



## Leadership and Governance Toolkit

### *Tool 17: Funding and Resourcing your DEI Strategy*

Funding is always a key challenge facing leaders interested in prioritizing a DEI agenda. The reality is that very little funding exists in the non-profit sector to launch programs and initiatives that support the advancement of diversity, equity and inclusion. First, when preparing budgets,

***Leaders must be creative in how they bring resources to support their DEI agendas, their budgeting and usage of funds.***

leaders must push their thinking to see how diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives can be integrated into existing funded positions and projects to improve project outcomes authentically. This will allow leaders to

find ways to fund new initiatives using existing funding. This process requires creativity and a detailed understanding of the existing funding resources. Ideas to fund DEI via existing funding structures are best identified via a group discussion involving key internal experts.

Another option to consider is whether the best plan of action for funding DEI initiatives is a step-by-step approach, i.e., fund a consultant to help develop an anti-racism and anti-oppression policy, then wait for some time and fund a DEI strategy, followed by funding for one specific initiative such as training, etc. This is a very common way to fund DEI in community-based organizations because funding is often cobbled together from different sources. Managers who are vigilant of budget underruns and can authentically frame DEI-related work as core to the organization's work can effectively fund DEI initiatives. Another more powerful approach is to outline a funding package and work with the board and key funders to get funding in place. This second approach does not need to be mutually exclusive from the step-by-step approach. Still, it does need to make convincing arguments for why DEI is not a nice to have or something additive to the work of the organization and is actually core to the organization's work. Finally, the third approach is difficult and has political risk, i.e., reallocating funds from existing programs and initiatives to DEI. This approach may seem difficult, but it is also the most effective way to fund DEI and signal its importance. Leaders must be willing to lead and facilitate discussions around reallocating funds from existing programs to DEI programs to help transition their organization's commitment to DEI from a verbal commitment to action.