

Sudbury Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Commission
Annual Report to the Select Board
2024–2025

Introduction

The Sudbury Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Commission is proud to present our 2024–2025 Annual Report, reflecting on our work, our challenges, and our vision for the future. Our mission remains clear and unwavering: to champion diversity, ensure equity, and cultivate inclusion for every member of our community.

This past year, the Commission continued to serve as a voice for equity in Sudbury— working to advance equity for historically marginalized residents where open dialogue and understanding can flourish.

Resident Engagement

Over the past year, we have actively responded to community needs and concerns, particularly when historically marginalized groups faced challenges. Highlights include:

- **Supporting advocacy for gender-expansive policies** in our schools by providing a platform for residents to share their perspectives.
- **Issuing public statements** affirming Sudbury’s values when Indian residents in the MetroWest and other areas, following incidents of theft and concerns for their safety, were met by some with skepticism and a lack of empathy.
- **Amplifying voices from local partners**, including the Sudbury Special Education Parent Advisory Committee (SEPAC) and town social workers.

These actions reinforced our role as both a resource and a convener for community dialogue.

Key Accomplishments

- **Engaging Expert Support:** Retained DEI consultant Dr. Raul Fernandez to assess our goals and provide a strategic roadmap (see attached report).
- **Community Initiatives:** Supported and participated in Town events such as Family Pride Day and the Eid-Al-Fitr.

- **Restructuring for Impact:** Streamlined our membership to create a more nimble and diverse body.
 - **Regional Partnerships:** Initiated conversations with the Concord and Wayland DEI Commissions and encouraged our Select Board to engage with Concord's Select Board to learn from their process for removing Tercentenary Markers.
-

Challenges Faced

While progress was made, the Commission encountered ongoing challenges:

- **Membership Stability:** Attrition and inconsistent participation limited continuity and momentum.
 - **Limited Capacity:** Time constraints among members affected project follow-through.
 - **Role Clarity:** At times, the Commission's scope and influence were unclear, impacting strategic focus.
 - **Community Engagement:** Community advisors' attendance/participation in meetings fell short of our expectations.
-

Insights from the Lived Experiences Project

In partnership with Dr. Nicole Argo, the 2023–2024 Lived Experiences survey provided valuable feedback from residents:

- **Identity-Based Mistreatment:** Residents reported exclusion based on religion, race, disability, and socio-economic status.
 - **Celebrated Successes:** Events such as Family Pride Day and inclusive school practices were seen as positive examples.
 - **Community Recommendations:** Top priorities included DEI training for town leaders, more community events, and a dedicated DEI resource.
-

Recommendations from Our Consultant

From his assessment, Dr. Fernandez advised:

1. Focusing on 2–3 strategic goals per year.

2. Securing dedicated staff or consultant support to sustain initiatives.
 3. Clarifying the Commission's advisory role and responsibilities.
 4. Leveraging the expertise of individual members more effectively.
 5. Establishing measurable accountability metrics.
-

Goals for the Coming Year

1. Strengthen Our Infrastructure

- Establish a consistent meeting schedule and reporting process to the Select Board.

2. Deepen Community Engagement

- Host/Co-host one to two annual community events to foster connection, dialogue, and visibility for DEI priorities.
-

The Sudbury DEI Commission remains committed to building a more inclusive community. With the Select Board's partnership, we can focus our efforts, expand our impact, and ensure that Sudbury is a place where everyone feels valued, respected, and heard.