



## I. Introduction

The Chesapeake Bay watershed is home to diverse communities with rich variation in culture, demographics and perspectives. Despite this diversity, federal, state, and non-profit environmental organizations have not adequately considered diversity, equity and inclusion in the work to restore the Bay, leading to environmental justice disparities in the implementation of conservation and restoration programs. As such, the Chesapeake Bay Program’s (CBP) Diversity Workgroup was formed in 2014 and tasked with increasing the diversity of people providing input and making decisions related to watershed conservation and restoration. The Diversity Workgroup also leads efforts to intentionally incorporate equity, inclusion and justice in addition to diversity—known collectively as diversity, equity, inclusion and justice (DEIJ)—into the implementation of the *Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement*. It is only by applying a DEIJ lens to all conservation and restoration activities and decisions that we will achieve healthy lands, local streams and a vibrant Chesapeake Bay that is shared by all people.

## II. Goal, Outcome and Baseline

This management strategy identifies approaches for achieving the following goal and outcome:



### **Citizen Stewardship Goal**

Increase the number and the diversity of local citizen stewards and local governments that actively support and carry out the conservation and restoration activities that achieve healthy local streams, rivers and a vibrant Chesapeake Bay.

### **Diversity Outcome**

Identify stakeholder groups that are not currently represented in the leadership, decision making and implementation of conservation and restoration activities, and create meaningful opportunities and programs to recruit and engage them in the partnership's efforts.

In our work to achieve the diversity outcome, we use the following definitions of diversity, equity, inclusion, justice, social justice and environmental justice from the CBP DEI Strategy. Unless otherwise noted, they are adapted from or developed by the D5 Coalition<sup>1</sup>:

- *Diversity: The demographic mix of a specific collection of people, taking into account elements of human difference. For example: racial and ethnic groups, income, spectrum of built environment settings (rural to urban), faith communities, LGBTQ+ populations, people with disabilities, gender, relationship to the natural environment.*
- *Equity: Improving equity is to promote justice, impartiality and fairness within the procedures, processes, and distribution of resources by institutions or systems. Tackling equity issues requires an understanding of the underlying or root causes of disparities within our society.*
- *Inclusion: Refers to the degree to which diverse individuals are able to participate fully in the decision-making processes within an organization or group. While a truly "inclusive" group is necessarily diverse, a "diverse" group may or may not be "inclusive."*
- *Justice – the quality of being just, impartial, or fair.*<sup>2</sup>
- *Social Justice—equal access to wealth, opportunities, and privileges within a society.*<sup>3</sup> *This may mean addressing the present-day impacts of past inequities in order to achieve equity going forward.*
- *Environmental Justice—the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations and policies, and refers to "decisions [that] support sustainable communities where people can interact with confidence that their environment is safe, nurturing, and productive..."*<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. D5 Coalition. 2014. Retrieved from: <https://www.d5coalition.org/about/dei/>.

<sup>2</sup> Merriam-Webster: <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/justice>

<sup>3</sup> Pachamama Alliance: <https://www.pachamama.org/social-justice/what-is-social-justice>

<sup>4</sup> Bunyan Bryant, PhD., Professor Emeritus, former Director of the Environmental Advocacy Program at University of Michigan School for Environment and Sustainability.

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## Baseline and Current Condition

In 2016, a diversity survey was distributed to the CBP partnership, which includes members and interested parties of Goal Implementation Teams (GITs), workgroups, the Management Board, the Principals' Staff Committee and the three Advisory Committees. The survey found that 13.7% of respondents identified as people of color. Among those who identified as CBP leadership, 9.1% identified as people of color. In 2018, the CBP set a target to increase the percentage of people of color in the partnership to 25%, with 15% in leadership, by 2025. The diversity survey was repeated in 2019 and showed a statistically insignificant increase to 14.6% people of color participating in the CBP partnership, with 10.3% in leadership. More information on the diversity survey results can be found on the [Chesapeake Progress](#) website.

The results of the diversity surveys are congruent with findings from the Green 2.0 report, "The State of Diversity in Environmental Organizations: Mainstream NGOs, Foundations & Government Agencies."<sup>5</sup> This 2014 report found that, despite increasing racial diversity in the U.S., the racial and ethnic composition in environmental organizations and agencies has not broken the 12% to 16% "green ceiling" that has been in place for many years. All in all, the current composition of the CBP partnership does not reflect the diversity of our population in the watershed. Thirty-five percent of the population in the watershed identifies as people of color.

A separate survey, conducted in 2019 by a DEIJ consultant, was distributed to members of the CBP as part of a DEIJ readiness assessment of the CBP. This survey found 88-97% of respondents indicated that DEIJ practices will benefit CBP on the following measures: ability to better serve the public; broaden our partnerships; advance our mission; encourage diversity, equity and inclusion in decision-making; expand our supporters; and improve hiring and retention of staff. However, most respondents did not believe the partnership is actively demonstrating a commitment to DEIJ.

In meeting the diversity outcome and promoting DEIJ in all aspects of CBP's work, the Diversity Workgroup has identified the following key challenges:

### **Inadequate Communication and Outreach**

Information about Chesapeake Bay restoration efforts is often not exchanged in a way that makes it relevant to underrepresented groups. For example, the CBP uses highly technical and/or acronym-filled language in meetings and conversations about Bay restoration. Typical communications and media channels are insular and fail to bring opportunities directly to underrepresented communities. In addition, few outreach materials are created in languages other than English. These communication methods are not inclusive and make it difficult for the non-engaged to understand restoration strategies and participate meaningfully in the process.

Furthermore, state and local governments often provide public participation opportunities in ways that are not designed to seek input from working families. Public meetings are often held during the workday, and in places without childcare and/or public transit access. These meetings are often advertised on government websites or in newsletters that have virtually no reach outside of people already participating in the process. Because of these challenges, some communities might not be

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<sup>5</sup> Green 2.0: The Challenge <https://www.diversegreen.org/the-challenge/>

aware of, and therefore, fully appreciate their stake in Bay restoration and the benefits that could be derived from improved water quality and habitat.

### **Employment and Professional Engagement**

A lack of diversity in staff and leadership roles limits the ability of diverse groups to influence decisions. Because federal and state environmental and natural resource agencies are generally not diverse, the various workgroups, teams and committees of the CBP reflect this reality. Subsequently, it is important that CBP partners take steps towards promoting inclusive recruitment, hiring and retention practices to achieve lasting diversity goals.

Studies of current hiring practices among environmental organizations demonstrate that positions are often filled internally. In some cases, government agencies are only able to hire from within the agency and therefore the ability to diversify the workforce is limited. These types of hiring practices perpetuate the current level of diversity at these organizations. Recruitment strategies must be intentionally altered in order to reach a broader and more diverse audience.

In addition to insular recruiting practices, unconscious bias, alienation and discrimination hamper the recruitment and retention of talented people of color. In 2019, Green 2.0 released the report “Leaking Talent: How People of Color are Pushed Out of Environmental Organizations.”<sup>6</sup> They found that people of color are less likely to stay than whites due to lower levels of perceived fairness around development, evaluation and promotion practices. Including DEIJ commitments in the organization’s mission, vision, values and strategic planning process as well as transparency in the promotion process were all positively related with perceived fairness and greater intent to stay.

Another challenge is low pay in the environmental field. Internships, entry level positions, and other opportunities are often low paid or not paid at all. This is a significant barrier for people who do not have the additional means or support to accept those positions due to their low pay.

### **Lack of Community-Based Organization Capacity**

Smaller community-based groups representing diverse communities typically lack the capacity and infrastructure to take advantage of or fully participate in CBP protection and restoration activities. Many have small budgets and are run completely by volunteers. After several years of working to achieve the diversity outcome, the Diversity Workgroup has found it difficult for stakeholders who are not currently involved to have meaningful engagement, as many of them serve in a volunteer capacity and cannot participate in the CBP when they are not compensated for their time or travel.

### **Environmental Justice Disparities in Bay Restoration**

Environmental justice is the concept that all people deserve access to a clean, healthy and safe environment. Environmental racism and discrimination have led to disproportionate amounts of environmental harm in communities of color as well as low income communities. Fewer restoration and conservation projects occur in diverse communities. A study in Maryland, for example, found disparities in state watershed restoration funding, indicating that communities of color and environmental justice areas have received fewer restoration resources or projects for their

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<sup>6</sup> Green 2.0 Leaking Talent <https://www.diversegreen.org/leaking-talent/>



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communities.<sup>7</sup> In addition, there is ample evidence in the scientific literature that shows urban tree canopy cover is significantly lower in low-income communities<sup>8</sup>.

One approach to addressing environmental injustices is through the meaningful involvement of all people in decision-making and implementation. Communities of color and other underrepresented communities have historically been excluded from decision-making that directly affects their communities. Thus, it is important to ensure communities' needs and input are heard and incorporated into decision-making at all levels. Community-based participatory research, continuum for engagement and other models may serve as useful resources for intentional outreach.

It is also important to address other challenges that lead to environmental justice disparities. Underrepresented groups and communities usually do not get timely information on grant funding opportunities, or they lack the capacity to apply for funding opportunities. We must work to tackle such barriers in order to increase participation of underrepresented stakeholder groups in the decision-making and implementation of conservation and restoration activities.

### **Organizational Culture**

There is a need to advance DEIJ internally by building a common understanding of and expanded capacity for DEIJ. For instance, there is a perceived lack of control over addressing the low diversity in staff positions within the CBP. Work is needed to address this belief as well as promote tools and strategies for inclusive hiring practices. Leadership could take steps to be more proactive and intentional in this area.

Another element of organizational culture is the lack of space for underrepresented and community-based organizations within the CBP partnership structure. As an example, these parties are often unable to participate during the hours in which Bay Program meetings are typically held. The current environment is not set-up to be inclusive of community groups and grassroots organizations, who represent important perspectives that must be incorporated.

## **III. Participating Partners**

The below agencies and organizations have participated in the development of this strategy.

### **State and Federal Agencies:**

- State of Delaware
- District of Columbia
- State of Maryland
- Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
- Commonwealth of Virginia
- Chesapeake Bay Commission
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

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<sup>7</sup> Environmental *Justice* Disparities in Maryland's Watershed Restoration Programs," Environmental Science and Policy Journal, October 2014

<sup>8</sup> *The Legacy Effect: Understanding How Segregation and Environmental Injustice Unfold over Time in Baltimore* by Grove and co-authors, 2018: [https://www.fs.fed.us/nrs/pubs/jrnl/2017/nrs\\_2017\\_grove\\_001.pdf](https://www.fs.fed.us/nrs/pubs/jrnl/2017/nrs_2017_grove_001.pdf)

- National Park Service
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- U.S. Forest Service
- National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

**Non-Profits, Nongovernmental Organizations, Universities and CBP Committees:**

- Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay
- Alliance for Aquatic Resource Monitoring (ALLARM)
- Anne Arundel County Watershed Stewards Academy
- Baltimore National Aquarium
- Baltimore Green Space
- Bowie State University
- Chesapeake Bay Foundation
- Chesapeake Bay Trust
- Chesapeake Conservancy
- Chesapeake Research Consortium (CRC)
- Choose Clean Water Coalition
- Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC)
- ecoLatinos
- Local Government Advisory Committee (LGAC)
- Maryland Commission on Indian Affairs
- Southeast Rural Community Assistance Project, Inc. (SERCAP)
- University of Maryland School of Public Health
- Virginia State University

## Local Engagement

The Diversity Workgroup includes membership and interested parties who represent local nonprofit, environmental justice and grassroots organizations. The perspectives and involvement of such groups has been instrumental in better understanding what tools and resources are needed to advance DEIJ in the work to protect and restore local waters and the Bay. Looking ahead, the workgroup will continue to build relationships with such groups. The workgroup will lead efforts within the CBP to prioritize developing long-term relationships with organizations run by and primarily serving communities of color and other underrepresented communities (in addition to, and distinct from organizations that engage communities of color and other underrepresented communities but are not led by representatives of these communities).

Among the workgroup's efforts to increase diversity in the environmental field, another key audience for engagement includes students and professionals of color, in addition to students and professionals from other underrepresented communities. To reach this audience, the workgroup will continue to build relationships with Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs) and community colleges. The workgroup will specifically target Career Centers and certain departments, as well as sororities, fraternities, professional associations and clubs (e.g., Minorities in Agriculture Natural Resources and Related Sciences or MANRRS) that attract and support students of color as well as students from other underrepresented groups. Additionally, the workgroup will continue to work with CRC to develop and improve Chesapeake-Student Recruitment, Early Advisement, and Mentoring (C-StREAM), a fellowship program for college students. The workgroup will also continue to

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work with and support the Environmental Literacy workgroup to promote systemic environmental education and equity in the distribution of environmental education resources and opportunities.

## **IV. Factors Influencing Success**

The Diversity Workgroup has determined the following factors have the greatest influence on our ability to meet the diversity outcome:

### **1. Adequate, Sustained and Equitable Funding**

Programs that exist to create entry ways into the environmental field, such as the Chesapeake-StREAM internship program, DC's Green Zone Environmental Program and Living Classrooms' workforce development programs, require sustained funding. With more funding, these programs can be also replicated, expanded, and made more accessible.

In addition, funding is not always allocated equitably. Many grant programs awarding funding to nonprofits for watershed restoration activities use complicated grant application processes that are typically beyond the skills of local community groups. The small size or lack of 501©3 status prevents grassroots and community organizations from receiving grants and other opportunities for capacity building. Grant-making organizations are beginning to incorporate more equitable practices by changing proposal requirements and providing capacity-building grants that do not require funding matches, for instance. To address current disparities in funding, grant-making organizations should promote non-discriminatory policies among applicant organizations, encourage restoration investments in environmental justice communities and projects that align with community-identified needs, as well as encourage capacity building investments and partnerships with underrepresented communities.

### **2. Employment: Inclusive Hiring, Recruitment and Retention Practices**

To successfully meet our DEIJ goals, we need to undertake intentional and inclusive outreach approaches to find qualified diverse individuals from communities and academic institutions. This outreach must include a targeted recruiting effort in historically black colleges and universities, community colleges, Hispanic serving institutions and other educational institutions, professional associations and groups. Part of this work includes attending job fairs at HBCUs and other institutions to connect with students and young professionals and share internship and employment opportunities. The goal is to create a pipeline or bridge of prepared recent graduates entering full-time staff and leadership positions in Chesapeake Bay organizations.

The Diversity Workgroup is a small component of the larger Chesapeake Bay community. Therefore, trainings related to DEIJ and hiring, recruitment and retention must be promoted widely. We must work to share best practices and provide or promote webinars, trainings and resources related to hiring, recruitment and retention.

### **3. Advance DEIJ in All Aspects of Organizational Culture and Work**

It is important to build organizational cultures that welcome and celebrate diversity. Reports by Green 2.0 and others indicate that the environmental field remains highly exclusive. Further, there is often a race-silent, gender-silent culture in many organizations where diversity issues are not

spoken or intentionally addressed. Everybody, and especially leadership, needs to be a part of the goal to create an inclusive organizational culture.

A Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Strategy for the Chesapeake Bay Program was completed in the spring of 2020. It includes recommendations that will be key to advancing DEI within the CBP. Recommendations include: updating governance documents and management strategies to include language that reflects DEI priorities; building a common understanding of and expanded capacity for DEI; institutionalizing efforts to advance DEI internally; and developing and distributing guidance on including DEI and in grant targets and evaluations, communications, and tracking and reporting. The Diversity Workgroup will serve lead and supporting roles in the implementation of these recommendations that will help to advance DEI in all aspects of CBP organizational culture and work.

#### **4. Develop and Maintain Partnerships**

To reach our diversity goals, we need to effectively build relationships with communities of color, low income communities and other underrepresented groups. This includes prioritizing long-term relationships with organizations run by and primarily serving communities of color and other underrepresented communities (in addition to, and distinct from organizations that engage communities of color and other underrepresented communities but are not led by representatives of these communities.) Further, we need to incorporate input from leaders of such communities, organizations and groups into decision-making and implementation efforts.

We need to connect our work with the history, culture and traditions of underrepresented groups, as well as issues that are faced locally by such groups. In addition, we need to expand efforts to build capacity of underrepresented organizations. Underrepresented organizations and grassroots groups usually do not get timely information on grant funding opportunities, or they lack the capacity to apply for funding opportunities.

Within the CBP, DEI cannot live solely in the Diversity Workgroup. DEI needs to be an element in the various GITs, workgroups and leadership teams. The Diversity Workgroup must continue to collaborate with other GITs and workgroups to increase DEI in all efforts to meet outcomes of the *Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement*.

#### **5. Account for Impacts from External Factors**

Many underserved communities are in watershed areas that are subject to sea level rise, flooding and other impacts from climate change. Studies have shown that some diverse communities face an increased vulnerability because of the compounded stresses of ongoing heat, poor air quality, flooding and mental health stress.<sup>9</sup> Other policy, public health and economic factors must be considered. For example, the COVID-19 coronavirus pandemic has disproportionately affected African American and other vulnerable populations. In Chicago, it was estimated in spring of 2020 that about 70 percent of people who died from COVID-19 were black, even though the city's population is about 30 percent black<sup>10</sup>. The same was found to be the case in D.C., where African Americans

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<sup>9</sup> See 2014 National Climate Assessment, available at <http://nca2014.globalchange.gov>.

<sup>10</sup> See NPR report: <https://www.npr.org/sections/coronavirus-live-updates/2020/04/06/828303894/in-chicago-covid-19-is-hitting-the-black-community-hard>



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make up about 45% of residents. As of April 23, 2020, 112 or 81% of the 139 lives lost in the District to COVID-19 were African American<sup>11</sup>.

## V. Current Efforts and Gaps

The Diversity Workgroup has identified the following efforts that are addressing the factors identified in the previous section. The workgroup has also identified the following gaps that need to be addressed in order to achieve the Diversity Outcome:

### Funding and Promoting of Career Pathway Programs

The Diversity Workgroup has played a supportive role in the development of internship and employment programs that provide entry pathways for underrepresented individuals to enter the conservation and restoration field. Workgroup members, within their own organizations, have spearheaded the creation of such programs by identifying and leveraging funding opportunities.

The Chesapeake Research Consortium (CRC), for instance, created C-StREAM summer internship program for undergraduate students who identify as a person of color and/or first-generation student. The CRC works with successful applicants to match them with meaningful internships and mentors at universities and government agencies (e.g. EPA, NOAA) within the Chesapeake watershed. Other organizations and agencies, including the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation as well as the Chesapeake Conservancy in collaboration with the National Park Service, have created summer internship positions to bring greater diversity to the environmental field.

### Promoting Equitable Grant Processes

Efforts must also be made to apply an equitable lens to grants and other funding opportunities. Some organizations within the CBP partnership or the larger Chesapeake Bay community have begun adjusting their guidelines and grant processes to address these inequities. For example, in their competitive grant opportunities issued using Chesapeake Bay Implementation Grant (CBIG) funding, the New York Department of Environmental Conservation added language to prioritize environmental justice projects. Proposed projects that are located in an environmental justice community, or will directly benefit an environmental justice community, are eligible for five priority points in the project scoring. The District of Columbia has implemented a similar guideline by awarding priority points to projects proposed in the Anacostia region.

The Chesapeake Bay Trust and other organizations that make up the Chesapeake Bay Funders network have also done a lot to incorporate DEIJ into their grant programs. Their report, “DEIJ in Action: A Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Justice Guide for the Chesapeake Bay Watershed<sup>12</sup>,” was released in 2019 and is an excellent resource. Chapter 5 includes recommendations on how to advance DEIJ outcomes through grantmaking.

### Gaps

We need to look holistically at existing pathway/bridge programs to fully evaluate the funding needs for such programs and identify opportunities including existing or future matching dollars. Further,

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<sup>11</sup>See Georgetown University report: <https://www.georgetown.edu/news/covid-19-and-dc-black-communities-challenges-and-opportunities/>

<sup>12</sup> DEIJ in Action Guide: [https://cbtrust.org/wp-content/uploads/CB-Watershed-DEIJ-Guide\\_May-2019.pdf](https://cbtrust.org/wp-content/uploads/CB-Watershed-DEIJ-Guide_May-2019.pdf)

there is more work to be done to make grant processes and funding equitable. The CBP partnership would benefit from additional guidelines, best practices and examples on how to do this.

### **Developing Intentional Employment Practices**

Eliminating bias and promoting inclusiveness in recruitment, hiring, and retention practices is critical to increasing diversity in organizations and agencies. Within the Chesapeake Bay partnership, some organizations have made changes to their recruitment and hiring practices to promote greater inclusiveness. In their job descriptions, for instance, the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay encourages applicants that meet 75% of the qualifications to apply. The Choose Clean Water Coalition has also taken a lead role in promoting equitable hiring practices. In 2018, the organization came out with a “Diversity Toolkit<sup>13</sup>” with building principles for including DEIJ in organizations. There is a section in the document devoted to hiring with information on how to include diversity language in job descriptions, promote equity in job postings and actively recruit diverse candidates.

In addition to changing internal practices, organizations can broaden their recruitment networks by engaging with HBCUs, MSIs, and other groups and associations that attract and support underrepresented individuals. Between March 2019 to December 2019, members of the Diversity Workgroup attended a total of eight job fairs and career events at HBCUs or other MSIs. In addition, the EPA CBP Office has established Memorandum of Understandings (MOUs) with Bowie State University and Virginia State University. These MOUs include goals to strengthen staff and student connection to Chesapeake Bay through interaction with CBP partners or hands on learning experiences. With funding from the state of Maryland and coordination from the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay, students and faculty members from Bowie State University were able to attend the 2018 and 2019 Chesapeake Watershed Forums.

### **Gaps**

There are many gaps that remain in our work. We need to further promote best practices and resources for recruitment, hiring, and retention. We need to continue building relationships with HBCUs, MSIs and community colleges. We should specifically target career centers and certain departments, in addition to sororities, fraternities, clubs, and professional associations that attract and support students of color as well as students from other underrepresented communities. We also need to examine the federal government’s hiring authorities to expand who may qualify for non-competitive service. Further, we need to leverage existing formal partnerships and connections with HBCUs and other colleges. The EPA has MOUs with Bowie State and Virginia State Universities; NOAA, NPS and other agencies/organizations have existing relationships with other schools.

### **Advancing DEIJ in All Aspects of Organizational Culture and Work**

DEIJ is becoming a prevalent discussion point in meetings and initiatives throughout the partnership and the larger Chesapeake Bay watershed community. In addition, some staff and partners have received DEIJ-related training. Still, members of the Diversity Workgroup in November 2019 identified organizational culture as a major barrier to successfully integrating DEIJ within their own organizations as well as within the CBP structure. Through a Goal Implementation Team funding opportunity, the

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<sup>13</sup> Choose Clean Water Coalition Diversity Toolkit:  
<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5942af072994ca6253840fc1/t/5981df0b3a0411e53c07a8ad/1501683468728/CCWC.DiversityToolkit.pdf>

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workgroup solicited Skeo Solutions, a DEIJ consultant, to complete a DEIJ readiness assessment of the CBP. In 2018-2019, Skeo conducted interviews with CBP teams and leadership, distributed a DEIJ readiness survey, organized two focus groups and reviewed key CBP policy documents. Their assessment found that, while CBP has established a strong foundation, there is much work yet to do to advance DEIJ within CBP.

### **Gaps**

There is much work yet to be done to fully integrate DEIJ in all aspects of organizational culture and work. Cultural humility and unconscious bias trainings are needed for all staff and leadership to develop a shared understanding of DEIJ and foster an inclusive culture. In addition, with input from the Diversity Workgroup, in 2020 the contractor Skeo Solutions developed a DEIJ Strategy based on their DEIJ readiness assessment of the CBP. This strategy provides a visionary framework for the partnership to follow. It includes recommendations that address many gaps within CBP's current authorizing environment, internal efforts, as well as mission-related work.

### **Forming Partnerships with Underrepresented Stakeholder Groups**

Members of the Diversity Workgroup have and will continue to attend conferences such as the Taking Nature Black, Naturally Latinos and the annual University of Maryland Environmental Justice Symposium. These conferences offer an excellent opportunity to connect with people of color and environmental justice leaders with whom we have not previously connected. There are other ongoing efforts to engage with underrepresented communities. For example, a project led by the Habitat GIT of the CBP, in collaboration with the Diversity Workgroup, Climate Resiliency Workgroup, and Local Leadership Workgroup, will do targeted local outreach in underrepresented communities that are especially vulnerable to climate change impacts. The project team will work with closely community leaders to find green infrastructure solutions that meet community needs and provide habitat and climate resiliency benefits.

Individual organizations within the partnership have implemented additional initiatives to engage with underrepresented stakeholder groups. The Choose Clean Water Coalition and Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay, for instance, have both offered scholarships for individuals who identify as a person of color to attend their respective annual conferences. The National Park Service has also taken an initiative to build intentional relationships with Latinx groups.

### **Forming Partnerships with other GITs, Workgroups and Teams of the CBP**

The Diversity Workgroup has worked with several teams and workgroups of the CBP. For example, the workgroup has worked with the Forestry Workgroup to promote equity and environmental justice in efforts to increase tree canopy cover in the watershed. The workgroup has worked with the Toxic Contaminants Workgroup and the CBP Communications Team to develop a Fish Consumption Advisory infographic and guide. The workgroup has also supported the Environmental Literacy and Public Access Workgroups in their efforts to ensure environmental education and public access for all communities in the watershed.

The Diversity Workgroup's EJ Screen Chesapeake tool has also proven to be a useful geospatial tool in which users can overlay watershed restoration layers (e.g., restoration potential, location of public access sites) with environmental justice demographic and environmental data. The Chesapeake

Conservancy, as part of a cooperative agreement with the EPA, is working on assessing the Geographic Information System (GIS) needs across the partnership. The Diversity Workgroup recently spoke to them about our GIS needs and the importance of integrating environmental justice layers with priority restoration and conservation layers identified by other CBP groups.

### **Gaps**

We need to develop a better understanding of environmental justice communities and underrepresented organizations. Once we develop a better understanding of these stakeholder groups, we need to meet with their leaders and explore meaningful ways to engage them in the partnership's efforts. The CBP needs to prioritize long-term relationships with communities of color and underrepresented groups. We need to better connect leaders of underrepresented stakeholder groups to other teams and workgroups of the CBP. We need to explore options that increase accessibility and enable participation in other workgroups and teams. In addition, we need to continue working with the other CBP teams. DEIJ efforts cannot sit alone in the Diversity Workgroup; partnerships and collaboration with other CBP teams is key.

### **Accounting for External Factors**

Within the CBP partnership, there is increased awareness of the importance of external factors, and there seems to be a slow but real shift to better incorporate social science, public health, and climate change considerations across the board in CBP's work.

### **Gap**

There is a lot more we can do to account for external factors in our work to advance DEIJ, especially since many external factors (e.g. climate change, student debt, COVID-19) disproportionately affect underrepresented communities.

## **VI. Management Approaches**

The CBP's Diversity Workgroup will work to carry out the following actions and strategies to achieve the diversity outcome under the stewardship goal of the *Chesapeake Watershed Agreement*. Our four management approaches seek to address the factors affecting our ability to meet the goal and the gaps identified above.

We will work to develop, implement and track progress in addressing the four focus areas of our diversity management strategy which are:

1. Enhance communication and outreach with underrepresented stakeholders
2. Create and expand employment opportunities for underrepresented individuals and communities by strengthening connections to existing resources and creating new avenues for career building
3. Promote environmental justice through the meaningful involvement and fair treatment of all people, regardless of race, color, national origin or income, in the implementation of the *Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement*
4. Advance diversity, equity, inclusion and justice in all aspects of organizational culture and work

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## **1. Enhance Communication and Outreach**

Increasing involvement and engagement of underrepresented stakeholders in Bay restoration activities requires improved communication and outreach efforts. The purpose of this management approach is to develop and oversee implementation of specific management strategy actions to improve communication and outreach to a diverse set of stakeholders.

### **Key Actions for 2020-2021**

- Continue attending conferences like University of Maryland EJ Symposium, Taking Nature Black, Naturally Latinos, and events like Festival del Rio. Identify other conferences/events to attend and make new connections.
- Continue inviting guest speakers to in-person meetings to elevate local work and make connections with underrepresented individuals.
- Continue to send monthly workgroup newsletter with employment, professional development, and other opportunities and updates.
- Conduct preliminary research to develop a better understanding of EJ communities and currently underrepresented organizations in the CB Watershed. Reach out to and build relationships with leaders of underrepresented organizations who are not yet connected to the CBP partnership in some way.

## **2. Employment and professional engagement**

This management strategy focuses on finding ways to create and expand employment opportunities to underrepresented individuals and communities by providing a better connection to existing resources and by creating new avenues for career building.

### **Key Actions for 2020-2021**

- Work with the Management Board and others to compile a list of existing programs and positions that provide or can provide entry pathways and opportunities for underrepresented individuals to enter the environmental field. With a complete understanding of existing programs and gaps, assess next steps to bolster such opportunities and ensure sustained funding of programs.
- Inventory the job market to establish opportunities for careers in the environmental field and their potential growth and salaries.
- Aggregate, package, and disseminate inclusive practices and resources for recruitment, hiring, and retention.
- Explore ways to increase inclusion in the federal hiring process. E.g., examine the federal government's hiring authorities to expand who may qualify for non-competitive service positions.
- Establish relationships with HBCUs, MSIs and community colleges in the watershed, intentionally connecting with university/college career centers and science, agriculture, and additional departments, as well as sororities, fraternities, clubs, and professional associations that attract and support students of color as well as students from other underrepresented groups at such universities and colleges.
- Leverage formal agreements and partnerships (e.g. EPA MOUs with Bowie State and Virginia State Universities) to strengthen HBCU/MSI staff and student connection to the Chesapeake Bay.



- Continue attending job fairs and other career events to promote internship and employment opportunities within CBP organizations.
- Coordinate efforts to implement DEIJ considerations in the hiring of Chesapeake Bay entry-level positions (e.g. C-StREAM, Chesapeake Conservation Corps, Staffer positions), establishing a pool of diverse candidates for permanent positions within the partnership.

### 3. Promote Environmental Justice

The Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement contains a principle for environmental justice. The principles in the Watershed Agreement provide the overarching framework by which the Chesapeake Bay Program commits to operate. The principles encompass the partners' collective core values and are intended to provide guidance as the partners develop policy and take actions to achieve the *Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement's* goals and outcomes. The environmental justice principle is to “*promote Environmental Justice through the meaningful involvement and fair treatment of all people, regardless of race, color, national origin or income, in the implementation of this Agreement.*”

#### Key Actions for 2020-2021

- Work with the CBP leadership, GITs, workgroups, and other relevant parties to identify specific decision points and other milestones within the GIT workplans and processes supporting the development and implementation of the *Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement*, where communities of color, low income communities and other underrepresented groups can influence the implementation of the *Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement*.
- Following the adoption of the DEIJ statement, work with CBP leadership and other relevant parties to clarify language in authorizing CBP documents to reflect a priority on developing long-term relationships with organizations run by and primarily serving communities of color and other underrepresented communities (in addition to, and distinct from organizations that engage communities of color and other underrepresented communities but are not led by representatives of these communities).
- Explore the options and determine a process for a Community Advisory Board (or similar entity/group) – composed of compensated EJ leaders and representatives from organizations led by people of color and other underrepresented groups – that could serve as (1) a sounding board and resource for development and implementation of the *Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement*, including outcome workplans and grant-making and (2) a resource for identifying and developing leaders from communities of color, low income communities and other underrepresented groups to serve as representatives on groups throughout the Governance and Management Framework. Work with the Management Board and other relevant parties, in addition to leaders of the Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC), to assess options as well as the current role that CAC provides. Explore whether there is an opportunity to further CAC's DEIJ efforts and increase representation from the EJ community.
- Connect leaders of underrepresented stakeholder groups with other workgroups and teams of the CBP so they can participate as members or interested parties of such workgroups/teams.
- Identify and address barriers that prevent underrepresented groups from participating in the implementation of the *Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement*. E.g., evaluate funding, scholarship, or travel assistance opportunities for underrepresented stakeholders to enable increased participation.

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- Develop a better understanding of effects from external factors such as climate change, public health and economic inequity. By understanding the implications, we can then take steps to mitigate them.
  - Develop a better understanding of the economical and societal benefits of incorporating DEIJ considerations in restoration and conservation activities, and provide this information to funders and others involved in decision-making.

#### ***4. Advance DEIJ in All Aspects of Organizational Culture and Work***

There is a need to advance DEIJ by building a common understanding of and expanded capacity for DEIJ. This can be done through cultural humility and unconscious bias trainings for all staff and leadership. Steps to advance DEIJ in our work also include updating governance documents and strategies to include language that reflects DEIJ priorities; institutionalizing efforts to advance DEIJ internally; and developing and distributing guidance on including DEIJ and in grant targets and evaluations, communications, and tracking and reporting.

#### **Key Actions for 2020-2021**

- Develop grantmaking guidelines that promote non-discriminatory policies among applicant organizations, encourage grant-making organizations to prioritize DEIJ in their organizational practices and funding decisions, encourage restoration investments that align with community-identified needs and benefits and encourage capacity building investments and partnerships with organizations that are run by and primarily serve communities of color and other underrepresented communities. In such guidelines, ensure that efforts to track funding allocation maintain the distinction between organizations run by and primarily serving communities of color and other underrepresented communities versus community-based organizations that are not led by the community they serve or engage.
- Work with the Management Board to adopt a clear and succinct DEIJ statement that fully captures definitions for DEIJ and EJ and how each of these topics relates to and advances the mission of CBP.
- Following the adoption of the DEIJ statement, work with the Management Board, Enhance Partnering, Leadership and Management GIT, and other relevant parties to update the Governance and Management Framework for the CBP to include a) explicit diversity goals for each group in their “Leadership and Membership” sections, b) language describing the role and impact of DEIJ and EJ considerations in the “Process for Decision-Making” section, and c) mechanisms for raising and addressing DEIJ issues. Reflect a priority on developing long-term relationships with organizations run by and primarily serving communities of color and other underrepresented communities (in addition to and distinct from organizations that engage communities of color and other underrepresented communities but are not led by representatives of those communities).
- Following the adoption of the DEIJ statement, work with the Strategy Review System (SRS) Team to explore using the SRS process to incorporate this language into the Management Strategies of other outcomes.
- Prominently advertise, incentivize and recruit for the 2020 Building Cultural Competence trainings. Ensure participation from CBPO staff, Management Board and membership across all GITs and Advisory Committees.
- In a supportive setting, ask people of color and other underrepresented groups, who are currently involved in the CBP, what is working well for them in the current work environment

and what additional resources or supports are needed to increase equity and inclusion in the workplace, provide relevant professional development, and increase promotion and retention rates.

- Develop and broadly disseminate the tools CBP identifies and/or develops on DEIJ, racial equity and EJ issues.
- Partner with GITs, workgroups, and other teams of the CBP to advance DEIJ goals in the work of the other *Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement* outcomes.

## VII. Monitoring Progress

Accompanying this management strategy is our two-year (2020-2021) logic and action plan. This plan has been updated with actions that address the gaps in our current efforts. It includes information on how we will measure or observe to determine progress in filling identified gaps.

We will also monitor our progress through the diversity survey indicator. Based on the 2019 diversity survey, 14.6% people of color currently participate in the CBP partnership, with 10.3% in leadership. This survey is scheduled to be repeated in 2021. We will use the results to monitor our progress toward meeting our long-term target of 25% people of color participating in the partnership, with 15% in leadership, by 2025.

## VIII. Assessing Progress

In the next two years, the Diversity Workgroup will work to implement the actions in our 2020-2021 logic table and action plan. We will assess our progress at the end of our two-year period and discuss any newly identified challenges in our work to implement the planned actions.

## IX. Adaptively Manage

The Diversity Workgroup will meet at least four times a year to discuss and review progress on actions identified in the Diversity Management Strategy and two-year logic and action plan. At the end of the next two years, the team will determine whether any changes need to be made to the overall strategy, the diversity outcome, metrics or any of the planned actions.

## X. Biennial Logic and Action Plan

A biennial logic and action plan has been developed for this Management Strategy. It includes the following information:

- Key actions
- Timeline for the action
- Expected outcome
- Partners responsible for each action
- Estimated resources

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## List of Acronyms

**CBP**- Chesapeake Bay Program

**DEIJ**-Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Justice

**EJ**- Environmental Justice

**GIS**- Geographic Information System

**GIT**- Goal Implementation Team

**HBCU**- Historically Black Colleges and University

**MSI**- Minority Serving Institution