** Diversity Workgroup Meeting Minutes**

**May 17, 2022**

**12:00pm-2:00 pm**

**Webex**

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| **Summary**• This was an important conversation about restorative justice within CBP throughout the diversity workgroup• All CBP partners need to take time to get to know each other better as individuals• To finish off our FY21 GIT Funding project (Scope 11) we will host a community forum to connect community organizations and CBP leadership. If interested in helping please email Gaby Roffe • The next GIT funding project is focused on connecting funders and the community-facing orgs (potential applicants) together to discuss needs and solutions, and help prepare the orgs to be able to apply• National Park Service and EPA have funds that are intended to benefit community partners/organizations. DWG members will work together to develop the micro grants program to ensure it’s accessible to the organizations that really need it• Diversity Workgroup might benefit from Bay Program 101 and a recap of the goals/mission |

**Welcome & Introductions**

* Objectives
	+ Listen and learn from diversity workgroup members on topics involving engagement
	+ Develop ideas for a community forum
* Everyone introduced themselves in the chat (see attendee list at the bottom of the meeting minutes)
* Thank you to everyone who attended. Additionally thank you to Ava Stone for facilitating and to Amy Goldfischer, Katlyn Fuentes and Colleen Norton for providing meeting support!

**DWG Engagement/Participation**

* Addressing Critical Issues & Clarity
	+ We’re looking forward to having a solution and action-based conversation.
	+ It’s not enough to adopt DEIJ policies, but we need to be truly committed to changing systems
	+ There is a desire to address critical issues and understand how community members feel and are experiences. It seems there is a conflict between wanting to get better acquainted with each other but also the fact that you are volunteering your time.
	+ People need to be able to feel safe to speak their truth because there is a desire for you all to learn from each other

We’re in perpetual learning mode. If we aren’t taking the right approaches in our work, that needs to be pointed out and work together to find the solutions that we can affect (even if small chunks). I think we’re all here because we want to make a difference.

* + We may all need to have awareness of the mission statement for the organization as a guide to what actions one feels able to pursue. with that said what is the mission as stated in the org documents.
	+ The CBP needs to be clear about whether they want to model DEIJ so people can make an informed decision about staying in the CBP
	+ Not all of us have a high level of influence and we are all working really hard within our capacities. We also need to consider the purpose of this workgroup and what we can really do with this workgroup. We all come from different circumstances and all want our voices heard. Regardless of background we should all have equal respect and space to be heard, or maybe not equal but more space for those that were traditionally excluded.
	+ People can be too timid to discuss or ask questions about topics that are uncomfortable or that they don’t know much about. By being timid we won’t get anywhere. We need to be more vocal and get comfortable with being uncomfortable
	+ There is a lot of need for trust building across people that might not be similar or share background is necessary to engage more deeply in this work.
* CBP Actions and Solutions
	+ Thinking about what’s important going forward, NPS and EPA are looking to stand up a new microgrant program within the NPS Gateways program and the EPA leadership has matched this. Total of 150K to work with Diversity and Stewardship workgroup to cocreate what this microgrant program will be.
	+ The intention is to address disparities in equity. Very early in its thinking but excited to leverage the NPS money to get EPA at the table. We want to cocreate this with stewardship and make sure that these dollars are capacity building seed dollars. This is just an example of something that we have worked to bring forward- it will take time to launch.
	+ Intention is to empower the diversity workgroup to design the microgrant.
	+ The reason we felt this money would be impactful is because of the Scope 11 project which found that organizations really need funding from the bay program. Scope 11 was the needs assessment- this is our first idea for addressing the needs. Now we need help on how to actually get the money to you. Hopefully will not be more of the same because we will create it with the needs in mind
* Feedback on Microgrants Program
	+ Communities that are doing this work that are struggling with funds don’t necessarily need a competitive grant process. People on the ground do not have the time to apply to these grant processes.
	+ Can we come up with a grant mentor program
	+ There are members of the Diversity workgroup that can help bring that expertise and remove barriers from the grant process. Providing grant writing and technical support would be great
	+ I wanted to recognize that its great that we are working on getting funding to communities. Historically, we just try to fix the problem without engaging with communities first to see what they need and the best approach to getting it to them. The intention is great, but the work hasn’t been done with the targeted communities to learn how to best get the money into their hands. Don’t try to fix it with a checklist, but put in the time to talk to the communities.
	+ There needs to be dedicated coaching for smaller community organizations so that not only can they access minigrant but prepare themselves to go on to larger grants.
	+ In cocreating/designing this microgrant, is there the potential to remove barriers to grant applications? I.E. not make the grant application process so time consuming and difficult
	+ If the microgrants are competitive, there certainly are "rules" that have to be followed. However, we should entertain workshops prior to the announcement going out
	+ PA has been looking at grant equity, and several state agencies got together and surveyed communities about our various grants... now the state is working through grant equity principles. It's not an immediate solution, but trying to work through some of those barriers at a large scale
	+ We have focused on equity in environmental contracts. Work with some small orgs to facilitate the first ever minority owned contract. And since then I have facilitated 9 more. Annapolis decided to launch a program dedicated to this and be even more strategic about putting bids out for minority owned contracts. Look at City of Annapolis Environmental Commission for more advice. Replant Anne Arundel and Replant Annapolis are the names of the two funding programs
	+ The EPA Environmental Justice small grant program has a good model for building capacity in organizations to be able to apply for those grants and other grants in the future.
	+ I am very new to this conversation and space but I am wondering if there is funding available/built in to pay/compensate community organizations and leaders who offer their time, energy and insight on ways to improve the grant application process...further, if there are community listening session or discussion groups - do community members get paid to participate? is that built into GIT funding projects (feel free to ignore if this is not relevant)
	+ HUD CDBG is a grant program that we should be looking at. On the topic of EPA EJ small grants- they are still a lot of work and then its small amounts of money that wont help much in an EJ impacted community. There are lots of small orgs that you can get small grants from (501c3) but there is a lot of bureaucracy around it. We don’t need that for accountability.
	+ Speaking to federal funders about barriers and possible changes is a component of our next GIT funding project starting next month!
	+ There are multiple categories of organizations that do environmental work. Please separate the focus based on the category of organizations - community based organizations, faith based organizations, small environmentally related businesses, small disadvantaged businesses (Small, Women, "Minority", etc.) local government/citizen commissions and boards, etc
	+ Look into HUD CDBG program – most communities know about it. How do they operate? $20k isn’t a lot in an EJ community with a lot of issues. We should talk to HUD. Some people know about EPA EJ small grants. People end up having to connect with 501c3s to apply for grants as fiduciary and end up having to pay them back & deal with bureaucracy. Really need to eliminate need to have a 501c3.
	+ Use octo quickbase to issue the funding it makes it easier

 **“Cultivating and Strengthening Relationships with Underrepresented Stakeholders” (GIT Funding Scope 11)**

* Recap & updates (see slides posted online)
	+ Goal of project to understand needs, barriers and priorities of organizations led by and serving underrepresented and underserved communities of color
* Community forum ideas (Mentimeter)
* Discussion
	+ Trust
		- How do you create a space where people are heard and valued? How to build new systems. How to get to where leadership understands commitment & not wasting people’s time or organizations’ time
		- Resilience planning has not yet reached impacted/vulnerable groups which leads to frustration. Even if we had a clearing house for these things 🡪 need problem resolution 🡪 build more trust.
		- When offering facts to a leadership team and having things land with them messages tend to be shorter and easier to digest but not diluted
		- That trust has not been established right now despite efforts made. The bottom line is to create environment where we build a new system that has DEIJ values embedded into it and not wasting people’s times etc.

**Attendees:**

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| Briana Yancy; US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) | Monserrat Pizarro; Chesapeake Conservancy |
| Wendy O'Sullivan; National Park Service Chesapeake | Erin Sullivan; US EPA |
| Ava Stone; CADR U.S. Department of the Interior | Rico Newman; Maryland Commission on Indian Affairs |
| Katlyn Fuentes; Chesapeake Research Consortium (CRC) | Emily Hendrickson; PA DCNR |
| Amy Goldfischer; CRC | James Brunswick; DNREC |
| Britt Slattery; NPS Chesapeake | BeKura W. Shabazz; First Alliance Consulting Firm/ Virginia Environmental Justice Collaborative |
| Kalaia Tripeaux; PA DCNR | Daphne Pee; Citizen Advisory Committee |
| Bo Williams; US EPA | Randy K. Rowel; Chesapeake Research Consortium |
| Colleen Norton; NPS Chesapeake | Avery Lavoie; US EPA |
| Allison Ng; US Environmental Protection Agency | Clare Sevcik; DNREC |
| Trystan Sill; MD Department of Natural Resources | Lauren Taneyhill; NOAA |
| Gabrielle Roffe; Chesapeake Conservancy | Brittany Hall; NPS Chesapeake |
| Ola-Imani Davis; Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay | Randy K. Rowel; CRC |
| Brittany Hall; NPS Chesapeake | Kesha Braunskill; Delaware Forest Service |
| Kristin Reilly; Choose Clean Water Coalition | Pamela Bingham; CEEJH |
| Carmera Thomas; The Conservation Fund & Greater Baltimore Wilderness Coalition | Madeline Lambrix; US EPA |
| Tuana Philips; US EPA | Julie Mawhorter; US Forest Service |
| Mariah Davis; Choose Clean Water Coalition |  |

**Mentimeter Responses**

Question: How did the issues raised in the email resonate with you?

Answers:

Felt it was important messages that needed a broad platform

I really respected the bravery and truth

It made me feel as though there is a lot of capacity within the workgroup that may not be being accessed or shared or even know of. And that we should explore these alignments more.

Things we have been hearing for a long time - need to be addressed - accountability

Good Trouble!

Question back: is there an opportunity to address the critical issues and understand how community members feel and are experiencing?

I would like more clarification about the audience and how we can together make an impact within our capacity as a workgroup

I understood the frustration and felt like I wanted to help make a change but I don't know what I can do.

Question: What have been your thoughts since the email?

Answers:

It has potential to be a turning point

I often see my place in this group to listen to others experiences, but I certainly don't want my silence to indicate support for the status quo. Trying to figure out how to support from a place without decision-making power

Lot of others agreed and understood the concerns

Opportunity for a dynamic shift in how the Diversity WG operates and what it focuses on.

We've talked about the DWG members infiltrating the rest of the CBP to make change - is this the time?

How can the DWG pull out and address the longstanding frustrations.

Wonder if CAC is holding similar discussion?

We need to shift from paper planning to active doing.

Question: What needs to happen to solve this? What is the right thing to do?

Answers:

Focus

Set parameters

Question: Are you interested in additional conversation on this topic & DWG participation?

Yes/Maybe

Kesha Braunskill

Randy Rowel

Wendy O'Sullivan

Allison Ng

Avery Lavoie

Brittany Hall

Trystan Sill

Gabrielle Roffe

Emily Hendrickson (I vote Yes!)

Monserrat Pizarro

James Brunswick

No: (none)

Question: Would you like to be a part of the development of the microgrants?

Answers:

Yes:

Gabrielle Roffe

Allison Ng

Brittany Hall

Monserrat Pizarro

Carmera Thomas

Randy Rowel

Maybe: (none)

No: (none)