



Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Justice

Action Statement

Chesapeake Bay Program Principals' Staff Committee

The Chesapeake Bay watershed is home to diverse communities with rich variation in culture, demographics and perspectives. It is important to embrace this diversity and promote the meaningful involvement, treatment and inclusiveness of all people in the implementation of the *Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement*. In doing so, we will be better able to achieve healthy local streams and lands, as well as a vibrant Chesapeake Bay that is shared by all people throughout the watershed.

The Chesapeake Bay Program partners acknowledge that individually, each partner has established policies and programs with the goal of advancing environmental and public health protection for all. Through these programs, the seven Bay jurisdictions, Environmental Protection Agency, other federal agencies, the Chesapeake Bay Commission and partners are working to address and advance diversity and environmental justice issues. We also recognize that there is more we must do as a united partnership, and for this reason we explicitly and tangibly commit to diversity, equity, inclusion and environmental justice. Partners will continue to build on this work, sharing best practices, and with the acknowledgement that this work may indeed look different across the jurisdictions and space represented as a partnership, we will move forward together. Further, we recognize the importance of addressing racism and other forms of discrimination in our efforts, structures and acts of daily practices.

Recognizing this, the Chesapeake Bay Program accepts the report and recommendations in the Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Justice Strategy (DEIJ Strategy) - developed by an independent consultant for the Chesapeake Bay Program Diversity Workgroup of the Stewardship Goal Implementation Team (GIT) and finalized in 2020. To the extent consistent with state and federal law and policy, members of the Principals' Staff Committee (PSC) will strive to implement the recommendations of the DEIJ Strategy. The Chesapeake Bay Program Diversity Workgroup, which was formed in 2014, started working with an independent DEIJ consultant in 2018 to conduct a DEIJ readiness assessment of the partnership and developed a tailored DEIJ Strategy that recommends the partnership:

- Increase racial and ethnic diversity among partnership staff and leadership.
- Help partners develop as DEIJ leaders who understand, respect and embrace cultural diversity.
- Provide partners with the tools to continually assess progress towards diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice goals.

The DEIJ Strategy contains recommendations that are grouped into four DEIJ framework focus areas. The consultant developed these recommendations based on interviews with Chesapeake Bay Program teams and leadership, a DEIJ readiness survey, two focus groups, a review of key partnership policy documents and input from the Diversity Workgroup. They provide a visionary framework to be used by the partnership as a guide to help integrate DEIJ into the implementation of management strategies and inform biennial logic and action plan activities that achieve the outcomes of the *Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement*.

1. Strengthen the Authorizing Environment of the Chesapeake Bay Program:

By adopting a succinct DEIJ statement for the partnership and updating governance documents and management strategies to include language that reflects DEIJ priorities and values.

2. Advance DEIJ Internally

By increasing diversity and inclusion for staff, appointees and volunteer bodies; building a common understanding of, and expanded capacity for, DEIJ; and institutionalizing efforts to advance DEIJ values and practices internally.

3. Advance DEIJ through Mission-Related Work

By building relationships with the federally recognized Tribes and underrepresented groups, including but not limited to communities of color and low income neighborhoods; incorporating community leaders' input into decision-making and implementation; advancing DEIJ in management strategies and logic and action plans; implementation of restoration activities and grantmaking; and elevating and prioritizing DEIJ in watershed restoration outreach, materials, activities and events.

4. Advance DEIJ Performance of Partners

By sharing the Chesapeake Bay Program's DEIJ statement with all partners, including the larger Chesapeake Bay watershed community; increasing access to DEIJ training and capacity building; developing and distributing guidance on including DEIJ and environmental justice criteria in grant targeting and evaluations; developing and sharing DEIJ communication and distribution guidance; and developing and sharing tracking and reporting guidance.

The recommendations in the DEIJ Strategy are provided to the Chesapeake Bay Program to be used by Chesapeake Bay Program leadership, GITs, Workgroups and other components of the Chesapeake Bay Program to inform the activities in the biennial workplans (i.e. Logic and Action Plans) and integrate DEIJ in the implementation of management strategies to help achieve the outcomes of the *Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement*. Continuing our path toward embracing the human diversity in the Chesapeake Bay watershed and promoting diversity, equity, inclusion and justice in our work to restore the Bay, we hereby strive to implement the recommendations in the Chesapeake Bay Program DEIJ Strategy to the extent consistent with applicable state and federal law and policy.

To implement the recommendations in the DEIJ Strategy, the PSC commits to:

- Within six months of the signing of the Chesapeake Executive Council statement, a draft implementation plan for the DEIJ Strategy will be presented to the PSC. The development of this plan will include direct outreach to underrepresented communities for input and feedback.
- Within three months of the signing of the Chesapeake Executive Council statement, explore a process for a community advisory board composed of environmental justice leaders and representatives from organizations led by people of color or other underrepresented groups. This board could be part of one of the partnership's existing advisory boards (Citizens Advisory Committee or Local Government Advisory Committee).
- Advancement of the DEIJ Strategy through work plan development and implementation for all GITs and Workgroups on their respective strategy review system schedules.
- Meaningful inclusion of DEIJ milestones on the agendas for the Management Board and PSC meetings at a minimum every six months with a commitment to update the Chesapeake Executive Council annually.
- Meaningful consideration of DEIJ in development of any future Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement(s).

As Chesapeake Bay Program partners, we acknowledge that this Action Statement is voluntary and subject to the availability of appropriated funds. This Action Statement is not a contract or an assistance agreement. We also understand that this Action Statement does not pre-empt, supersede or override any other law or regulation applicable to each signatory.

FOR THE STATE OF MARYLAND
Chair, Principals' Staff Committee



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John J.

FOR THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
on behalf of the Federal Government
and the
Federal Leadership Committee for the
Chesapeake Bay
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
U.S. Department of Agriculture
U.S. Department of Commerce
U.S. Department of Defense
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
U.S. Department of the Interior
U.S. Department of Transportation



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