

Equity and Inclusion Transition Policy Committee

Mission Statement

Implement a shared vision for a more equitable, inclusive, and accessible city for all, recognizing the value of diversity in every aspect of its municipal activities, boards and institutions; including appropriate advocacy.

1. How do you propose the Simmons Administration should prioritize the policy goals in this area, and on what timeframe?

Background:

Research shows, cities that prioritize diversity, equity, and inclusion are more likely to be responsive to citizens' needs, providing access and opportunity for all so that each and every citizen may thrive in their community.

We believe Stamford should strive for Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Accessibility principles in all aspects of city governance, from the people who work for or are in service of the City, to vendors and businesses hired through the City's procurement process. This diverse base should be representative of the City's demographics and/or national demographics. Further, we should endeavor for equity and accessibility in all City services. We believe the Simmons administration has a prime opportunity to make a significant impact in the city of Stamford as it relates to not only equity and inclusion, but also diversity and accessibility. With that in mind, our first recommendation is to rename this committee, Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Accessibility (IDEA). As a next step, we believe the Mayor should champion an IDEA mission statement and challenge each transition committee to incorporate the necessary actions needed to allow this great city to live the mission. To launch this process, the above mission statement was written.

2. Which goals are achievable in the first 100 days of the Administration?

We believe Stamford should strive for a diverse base in all aspects of city governance, from the people who work for or are in service of the City vendors and businesses hired through the City's procurement process. This diverse base should be representative of the City's demographics and/or national demographics (See Appendix for composition). To accomplish this goal, policy, procedure and behavioral changes will need to be made in terms of how the City is currently recruiting, retaining and developing all major groups listed in the table below. From a procurement standpoint, special focus is necessary in the identification, certification communication and selection processes.

In the first 100 days, we believe the following goals are achievable and will set Mayor Simmons up for success:

- ✓ Mayor Simmons to define and adopt an IDEA mission statement and socialize the vision for how she and her administration can bring it to life.
- ✓ Create ongoing IDEA Advisory Commission whose purpose would be to help create and forward the strategic plan set forth by the IDEA Officer. This commission would be inclusive of representatives of the community (many on this current committee would be willing to play an active role in this capacity).
- ✓ Refine and rename the description of DEI officer position to IDEA Officer and pledge to hire within the first 100 days
- ✓ Determine who will serve on appointed boards and commissions and seek non-traditional and innovative channels for candidate recruitment. As a committee we *recommend viewing appointees as potential pipeline for candidates for elected office.*
- ✓ Set as a priority of the Chief Information Officer: ensure City website and City service requests are accessible (e.g. vision impaired, language, etc.) and encourage other local organizations and institutions to do the same.

Group	Primary Influencer
City employees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Human Resources and individual hiring managers • Unions
Appointed boards and commissions	Mayor Board of Reps
Cabinet	Mayor
Elected boards (Education, Finance, Board of Reps)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Political party leaders • Elected district representatives
Procurement	Mayor & Head of procurement

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3. Which goals will require legislation to move forward? Which items can be advanced through the actions of the Administration alone? What is the fiscal impact of these legislative or executive actions?

Most of the following initial IDEA actions do not require legislation to move forward. That said, we think a commitment to work with the Board of Education to make our public education accessible to all – this is inclusive but not limited to access to all spaces in buildings and “accessible” technology.

"We think the City should consider completing a disparity study for the city of Stamford. One idea to help garner support for more focus and financial support for diversity and inclusion is to develop an education/communication plan for IDEA education and awareness for the Stamford community.

While this final suggestion will not require legislation to move forward, we recognized that it may need to be outsourced which would be a cost to the city. With that said, we feel it is important for all cities employees go through IDEA training.

4. Are there specific challenges you can identify with regard to achieving the Simmons Administration’s goals, and how would you suggest addressing those?

Without supporting data, diversity initiatives can often be thought of as a “nice thing to do” versus a “must do” and we view this as a potential challenge from a prioritization perspective. Hence, we feel it is critical for the Mayor to work with the following parties to develop benchmarks and begin creating IDEA goals and quantitative and qualitative metrics of success (*diverse slates for hiring, fulfillment of recruiting via hiring, advancement, etc.*):

- Elected boards — Board of Finance, Board of Education, Board of Representatives
- Appointed boards — Planning, Zoning, etc.
- Unions — Police, Firefighters, Teachers
- Leadership of City departments
- Begin to develop IDEA dashboard incorporating above benchmarks, goals, metrics of success and make IDEA performance/goals achievement a performance criterion

5. What examples of success from other states, countries, or the private sector in this policy area should the Administration study?

As a committee, we believe there are a number of cities the Mayor’s office could reference for best practices. Across the state, small businesses account for nearly 50% of all employers and we believe the City could do a better job supporting local small business owners, especially minority owned businesses that are being negatively impacted at a greater rate than others. Below are a couple of links to websites of other Cities we feel are good models:

- Procurement sites of other cities: [NYC Mayor’s Office of Contract Services](#), [New Haven](#), [Hartford](#)
- In this [link](#) is information regarding a third grant opportunity provided by NYC to small businesses.

In October, the city of Bridgeport provided [grants](#) up to \$10,000 to small business owners after providing grants up to \$5,000 in May.

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6. Are there any other issues/considerations you would like to highlight regarding this policy area?

Other considerations for the Mayor include:

- To maintain momentum and to keep a pulse on the city's success and opportunities to best meet the needs of the citizens, the Mayor should create a vehicle to capture the voice of the community.
- Review what the other committees created and ensure that IDEA is incorporated into their 100-day plans
- Set specific goals for diversity supplier certificates and enterprises (See appendix for Diversity Suppliers).
- Consider doing a policy review through the lens of IDEA:
 - Make sure all job descriptions are reviewed to ensure they are written to attract a diverse group of candidates
 - Determine how Build Back Better funds are distributed equitably
 - Look at the diversity of each layer of leadership, ensure there is a diverse group, and devise a strategy to develop and/or hire to fill the gaps

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APPENDIX

DEFINITIONS

Diversity is the presence of differences and the intersectionality of all dimensions of those differences.

Diversity includes characteristics of persons including, but not limited to race, culture, color, creed, or religion, national origin, gender, mental and physical ability, age, marital status, family structure, citizenship status, sexual orientation, sexual expression or identity, economic status, veteran's status, and any other protected class in conformance with federal state and local laws.

Equity ensures barriers are removed and support is given to ensure all have equal access, opportunity, and advancement. The principle of equity acknowledges that there are historically underserved and underrepresented populations, and that fairness regarding these unbalanced conditions is needed to assist equality in the provision of effective opportunities to all groups.

Inclusion speaks to how we solicit, interact, collaborate and execute.

Inclusion is a call to action and shapes the culture of an organization. It is about actively seeking, inviting, implementing, and communicating the contributions and participation of all people.

Accessibility is the confirmation that all have access to and benefits from the opportunities, information, resources, initiatives, and programs offered. Accessibility also includes the practice of effective communication (large print, braille, close caption, audio, sign language, TTY, video and audio descriptions) and the physical and non-physical barriers experienced by many.

CITY DEMOGRAPHICS

Stamford demographics:

Caucasian/white — 48%

Latino — 28%

Black — 12%

Asian — 8%

Native American — <1%

Other race/ethnicity — 4%

Immigrant demographics:

Foreign-born — 34%

National demographics:

Women — 58%

Disability community — 26%

Veterans — 10%

Other considerations:

Immigration — first- or second-generation

Economic background — low-income

Level of education

DIVERSITY SUPPLIERS

A "diversity supplier" holds one or more certifications listed below.

- Disabled Business Enterprise (DIS)
- Disabled Veteran Business Enterprise (DVET)
- Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE)
- Historically Underutilized Business Zone (U.S. SBA HUBZone Empowerment)
- Minority-Owned Business Enterprise (MBE)
- Minority/Women-Owned Business Enterprise (M/WBE)
- Non-Profit Entity (Non-Profit)
- Small Business Administration 8(a) Program (SBA 8(a))
- Small Business Enterprise (SBE)
- Small Disadvantaged Business (SDB)
- Veteran-Owned Business Enterprise (VET)
- Women-Owned Business Enterprise (WBE)

Source: [CT Data Haven: Stamford 2021 Equity Profile](#)