



City of Biddeford
Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee

March 9, 2026 at 5:30 PM

City Hall Second Floor Conference Room & Zoom

[Join Microsoft Teams Meeting Online](#)

Or call in by phone: +1 872-242-8054

Phone conference ID: 746 129 459#

Meeting ID: 281 422 905 122 22

Passcode: G2Kq2dV9

1. Call to Order
2. Public Comment
3 Minute Limit Per Speaker
3. Approval of Minutes
 - 3.a February 9, 2026 DEI Committee Meeting Minutes
4. Current Events
5. New Member Orientation
 - 5.a Committee Mission & Vision
 - 5.b Committee Expectations
 - 5.c Past Projects
6. Discussion Items
 - 6.a Eid al-Fitr Proclamation
 - 6.b Diversity Calendar & Proclamation Schedule
 - 6.c Pride Update
 - 6.d Juneteenth Update
 - 6.e Public Restroom Project
7. Other Business
8. Second Public Comment
3 Minute Limit Per Speaker
9. Adjourn

February 9, 2026 DEI Committee Meeting Minutes

In attendance: Lauren (online), David, Anne, Breese, Jamie, Aiden, Ariane, Danica

Not in attendance: Syed, Flo (excused)

1. Call to Order

Meeting called to order at 5:35 PM .

2. Public Comment

No members of the public were in attendance.

3. Approval of Minutes

Motion by Breese to approve the January 12 meeting minutes, seconded by Aiden. Motion is unanimously approved.

4. Discussion Items

4.a. Departures and Welcomes

Anne announced Bistra's resignation and welcomed three new members. Committee members re-introduced themselves to the new members.

4.b. Current Events

This item will be added as a standing item on upcoming agendas to give the Committee time to discuss how current news and events in the community intersect with our work.

Anne shared that she has reached out to library about Black History Month and reiterated how appreciative we are of their partnership and their amplification of diversity in their programming.

Anne suggested that the Committee seeks to collaborate with the Biddeford Cultural and Heritage Center for RiverJam this year. Danica will share contact information for their President.

Aiden has been working with a therapist to compile a list of statewide providers who will offer free or low-cost therapy to people impacted by current events. He will share it with committee when it is complete.

4.c. Black History Month Proclamation

Anne's draft Proclamation is shared with the group. Aiden makes a motion to approve the proclamation. Breese seconds. Vote is unanimous.

Danica shared that this proclamation is set to be read at the February 17 City Council meeting and invited members to attend if they are able. Anne shared that the BHS Black Student Union may be interested in having members attend, and she will let the Mayor know in advance if there are any guests that should be welcomed.

4.d. Juneteenth Update

Flo, Delilah Poupore of Heart of Biddeford, and Josh Brister of the Maine Black Chamber of Commerce have been meeting to plan this year's Juneteenth celebration. A location is not yet confirmed, but the event is scheduled from 3-5 PM on Friday, June 19, 2026.

Josh Brister will be submitting a Fiscal Year 2027 budget request for City support of the 2027 Juneteenth event. This request is due on March 5. Danica notes that Council would be budgeting this request for the 2027 Juneteenth celebration, not the 2026. Anne will pass this information to Flo. David asks how much Council contributed last year. Danica clarified that it was not funded with Council funds last year.

Breese notes that the last Juneteenth celebration was the inaugural event. Despite this, over 200 people attended, and it was very well received by the Biddeford community at large. He suggested that a rain location is planned if the event will be outdoors.

Danica will share the Juneteenth flyer with the Committee.

4.e. Pride Month Discussion

Danica explained the flag display policy to the Committee. A flag request was submitted to fly the Pride Flag at City Hall in June; however, the request must be sent no more than 90 days in advance. The requester has been asked to resubmit the request in March.

Committee members were asked to save the date for a Monday, June 1 flag raising at City Hall. The high school's Pride group will be invited to attend as they have in past years.

The request to fly a Pride flag should be submitted on March 3rd.

Danica provides an overview of the City's flag policy.

Anne provides context for the City's flag policy, such as to prevent obscenity and retributivism.

A raising of the Pride flag will Monday, June 1st.

Anne notes that there are local student groups who enjoy having ownership of this event. Jaime asks after the name of the student group; Anne says they are multivarious and constantly evolving.

Jamie asks who plans Biddeford Pride. Danica says that, historically, it's HoB.

David will ask when planning meetings for this will occur, so that committee members can be involved in their individual capacity.

5. Other Business

David asked about people with disabilities who were unable to move their cars during snow bans, and whether there might be a City resource for such people to call in. After some discussion of practical issues, Danica says she will ask if the City has any resources in place already that could be examined or grown.

There is a general discussion of the nature of City proclamation; how they are decided upon; how they are written; and their symbolic import.

Danica notes that photographs in Council meetings are not necessarily required at this time, but that they can certainly be requested if community members wish them.

Breese offered to prepare a writeup about Khmer New Year for the Biddeford Beat. Ariane offered to prepare a writeup on International Women's Day. Danica will send out examples of past writeups to the Committee, as well as a copy of the Diversity Calendar.

Danica will reach out to her contact at Age Friendly Biddeford to see if there is interest on collaborating on a proclamation for Older Americans Month.

6. Second Public comment

No members of the public were in attendance.

Meeting adjourned at 6:40 PM.

Mission

The Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee works as part of the community to embrace diversity and recognize the value and uniqueness of each person. Through continuous reflection, education, and action, the DEI Committee pledges to acknowledge and address systemic barriers of inequity. The committee makes recommendations to the City Council on how best to continue building an inclusive and equitable community.

Vision

The City Council actively looks to the DEI Committee for guidance on the City's policies, procedures, and practices to ensure equity for all community members.

Biddeford's City government proactively creates the conditions for all residents to feel that they belong in, and can contribute to, the community of Biddeford.

The community of Biddeford welcomes and celebrates diversity, embraces change, and is committed to learning and adapting.

WHAT IS DEI?

CONTACT US



CITY OF BIDDEFORD



*Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
Committee*



Diversity

The things that make people different and make our community richer. Examples include race, gender, religion, and sexual orientation.

Equity

Making sure that everyone has access, resources, and opportunities to succeed and grow - especially people who have faced discrimination or who have not been in positions of privilege.

Inclusion

A culture where all people are welcome and everyone is valued, respected, and able to reach their full potential.

Visit Our Website

www.biddefordmaine.org/deicommittee

Email Us

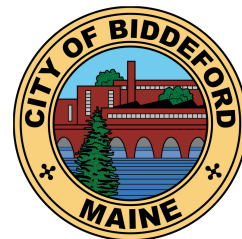
diversityequityinclusion@biddefordmaine.org

Come to a Meeting

Second Monday of
each month

5:30 p.m.

City Hall Second Floor
Conference Room
(205 Main St)



OUR MISSION



The Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee works as part of the community to embrace diversity and recognize the value and uniqueness of each person.

Through continuous reflection, education, and action, the DEI

Committee pledges to acknowledge and address systemic barriers of inequity.

The committee makes recommendations to the City

Council on how best to continue building an inclusive and equitable community.

Our committee has nine members that are each appointed by the Mayor for a two-year term. Members must live, own a business, or attend school in Biddeford.

OUR COMMITTEE



The DEI Committee was created by the Biddeford City Council in January 2022 to:

- Advise the Council on policy decisions
- Examine existing city policies, programs and practices and recommend updates
- Make recommendations to the Council on public engagement strategies and methods by which all Biddeford residents have the opportunity to better participate in the decision-making process.
- Provide feedback, guidance, strategies and recommendations to increase community engagement specifically by underrepresented groups.
- Identify local community leaders and build more leadership capacity in Biddeford's diverse communities.

SHARE YOUR STORY

Use the QR code to anonymously share your thoughts, ideas or experiences with the DEI Committee.



DIVISION 13
DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION COMMITTEE

Sec. 2-326. Established. [1-16-2024 by Ord. No. 2024.02]

The City of Biddeford's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee is hereby established.

Sec. 2-327. "Committee" defined. [1-16-2024 by Ord. No. 2024.02]

Unless otherwise indicated, the term "Committee," as used in this division, shall mean the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee.

Sec. 2-328. Composition; appointment of Committee members; terms of office; removal of members. [1-16-2024 by Ord. No. 2024.02]

- (a) The Committee shall consist of 8 volunteer members and one City Councilor. Such members shall be nominated by the Mayor and confirmed by the City Council. Members must reside, own a business, or attend school within the City of Biddeford. The Committee shall be staffed by the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Coordinator or City Manager designee.
- (b) The Council will strive to appoint members to the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee who bring their lived experiences regardless of their varied identities, including, but not limited to, age, race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, pregnancy, the dimensions of gender, disability, citizenship, veterans' status, ancestry, national origin, and/or political affiliation, amongst other identities. Appointed members will be expected to think broadly in terms of how issues of racism, sexism, ableism, and other discriminatory and prejudicial biases and systems impact all residents in Biddeford.
- (c) The terms of each member shall be staggered so that no more than three members' terms shall expire in the same year. Upon adoption of this division, there shall be three members appointed for a three-year term, three members appointed for a two-year term, and three members appointed for a one-year term. Following the completion of these initial terms, all members shall be appointed for three-year terms.
- (d) A member shall automatically be removed from the Committee in the event that they no longer reside in, own a business or attend school in the City of Biddeford or if they are absent for more than three regular meetings per calendar year without being excused by the Chair.

Sec. 2-329. Functions and purposes. [1-16-2024 by Ord. No. 2024.02]

- (a) The purpose of the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Committee is to create a culture of acceptance and mutual respect that acknowledges differences and strives for equitable outcomes of opportunity, access and inclusion.
- (b) It shall be the function of the Committee to:
 - (1) Advise the Biddeford City Council on policy decisions related to diversity, equitable outcomes, and inclusion;
 - (2) Examine existing City policies, programs and practices through a community lens to

- promote diversity, equity, and inclusion;
- (3) Make recommendations to the Council on public engagement strategies and methods by which all Biddeford residents have the opportunity to better participate in the decision-making process;
 - (4) Provide feedback, guidance, strategies and recommendations to increase community engagement specifically by underrepresented groups;
 - (5) Identify local community leaders and building more leadership capacity in Biddeford's diverse communities;
 - (6) Perform such other functions as may be required or delegated by the Mayor or City Council.

Sec. 2-330. Filling of vacancies. [1-16-2024 by Ord. No. 2024.02]

Vacancies on the Committee shall be filled for the remainder of the term in the same manner as original appointments are made.

Sec. 2-331. Quorum. [1-16-2024 by Ord. No. 2024.02]

A simple majority of Committee members shall constitute a quorum.

Sec. 2-332. Required vote. [1-16-2024 by Ord. No. 2024.02]

The Committee shall act by majority vote of those present and voting.

Sec. 2-333. Annual election of Chair and Vice Chair. [1-16-2024 by Ord. No. 2024.02]

The Committee shall annually elect a Chair and Vice Chair.

Sec. 2-334. Chair to call meetings and preside. [1-16-2024 by Ord. No. 2024.02]

The Chair shall notify all Committee members on three days' notice, unless waived, and shall preside at such meetings.

Sec. 2-335. Vice Chair's power in absence of Chair. [1-16-2024 by Ord. No. 2024.02]

The Vice Chair shall be vested with all the powers of the Chair in case of the Chair's absence or incapacity to serve.

Sec. 2-336. (Reserved)

Sec. 2-337. Authority of Council to assign powers, duties. [1-16-2024 by Ord. No. 2024.02]

The Council may assign additional powers and duties to the Committee as it deems necessary.

City of Biddeford
REMOTE MEETING PARTICIPATION POLICY

Purpose:

Pursuant to 1 M.R.S. § 403-B, a municipality may continue to allow members of its various boards, committees, commissions, including city council, and the public to participate in public meetings by remote methods upon adoption of a written policy. This policy satisfies the legal and administrative requirements needed to allow remote participation.

Definitions:

Hybrid Public Meeting - means a public meeting consisting of a combination of in-person and remote participation, where there must be at least one member of the public meeting body present at the specified meeting location.

Remote Public Meeting – means a public meeting consisting of remote participation by all members of the meeting body and the public by remote methods.

In-Person Meeting – means a public meeting held in-person with no remote two-way participation option(s) for the public or participating members of the public meeting body.

Remote Methods - means telephonic or video technology allowing simultaneous reception of information and may include other means when such means are necessary to provide reasonable accommodation to a person with a disability. Public proceedings may not be conducted by text-only means such as e-mail, text messages or chat functions.

Meeting Body - means any of the various City of Biddeford public boards, committees, commissions, including city council.

Applicability:

This policy, as may be amended from time to time, applies to all boards, committees, commissions, including city council (meeting body). Municipal staff and each respective meeting body chairperson or assigned alternate shall ensure compliance with this policy.

Unless otherwise specified, all public meetings of the city meeting bodies shall be conducted as hybrid meetings.

Requirements:

1. All hybrid and remote public meetings must be properly noticed. The notice must include the means by which the public may access the meeting remotely, currently through Zoom, and will provide a method for disabled persons to request necessary accommodation to access the meeting. Notice will also identify a location where the public may attend a hybrid meeting in person. Notice timelines and format shall comply with existing meeting body rules or requirements and any applicable charter, ordinance, policy, or bylaw.
2. The public meeting body will make all documents and materials to be considered by the public meeting body available, electronically or otherwise, to the public who attend remotely for hybrid and remote meetings to the same extent customarily available to the public who attend

in person, provided no additional costs are incurred by the City. This requirement shall be satisfied upon publication of agenda materials on the city website and agenda software, currently Granicus.

3. All votes taken during a hybrid or remote public meeting will be by roll call vote that can be seen and heard if using video technology, or heard if using audio technology only, by other members of the meeting body and the public. A member of the meeting body who participates remotely will be considered present for purposes of a quorum and voting.
4. All meeting body members are expected to be physically present for the public meeting except when being physically present is not practical. Reasons for remote attendance may include:
 - a. An Emergency - the existence of an emergency or urgent issue that requires the entire public meeting body to meet by remote methods;
 - b. Illness, Physical Condition, or Distance - illness, other physical condition or temporary absence from the jurisdiction of the meeting body that causes a member of the meeting body to face significant difficulties traveling to and attending in person;
 - c. Geography of the Public Meeting Body's Influence - with respect to a public meeting body with statewide membership or influence, significant distance a member must travel to be physically present; and
 - d. Geography of the Public Meeting Body's Jurisdiction - The area of the public body's jurisdiction includes geographic characteristics that impede or slow travel, including but not limited to islands not connected by bridges.
5. A determination as to a member of a meeting body's ability to participate remotely shall be made by the meeting body's chairperson or assigned alternate in consultation with the assigned staff representative and/or city manager or assigned alternate.
6. A public body member shall provide notice to the respective chairperson as soon as practical if attendance at a scheduled public meeting is impractical.
7. Public attendance at a proceeding will not be limited solely to remote methods except under the conditions in paragraph 4, subparagraph (a).

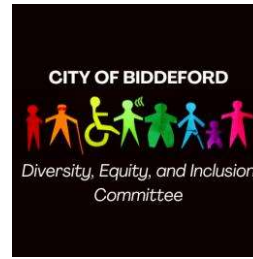
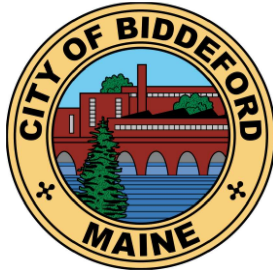
Limitations:

1 M.R.S. § 403-B, does not allow regional school unit budget meetings held pursuant to Title 20-A, section 482-A to be conducted using remote methods.

This policy will remain in force indefinitely unless amended or rescinded.

Adopted by the Biddeford City Council: July 20, 2021 by Order 2021.82

Planning Board Ratification Date: August 4, 2021



Best Practices for Promoting Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in Community Engagement

The City of Biddeford aims to create an atmosphere of inclusion and belonging across all areas of our municipal work. While this is an ambitious endeavor indeed, it is also one that can be exemplified by the ways in which we engage with the community. Whether we are hosting events, publishing various communications, soliciting input and feedback, and/or building partnerships across the city, each has the capacity to be designed, implemented, and evaluated through a DEI lens. Thus, we hold this truth at the core of our work: that each resident, business owner, student, and/or visitor of Biddeford, particularly those who have been the most marginalized, does not have to question whether or not they were thought of during the planning process; it will simply be true.

While this document is intended to be a guide (and potentially a checklist) for the planning and execution of varied forms of community engagement, we also recognize that language, context, and best practices are constantly evolving and will need updating. We hope that committees and City Government will use the following steps and strategies to plan for and navigate circumstances they may not have considered, or those in need of further investigation.

If you have questions or would like to discuss this document in more detail, please contact Danica Lamontagne (danica.lamontagne@biddefordmaine.org).

Active Engagement

Do members of the community have meaningful opportunities to be informed and involved in the design, delivery, and evaluation of public programs that affect them?

- Consider how the community can be engaged across the *Spectrum of Public Participation* (Appendix B):
 - *Inform* the public of the issues and initiatives going on in their community
 - Social media campaign; City website; newsletter; press release; presentation; Public Access programming; paid advertising in newspaper
 - *Consult* with the public to identify needs, preferences, or provide feedback on actions taken in the community

- *Our Biddeford* (Appendix C), the City of Biddeford’s online community engagement platform (e.g., surveys, polls); e-mail requests for comment; public hearings; surveys by mail; focus groups; guest speakers
 - *Involve* the public in the planning and implementation of the policies, programs, and decisions that affect them
 - *Our Biddeford*, the City of Biddeford’s online community engagement platform (e.g., option analysis, Q&A, mapping); advisory boards
 - *Collaborate* with the public on projects and *empower* them to decide on actions taken in the community
 - *Our Biddeford*, the City of Biddeford’s online community engagement platform (e.g., ideas wall, participatory budgeting); partnerships with local organizations; committees; task forces; ballot measures
- *Please refer to the appendix for more information about the *Our Biddeford* platform.

Accessibility

Do members of the community have access to programs and the ability to participate?

- Strive to identify which of the following circumstances might be preventing members of the community from participating, and address/accommodate for each as follows:
 - *Dis/Ability*¹: Choose locations for events that are accessible to everyone, particularly people with wheelchairs or limited mobility. Include subtitles on recordings, and/or provide for the needs of blind/low vision participants and those who are deaf/hard of hearing.
 - *Language*: Provide translation materials and/or translators for members of the community who are English Language Learners.
 - *Literacy*: Use plain language and concise communication, free of jargon and unexplained abbreviations.
 - *Time*: Host events and programs at different times to accommodate varied life/work schedules, and provide recordings/materials for those who are unable to attend.
 - *Location*: Host events and programs at locations that can be easily accessed by community members on their own or via public transportation.
 - *Technology*: Provide materials or channels for communication that are easy to find and review online. Include assistive technology² (Appendix A), as well as

¹ Dis/Ability: The word disability, when spelled without the slash, means that the person is identified by their disability, by what they cannot do. When slashed, this reminds people that people are identified by what they can do. (<https://students.wustl.edu/disability-education-self-study-guide>)

² Assistive technology (AT) is any item, piece of equipment, software program, or product system that is used to increase, maintain, or improve the functional capabilities of persons with disabilities. (www.atia.org)

offline options for those who are less familiar with technology or do not have internet capabilities.

Accountability

Are we responding to feedback and maintaining reciprocal and sustainable relationships within the community, even after an event or project has concluded?

- Build trust and credibility by actively listening to those most often excluded or overlooked (i.e. BIPoC, LGBTQ+ folks, people with disabilities, the unhoused community, etc.).
- When soliciting feedback, acknowledge and validate the concerns, and be transparent about existing (and potential) limitations.
- Continuously review data and meet with constituents to remain familiar with who lives and works in the community.
- Ensure that groups who have been historically marginalized were invited, engaged, felt included, and want to continue to participate in the future.
- Report results once a project is complete so people can understand how their feedback was incorporated when making decisions.
- Following community engagement efforts, debrief and evaluate if participation levels met your expectations and consider what can be done to be more inclusive and equitable.

Appendix A



Appendix B (www.organizingengagement.org)

IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation



IAP2's Spectrum of Public Participation was designed to assist with the selection of the level of participation that defines the public's role in any public participation process. The Spectrum is used internationally, and it is found in public participation plans around the world.

		INCREASING IMPACT ON THE DECISION				
		INFORM	CONSULT	INVOLVE	COLLABORATE	EMPOWER
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION GOAL		To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.	To place final decision making in the hands of the public.
	PROMISE TO THE PUBLIC	We will keep you informed.	We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will look to you for advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.	We will implement what you decide.

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Appendix C - Tools Available on *Our Biddeford*

The City's online community engagement platform, Our Biddeford, provides a range of tools to gather feedback and involve residents in the decision-making process for local government. If you would like to use Our Biddeford for community engagement, you would set up a "project page" related to the item you are working on. Then, you can select from available tools based on what level of [public participation](#) you are looking to promote – whether you would like to *inform, consult, involve, or collaborate with* the public.

An overview of the available tools is included below. Please contact the Communications Department for more information.

- *Inform* – A project can be set up with the goal of simply informing the community about the work you are doing. You can add images, text and attachments to explain what is happening with the project and outline the timeline for the project to be completed. This method is designed for one-way communication needs, so community members can read and learn but they cannot actively participate in making decisions.
- *Consult*
 - Surveys – This platform can integrate traditional surveys from the City's survey tool, Typeform. These surveys are anonymous and the results are not public. Typeform supports most common survey question formats, including multiple choice questions, short answer questions, rankings, and rating tools such as opinion scales.
 - Quick Polling – A quick poll consists of a single yes/no question, (dis)agree statement, or any other multiple-choice question (e.g., "Would you rather spend all funds on the new park, allocate it to the renovation of older parks, or do a mix of both?"). The identity of the respondents is anonymous but the results of the vote are public.
- *Involve*
 - Option Analysis – With option analysis, admins can provide a limited number of options, ideas, or scenarios on which citizens can vote and/or comment (for example, "Which of these park designs is your favorite?"). With this method, the community cannot add their own ideas, scenarios or options, but they can vote for options they like, leave comments on the proposed ideas, and have conversations with other users.
 - Q&A – Residents can submit questions for the project team to respond to. You can also use this tool to provide answers to anticipated "FAQs".
 - Mapping – Residents can share location-specific feedback on a map of the city. This method is particularly useful for planning and mobility projects. For example, users could be asked to show on a map where they think new crosswalks should be added.

- *Collaborate*
 - Ideation / Ideas Wall – The City provides a prompt, and users are able to freely submit their own ideas or answers. Other participants can vote and comment on the ideas.
 - Participatory Budgeting – Using the participatory budgeting tool, community members can provide input on how a certain pool of money will be spent. There are two ways to do this:
 - With “Cumulative Voting”, project organizers set a maximum budget and identify several categories of spending. Participants can say how many dollars they would like to spend on each of those categories.
 - With the “Basket Exercise”, project organizers would identify several specific options for participants to select between that have a known cost. The participants can ‘shop’ for the combination of items/projects that they would like to fund and cannot exceed the maximum budget that you set.

City of Biddeford



PROCLAMATION

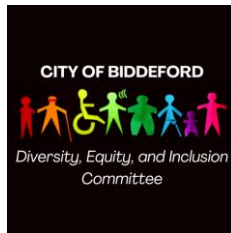
Whereas, Eid al-Fitr holds profound significance within the Islamic faith as a celebration commemorating the conclusion of Ramadan, a sacred month for Muslims, rooted in charity, fasting, prayer, and in which the Holy Quran was revealed to Prophet Muhammad; and,

Whereas, Muslims in Biddeford and worldwide gather in unity during this time to rejoice in the blessings of the month of Ramadan, through shared spirituality and celebration; and,

Whereas, the state of Maine is home to 17,000 Muslims who observe Eid al-Fitr as a time of generosity by visiting family, friends, community members and offering service, food, gifts, and charity; and,

Whereas, Biddeford is grateful for its Muslim neighbors and diverse community representing various walks of life and traditions, which make the cultural fabric of this City; and

Therefore, I, Liam LaFountain, Mayor of the City of Biddeford, do hereby honor Friday, March 19, 2026 as Eid al-Fitr in our City. May this proclamation serve as a testament to our unwavering support and gratitude for our Muslim neighbors and the Islamic traditions. Let us, the City of Biddeford, rejoice with our community members and celebrate Eid al-Fitr with a shared unit of appreciation.



Biddeford Diversity Calendar – 2026

This resource was created to amplify a variety of events, celebrations, and holidays, while paying special attention to those that have historically (or currently) been excluded from the mainstream spotlight in America. It is intended to be a living document, in which members of the Biddeford community (and beyond) feel recognized and represented.

**Certain dates will change from year to year. Please email diversityequityinclusion@biddefordmaine.org with any feedback or additions.*

January

Poverty Awareness Month: A month-long initiative to raise awareness and call attention to the growth of poverty in America.

Martin Luther King Jr. Day (January 19th): Commemorates the life and work of Dr. King, who was a Baptist minister and prominent leader in the American civil rights movement. It is celebrated on the third Monday of January each year.

International Day of Commemoration in Memory of Victims of the Holocaust (January 27th): On this annual day of commemoration, the UN urges every member state to honor the six million Jewish victims of the Holocaust and millions of other victims of Nazism and to develop educational programs to help prevent future genocides.

February

Black History Month: This month was created to focus attention on the contributions of African Americans to the United States. It honors all Black people from all periods of U.S. history, from each enslaved person forcibly brought over from Africa to African Americans living in the United States today.

Lunar New Year (February 17th): Marks the start of the new year in the lunar calendar used in East Asia, Southeast Asia and elsewhere. It begins on the date of the second new Moon after

the Winter Solstice, which means that the Lunar New Year can occur anytime between January 21 and February 20. 2026 is the year of the Horse.

Start of Ramadan (Evening of February 18th – March 19th): The start of Islam's most sacred month — during this time Muslims abstain from eating and drinking from dawn until dusk and also involves prayer, self-reflection, and increased devotion. The beginning time of Ramadan is based on the first observance of the new Moon over Mecca, Saudi Arabia.

March

Holi (March 4th): Known as the festival of colors, this day is celebrated in many South Asian countries and across the world (including the U.S.).

International Women's Day (March 8th): This day highlights the political, social, cultural, and economic achievements of women, while also celebrating their achievements, raising awareness about discrimination, and taking action to drive gender parity.

St. Patrick's Day (March 17th): This day is celebrated by many Irish people and their descendants worldwide, and typically includes a feast to honor Irish heritage.

Neurodiversity Celebration Week (March 16th – 20th): A worldwide initiative that challenges stereotypes and misconceptions about neurological differences while creating more inclusive and equitable cultures that celebrate differences and empower every individual.

Eid al-Fitr (March 20th): Marks the end of the month-long dawn-to-sunset fasting of Ramadan (the Holiday of Breaking the Fast). Eid is declared after a crescent new moon has been sighted or after completion of thirty days of fasting.

Transgender Day of Visibility (March 31st): A day to celebrate the lives and contributions of trans people, while also drawing attention to the poverty, discrimination, and violence the community faces.

April

Arab American Heritage Month: Time to recognize the 3.5 million Arab Americans that exemplify so much of what our country stands for: hard work, resilience, compassion, and generosity.

Week of the Young Child (April 11th – 17th): A national event promoting the importance of high-quality early learning.

Khmer New Year (April 14th - 16th): One of the most significant holidays in Cambodian culture, and celebrated with great enthusiasm and joy, this vibrant festival marks the end of the harvesting season and the beginning of the traditional solar New Year. It is a time for families and communities to come together, honor their ancestors, and welcome the arrival of a prosperous year ahead.

Passover (April 2nd - April 9th): Major Jewish festival that celebrates the freeing of enslaved Israelites from Egypt. The dates are based on the Hebrew calendar, from the 15th day of the Hebrew month of Nissan through the 22nd day.

Easter (April 5th): Major Christian holiday which celebrates Jesus' resurrection. Easter Sunday always occurs on the first Sunday following the full Moon that occurs on or after the spring equinox.

Orthodox Easter (April 12th): Each year, in accordance with the Julian calendar, Orthodox Christians worldwide, and about six million in North America, observe Easter, also known as *Pascha*.

Earth Day (April 22nd): Applauds the planet we live on and all it does for us; Earth Day is observed by more than 192 nations. Earth Day 2024 is unwavering in its commitment to end plastics for the sake of human and planetary health, demanding a 60% reduction in the production of ALL plastics by 2040.

May

Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander Heritage Month: Celebrates people with Asian, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander ancestry, and their contributions to the United States.

Jewish American Heritage Month: Honors American Jews and their contributions to the United States throughout history.

Older Americans Month: Celebrates how older Americans contribute to the United States.

Military Appreciation Month: A month-long observance in the United States, dedicated to people who are currently serving in the United States military.

National Day of Prayer (May 7th): First proclaimed by the Continental Congress in 1775 and later by President Abraham Lincoln, a day of prayer was determined to be “an effective remedy for national ills for all people in all nations.” This day was determined to honor the prayers of all people, without regard to their religious affiliation.

June

Caribbean American Heritage Month: Recognizes those of Caribbean descent and the impact their accomplishments have had throughout American history.

Pride Month: Recognizes LGBTQIA+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer/questioning, intersex, asexual, + like nonbinary and two-spirit) people and the effect they’ve had on the world. June was selected to commemorate the Stonewall Riots, which were sparked by a police raid on a gay bar in Greenwich Village, New York City. This event was a pivotal moment in the LGBTQIA+ rights movement and has been seen as the beginning of the fight for equal rights.

Juneteenth (June 19th): Originally recognized as a federal holiday In 2021, this day commemorates when the last 250,000 enslaved African Americans learned of the Emancipation Proclamation (over two years after it was originally issued). They were then finally declared ‘free.’

Summer Solstice (June 20th): The longest day of the year and the shortest night and has been celebrated by various cultures around the world for thousands of years.

Ashura (June 26th): This day of religious significance for Shia Muslims falls within the month of Muharram, which is the second holiest month in Islam after Ramadan. The day of Ashura commemorates the martyrdom of Imam Hussain, grandson of the Holy Prophet Muhammad during the battle of Karbala.

July

Americans with Disabilities Act Anniversary (July 26th): This landmark law affirmed the inherent dignity of every person, regardless of disability, and falls within the month of Disability Pride. There are an estimated 1 billion people with disabilities worldwide, and 15% of whom reside in the U.S. This law and month remind us of the ways we must continue to advance the rights of

the disabled community to promote more accessible, equitable, and inclusive societies everywhere.

August

National Night Out (August 4th): A community-police and safety awareness-raising event in the United States, held the first Tuesday of August.

Day of Arba'in or Arbaeen (August 5th): In Arabic this translates to forty (i.e. fortieth day). The traditional period of mourning in Islamic culture is forty days and this takes place 40 days after Ashura. Millions of people around the world mark the Day of Arbaeen by remembering the story of Hussain, his family and his companions.

September

National Hispanic Heritage Month (September 15th - October 15th): Honors Hispanic and Latino Americans for their achievements and contributions to United States culture.

National Recovery Month: Seeks to raise awareness and educate Americans on treatment and health services for individuals affected by addiction, and to exemplify that recovery is possible.

World Suicide Prevention Day (September 10th): Established in 2003 by the International Association for Suicide Prevention in conjunction with the World Health Organization, to reduce the stigma and raise awareness that suicide can be prevented.

Rosh Hashanah (September 11th – 13th): The Jewish New Year when Jews reflect on their faith. It occurs on the first two days of Tishrei, the seventh month of the Hebrew calendar.

October

Mental Illness Awareness Week (October 4th – 10th): Each year, during the first week of October, participants across the country raise awareness of mental illness, fight discrimination and provide support for those living with mental health conditions.

National Coming Out Day (October 11th): Observed on the anniversary of the 1988 National March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights, this international annual awareness day supports LGBTQIA+ people in 'coming out of the closet' (i.e. the process of accepting one's sexual orientation or gender identity and sharing that identity openly with other people).

Indigenous People's Day (October 12th): Celebrates and honors all Indigenous People of North America and commemorates their histories and cultures.

November

Homelessness Awareness Month: Serves to educate the public about the many reasons people are unhoused, and to encourage support for assistance service providers and other service organizations aiming to offer a variety of resources to the unhoused population.

National Native American Heritage Month: Calls attention to the culture, traditions, and achievements of those who are Indigenous to what we now call North America, and their descendants.

Diwali (November 8th): An important celebration in the Hindu faith in which a variety of deities are praised. Diwali occurs annually during the Hindu month of Kartik on the day of the new Moon.

Transgender Day of Remembrance (November 20th): Held as a remembrance for all those murdered as a result of transphobia.

December

International Humans Rights Day (December 10th): Adopted by the UN in 1948 following the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Winter Solstice/Yule (December 21st): The shortest day of the year and the longest night. / A festival celebrated by those of the Pagan and Wiccan faiths.

Christmas (December 25th): A Christian holiday marking the birth of their Lord and savior, Jesus Christ.

Hanukkah (December 5th – December 12th): A Jewish holiday celebrating Jew rising up against their Greek-Syrian oppressors in the Maccabean Revolt. It begins on the 25th day of Kislev in the Hebrew calendar.

Kwanzaa (December 26th - January 1st): An annual celebration of African American heritage, unity, and culture, often celebrated by Black Americans which was, and still is, inspired by

African harvest celebrations. This seven-day holiday honors the seven principles, one celebrated each day.

DEI COMMITTEE ANNUAL PROCLAMATION LIST

Month	Proclamation	Agree to Draft?
January	Martin Luther King, Jr. Day	YES
February	Black History Month	YES
March	Eid al Fitr	YES
April		
May	Asian American Native Hawaiian Pacific Islander Heritage Month	YES
June	Pride Month Juneteenth	YES YES
July		
August		
September	Hispanic Heritage Month	YES
October	Indigenous Peoples' Day	YES
November	Homelessness Awareness Month	YES
December	Holidays and Traditions	YES

Biddeford

JUNEETEENTH

2026



*Friday June 19, 2026
3pm-5pm
Downtown Biddeford
Location TBD*

Sponsored By

