

Equity and Human Relations Advisory Committee
2024-2025 Equity and Human Relations Awards Ad Hoc Subcommittee
Report to be delivered January 27, 2026

Members of the 2024-2025 Equity and Human Relations Awards Ad Hoc Subcommittee are: Samia Bano, Haifaa Moammar, Rebecca Rona-Tuttle and Carlos Valverde.

The committee originally expected that the 2024-2025 Equity and Human Relations Awards would be presented during the spring or summer. However, the ad hoc subcommittee was informed that the presentations would need to be delayed.

In mid January of 2026, Mayor Freddy Puza and City Manager Odis Jones communicated that the presentation of the 2024-2025 Equity and Human Relations Awards would be held the evening of Monday, January 26, in the Council Chambers immediately prior to the Council's business meeting.

Members of the Equity and Human Relations Advisory Committee are already familiar with the information that follows. But since many months' time has elapsed since EHRAC made its decisions about the Award recipients, we are repeating the information here.

During a meeting of the full committee, members were told that the Awards ad hoc subcommittee had carefully scrutinized the many nominations forms and used a rubric to determine the two semi-finalists in each of four categories.

During that meeting, member Rebecca Rona-Tuttle shared information gathered from the nominations to describe the semi-finalists. Following a discussion, the committee voted for the final award recipients.

It was determined that during the presentation of the awards at the Council meeting, the chair or vice chair would speak on behalf of the committee. Chair Denise Renteria is expected to do so. She will explain the awards program and read a short description of the contributions each Award recipient has made. The four members of the Awards ad hoc subcommittee will present medallions to the Award recipients.

Descriptions of the recipients follow.

Category: Student in a Culver City School

Kalia Lowitz

Kalia Lowitz graduated from Culver City High School last spring. As a girl scout striving to earn her Gold Award, she planned and implemented a clothing drive out of a desire to ensure that people in need of clothing, such as those served by Culver Closet, local centers and shelters, had a supply of clothing. At the high school she led a campaign to raise funds for a Junior Class trip to improve the mental health and well-being of her classmates after the recent loss of a classmate and the pandemic.

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Category: Individual who resides or is employed in Culver City

Dr. Jo Tavares

Dr. Jo Tavares is director of the Climate Change Education Center at West Los Angeles College. She has collaborated with staff to create an ambitious, wide-ranging program, including curricula that incorporate climate change into many and diverse subject areas. Through her efforts, she is increasing students’ understanding of climate change and environmental issues, particularly as they impact social equity and environmental justice.

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Category: President or Executive Director of a Nonprofit Serving the Culver City Area

Jane Borochoff

Jane Borochoff is the executive director of the Westside Regional Center, which provides services to people with developmental disabilities throughout their lifespan. She leads her 250-member staff in providing support to more than 10,000 individuals and their families in person-centered and culturally responsive ways. She actively prioritizes diversity, equity and inclusion. She was directly involved in assisting the Center’s 80 clients who lost everything in the Pacific Palisades fire.

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Category: Owner of a Culver City Business

Mr. Fawaz Istwani and Mr. Nicholas Conner

Mr. Fawaz Istwani and Mr. Nicholas Conner are co-owners of Jackson Market. They have created a safe and welcoming space for people of all faiths and backgrounds. Jackson Market provides a venue for educational and cultural events, documentary film screenings and teach-ins. They have advocated for human rights, including support for Palestinians, and have also demonstrated steadfast support for underserved communities.