

The City of Newark
Diversity and Inclusion Commission
Annual Report for 2024

The Diversity and Inclusion Ordinance

Newark City Code, Chapter 2, Article XV, Section 2-168 to 2-172, (Ordinance 21-12 Amendment I 4/26/21).

Sec. 2-168. – Creation of the diversity and inclusion commission; purpose of:

- a) The council of the City of Newark hereby establishes the Diversity an Inclusion Commission.
 - b) Purpose: The purpose of the Diversity of Inclusion Commission is to provide advice and recommendations to the city staff in regard to the following:
 - 1) Recommend strategies to achieve Newark’s vision to be an inclusive community that embraces diversity, enabling and supporting different lifestyles by encouraging cooperation, tolerance and respect among and by all persons who come into contact with the City of Newark, including residents, students, visitors, employers and employees.
 - 2) Assist the city and the community to eliminate and prevent all forms of discrimination, hate or bias.
 - 3) Act as conduit for complaints in the area of diversity, equity and inclusion. Any related complaints about city staff will be transmitted to the city manager for investigation and follow-up in accordance with city policy.
 - 4) Recommend methods to improve diversity recruitment and retention efforts at all levels of city government including council, boards/commissions, and staff.
 - 5) Provide education regarding the community’s overall diversity.
 - 6) Recommend effective strategies for improved public engagement and methods to remove or reduce barriers to improve access to city services for our diverse population.
 - 7) Recommend areas for investment where needs are greatest, addressing root causes of inequities and lack of access to more smartly allocate our public resources.
 - 8) Recommend opportunities for community partnerships as a strategy to better understand and address equity impacts throughout our city.
 - 9) Facilitate the building of relationships with under-served and underrepresented communities and serve as trusted messengers to the community at large.
 - 10) Prepare an annual report to council on the previous year’s activities of the commission and the forthcoming year’s goals.
 - 11) Perform such other duties as the mayor and/or city council may direct.
- (Ord. No. 21-12, Amend. No. 1, 04-26-2021)

Mission Statement

The commission is charged with recommending strategies to achieve Newark's vision to be an inclusive community that embraces diversity, enabling and supporting different lifestyles encouraging cooperation, tolerance, and respect for all persons who come in contact with the City of Newark, including residents, students, visitors, employers and employees.

Commission Members

The Diversity and Inclusion Commission have seven members with the mayor and each council member nominating one member each to be appointed with the approval of the mayor and council. All members shall be at-large appointments. Members are not required to reside within the city, but at minimum shall have a connection to Newark as an employee of a Newark business or as a student or have unique knowledge, skills, or abilities to advance the purpose of the committee. Four members shall constitute a quorum.

Terms: The mayor and council members in Districts 3, 5 and 6 shall have appointee terms that expire in even numbered years and the members appointed by council members in Districts 1, 2, and 4 shall have terms that expire in odd numbered years. Thereafter, all terms shall be for two years. Upon the expiration of a term of appointment, a member shall serve until his or her successor has been duly appointed.

Members of the Diversity and Inclusion Commission shall serve without compensation. However, members shall be reimbursed for reasonable expenses subject to travel and reimbursement procedures of the city.

The Diversity and Inclusion Commission shall meet at least once each quarter-year at times and places of its choosing in compliance with Delaware's Freedom of Information Act and Section 2-5.1 of the City Code.

Appointment Type	D&I Commission Member	Start Date	Term Expiry Date
Mayor's Appointment	Sasha Aber	7/12/2021	7/15/2024
District 6	Patrick McCloskey	7/12/2021	7/15/2024
District 3	Tamesha Garnett (Acting Chair)	8/9/2021	7/15/2024
District 2	Joel Murphy	10/9/2023	7/15/2025
District 1	Charles Alexander (Vacant)	8/14/2023	Resigned
District 4	Charles Linwood Jackson	5/22/2023	7/15/2025
District 1	Richard Gaskins	10/28/2024	7/15/2025

A list of current members is maintained on the City's website at:

www.cityofnewarkde.us/DocumentCenter/Home/View/620 (pdf format). Secretarial services are provided to the D&I Commission by a member of the City Secretary's office; Diana Reed and Tara Schiano served as Secretaries for the D&I Commission in 2024. In addition, Devan Hardin (Chief Human Resources Officer) regularly attends D&I meetings as liaison to the city administration.

D&I Commission 2024 Accomplishments

- Finalized D&I Commission Action Plans and Mission Statement
- Established D&I 2024 Goals
 - i. Participate in establishing increased diversity in the Veteran Banner Project. (The Newark Partnership – TNP)

- ii. Explore opportunities to expand community outreach and diversity of the Parks & Recreation's Day Camp and childcare programs. (Parks & Recreation)
 - iii.
- Recommendations to City Council
 - i. Juneteenth Celebrations: The City Council set aside annual funding to support the celebration of Juneteenth.
 - ii. Juneteenth Celebration: To include events that provide education, culture, music, ...etc.
 - iii. The Veteran Banner Project is to represent the vets who were residents of the City of Newark, DE, and served in the US Military. This effort will continue into 2025.
- Parks & Recreation:
 - i. After school & Summer Camps:
 - Began information sharing with the Director of Parks & Recreation to level set our understanding of what's in place
 - This effort will continue into 2025.

Other Notable Efforts

- The Diversity and Inclusion Commission met six times in the calendar year of 2024.
- The Diversity and Inclusion Commission voted in Mr. Joel Murphy to serve as Chair for the balance of the calendar year 2024 and part of 2025. Ms. Tamesha Garnett will continue as Vice Chair for the calendar year 2024 and will continue through 2025.
- Establish dialog with the Planning and Development Department regarding the rising costs of downtown Parking and its impact on varying communities.
- Religious Holiday Displays on Academy Lawn – This discussion, with an intent on submission of recommendation, will continue in 2025.
- Diversity Festival – The commission will conduct discussions regarding ideas for 2025 Diversity Festival.
- **November 2023** - D&I Commission web page is live. <https://newarkde.gov/1274/Diversity-Inclusion-Commission>
- **November 2023** Commission approved action plan to serve as a guideline for the discussion of agenda topics, goals, and recommendations.

2024 Guest Speakers/Presentations

- **Public Commenters:**
 - **Dyann Conner** – June 2024
 - Ms. Dyann Connor, of 301 Winterthur Lane
 - She stated that she wanted to compliment the Commission on the amount of detail and time they put into the project. She and her husband did notice the flags. Her husband is an African American veteran of the Marine Corps. They did notice the flags and are aware of them in Pennsylvania, as referenced by Mr. Murphy,

which is not diverse. She was glad that the Commission brought up the topic, and she was the Director of Social Justice at Tower Hill School. So, when the Commission was wordsmithing the paragraph, it was familiar with how they write things inclusively. She indicated it was familiar, well done, and wanted to thank the committee.

- **Mara Gorman** – August 2024
 - Ms. Mara Gorman, District 1,
 - She is an active member of the Newark, DE, NAACP and is very interested in the work of this Commission.

D&I Commission Goals for 2025

- To have Religious Holiday Displays on Academy Lawn to reflect more inclusion.
- Diversity Festival – The Commission will recommend ideas for the 2026 Diversity Festival.
- Fill vacant Commission seats.