



## **MELROSE HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION**

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### **Melrose Human Rights Commission FY24 Budget Memo**

#### History of the Melrose Human Rights Commission:

The Melrose Human Rights Commission is one of the oldest community HRCs in the Commonwealth. This Commission was created in 1992 upon recognizing a clear and apparent need in our community. For over 30 years, our commission has worked to strengthen the local bonds in our City, fostering and cultivating mutual respect and understanding of all viewpoints, while verifying for all observers the enriching nature a diverse population brings with it.

Our essential mission is two-fold: (1) working to safeguard and advocate for our legal and social rights, and (2) helping our community to progress and transform individually and in our collective relations.

Our work includes:

- working to promote goodwill, understanding of diverse cultures, and awareness of human rights issues;
- investigating claims of unlawful discrimination or harassment, and either mediating where appropriate or referring claims to appropriate enforcement authorities; and
- building and sustaining community relationships and partnerships.

#### **Some examples of our work in FY23:**

- With respect to promoting goodwill, the Melrose Human Rights Commission partnered with the Mayor's Office and the DEI Task Force to create an event titled, Dance for Community, where Melrose attendees were brought together through music and movement.
- We had conversations about what is a beloved community at our MLK Day of Service, where we reflected on how Melrose can support our Boston families with the METCO program after over 300 community-service projects were completed during the day at 13 different community host organizations.
- To promote understanding of our many diverse cultures, we planned and organized a Community Iftar Dinner, in partnership with the Malden Islamic Center and Peace Islands Institute. As well, we partnered with the Lincoln School PTO to bring back the International Welcome Potluck, where participants were invited to bring a dish representing their cultural heritage and Lincoln students shared with attendees highlights of their ancestral home country; we are in the works of organizing Pride, a celebration of our LGBTQ+ community.
- We continue to build and sustain community relationships and partnerships by increasing our community outreach through the creation of the HRC HUB, which is a quarterly newsletter to keep the Melrose community informed on the happenings of the Melrose Human Rights Commission, provide educational resources, and draw attention to the support of local

organizations, businesses, and elected officials who consistently and constantly step up to donate their time and resources to our causes by giving them the recognition they deserve at our events.

**Now: FY24**

We have much more work to do. We are innovating and transforming our programming to meet the needs of our increasingly diverse community. Our commissioners are eager, energetic, and ready to work hard to continue to provide educational opportunities, lasting partnerships, support, and resources to achieve our mission of one community that is open to all.

For the upcoming year, we hope to continue to bring our community together while also promoting our core mission through celebratory and educational events. In addition, we are looking forward to working with the Melrose Police Department to ensure a systematic response to any civil rights incidents and working with Melrose Public Schools and PTOs to foster a relationship with our youngest residents.

There is more that can be done. There has been an increased and renewed interest in the MHRC from the community. Our expanded programming has been in response to that demand. Consequently, our expenditure has increased, far exceeding our \$3,000 appropriation. Those expenses were covered by grants as well as in-kind and small-dollar donations, overall, usually amounting to at least half as much as our allocated budget. We anticipate this trend continuing. Our ability to fundraise is difficult – as much of our volunteer time and energy is spent on our Commission’s programming but the need for our commission has not shrunk – which is why I am asking this council to commit to keeping our funding the same it has been - \$3,000. And with it, I make a promise – that we will be good stewards of the funds we are allotted. We will continue to seek to expand our programming and outreach while simultaneously coming up with new ways to fund our commission.

Our work is made possible through the dedication of our 11 volunteer public servants, and our many volunteers and partners in the community. I would be remiss in not thanking them for their commitment, sacrifices, and dedication.

Thank you for your continued support.