

Checklist: Budgeting for Your DEI Initiative

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While companies and teams have different approval processes, these are important to keep in mind as you budget, no matter the approach.

1. Review the previous year's DEI expenses and programming.

- What were you able to achieve with the budget the DEI department received?
- What programs were eliminated or curtailed to fit the budget, and what was the impact?
- Was the budget able to help you make sufficient progress to your DEI goals?
- How does this help to make a case for an increased budget this year?

2. Assess the investment necessary to get you to this year's DEI goals.

- Distinguish the nice-to-haves from the must-haves
- Make a case for each significant item on your budget. This isn't the same as making the business case for DEI in your organization (you shouldn't have to keep doing this at every turn). You'll want to make sure that your DEI investment is intentional and planned.
 - For example, explain the need for the employee resource group (ERG) budget you are requesting and tie it to the sense of belonging that ERGs provide for employees. Pull in the data points necessary to help you make your case such as employee sentiment surveys you take or the growth in ERG membership and demand. Explain the type of programs that the budget will fund.
- Break the budget up quarterly or even monthly to get a scope of the expenses at different parts of the year and to identify different ways to present your case.
- Review hiring or allocation of staffing resources for a DEI team and incorporate this into our budget. Don't rely on volunteers as a strategy.

- Incorporate resources to support your DEI leaders. Include a consulting budget and have a training and education budget just for your DEI team.
- 3. Get leadership Buy-in by including them in the process and speaking the corporate language.**
- Incorporate the return on investment where you can. Diversity management, when properly managed, drives profit. This shows up as decreased costs (raised productivity, lower undesired loss, and increased recruiting efficiency).
 - Highlight the previous year's DEI wins and what's working in DEI programming.
 - Tie the DEI goals and programs to the company's goals and illustrate how the DEI programs help meet the company's objectives, and alleviate company needs and pain points.
 - Run your numbers by your champions on the leadership team to fine-tune them and to get buy-in in advance of submitting your proposal
- 4. Submit your budget for review and approval.**
- Format your budget document in a way that aligns with other department budget requests.
 - Ensure you have a champion in the room when the budget is reviewed. If your organization does not have a Chief Diversity Officer that is present in leadership discussions around the budget, ensure that the HR, operations, or compliance leader is prepared to champion the budget.
- 5. Utilize approved budget.**
- As you review approval for your budget, assess what it will and will not cover and make adjustments throughout the year as necessary.
 - Try not to leave money on the table. Use your full budget to implement the programs you have planned. When requesting an increased budget next year, it helps to see that you've utilized all the resources allocated the previous year for DEI programs.

6. Prepare for next year's budget as you implement your DEI plans throughout this year.

- Document expenses as you go through your budget in addition to the returns on investment. Use data to document the impact of your DEI initiative.
 - a. Account for the number of events (training, celebrations, branding, marketing campaigns, etc....)
 - b. Keep note of engagement (training participation, event attendance, post-event survey ratings, social media clicks...)
 - c. Document the fluctuation in engagement as the year goes on (did the training attendance increase from year to year? Are the DEI-related training more well attended than other company training?) Use the data from the DEI Initiative that you've collected as a business case for programming and as justification to request more budget at the end of the year for the following year.