powerful institutions and organizations. These groups include, but are not restricted to populations of color, such as African Americans and Blacks, Latinx, Hispanics, Native Americans and Alaska Natives, Asian Americans, and Pacific Islanders. They may also include lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender populations, people with disabilities and other groups distinguished by their ethnicity, native or indigenous origin, culture, religion, belief system, marital status, parental status, socioeconomic status, appearance, language, accent, education, or nationality.

Equity is an approach based in fairness to ensuring everyone is given equal opportunity; this means that resources may be divided and shared unequally to make sure that each person has a fair chance to succeed. Equity takes into account that people have different access to resources because of a system of oppression and privilege. Equity seeks to balance that disparity. Equity prioritizes efforts to ensure the most underserved and marginalized among us has as much of an opportunity to succeed as the most well-served and advantaged. By taking the various advantages and disadvantages that people face into account, we work to ensure that every person has an equal opportunity to succeed.

Inclusion is the dynamic state of operating in which diversity is leveraged to create a healthy, high-performing organization and community. Inclusion refers to the degree to which diverse individuals are able to participate fully in the decision-making processes within an organization or group. An inclusive environment ensures equitable access to resources and opportunities for all. It also enables individuals and groups to feel safe, respected, engaged, motivated, and valued for who they are and for their contributions toward organizational and societal goals.

- DEI Commission. <https://www.concordma.gov/2963/DEI-Commission>
- Select Board Goals 2022-2023. <https://concordma.gov/DocumentCenter/View/36999/2022-2023-Select-Board-Goals>
- 2022 Housing Production Plan that includes DEI <https://www.concordma.gov/3152/Housing-Production-Plan>