

The Chesapeake Bay Program

DEIJ

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN



Chesapeake Bay Program
Science. Restoration. Partnership.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Chesapeake Bay Program Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Justice Strategy Implementation Plan (Implementation Plan) presents a roadmap for advancing the recommendations found in Restoration from the Inside Out: A Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Justice Strategy for the Chesapeake Bay Program (DEIJ Strategy). Finalized in 2020, this visionary framework will help guide the Chesapeake Bay Program in integrating diversity, equity, inclusion and justice (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 (Watershed Agreement).

The goals of this plan are three-fold:

- Grow racial and ethnic diversity in the partnership from 13% to 25% (including 15% of leadership).
- Help Chesapeake Bay Program partners develop as DEIJ leaders who understand, respect and embrace cultural diversity.
- Provide partners with the tools to continually assess progress toward diversity goals.

The Implementation Plan is divided into four DEIJ framework focus areas. Each focus area has at least one objective, which in turn has several associated actions and subtasks. The intent is that when these actions and subtasks are taken, the objective(s) for that focus area will be met.

Focus Area One: Strengthen the Chesapeake Bay Program's authorizing environment for DEIJ.

An authorizing environment ensures that DEIJ has broad support across all areas of the partnership. To strengthen ours, the Chesapeake Bay Program will adopt a succinct statement that defines both DEIJ and environmental justice and how each topic relates to and advances the work of the partnership. Key organizational documents, such as our governance framework and management strategies for each outcome, will be updated as needed to explicitly articulate the role that DEI and environmental justice plays in the implementation of the Watershed Agreement, as well as reflect the values, goals and commitments contained in the DEIJ statement. The Chesapeake Bay Program commits to consider addressing equity and inclusion in future watershed agreements and/or policy directives.

Focus Area Two: Advance DEIJ internally.

To grow the racial and ethnic diversity in our partnership, we must increase diversity and inclusion in our hiring, promotions and tenure, and encourage all partners to do the same. Engagement with underrepresented groups and individuals is critical to our understanding as to what is working for them within the current Bay Program structure and to gain knowledge as to what is needed to grow equity and inclusion in our workplace, provide professional development opportunities and increase promotion and retention rates. After growing this understanding, comes the creation and expansion of employment opportunities for underrepresented individuals and communities. To be successful in this effort, connections to existing resources must be strengthened and new avenues for career building must be built. One way in which to reinforce these connections is to conduct proactive recruitment that would increase underrepresented groups within the Bay Program organizational structure. Once recruited, however, opportunities must be created in which to support and retain these individuals and

groups within the partnership. In order to advance the understanding of how critical DEIJ is to our work, Chesapeake Bay Program partners will receive training on DEI and environmental justice-related issues. Each Goal Implementation Team (GIT), workgroup and advisory committee will be encouraged to incorporate time in their meeting agendas to discuss DEIJ issues, priorities and progress. The Bay Program commits to setting aside specific funding to provide training for Management Board members and staff so they may begin building a professional network focused on advancing DEIJ in our work. These efforts must then be institutionalized across the partnership.

Focus Area Three: Advance DEIJ through mission-related work.

To engage with under-resourced and underrepresented communities, organizations and individuals, and ensure their voices are heard in Bay restoration work, it is important to connect with those agencies and organizations that are already working with these groups. This approach will require both an internal and external focus. Externally, under this focus area, we'll clarify the distinction between those organizations that are run by and serve underrepresented communities, and those that engage with them. Once these entities are identified, we'll work with them to build relationships with underrepresented communities so that they may become engaged in our implementation and decision-making processes. Internally, it's critical that steps are taken to integrate DEIJ considerations into the logic and action plans of each Chesapeake Bay Program workgroup, as well as in our grants and contracts, outreach, communications, activities and events.

Focus Area Four: Advance DEIJ performance of partners.

Our partners are at the core of the Chesapeake Bay Program. Once the DEIJ statement is developed, this will be shared with all partners in a variety of manners to ensure they understand its intricacies and how it can be applied to their own work. As mentioned above, all Chesapeake Bay Program communications, outreach and engagement materials will be evaluated and re-drafted to ensure DEIJ is considered and appropriately represented. These materials will be shared widely with our partners and their use encouraged. This includes tracking and reporting guidance.

Together, the focus areas, related objectives, and complementary Performance Tracking and Accountability Framework are designed to hold the partnership accountable in achieving a more diverse workforce and ensuring all voices are heard in Bay restoration and conservation activities. Regular updates will be provided by all program entities to the Management Board, Principals' Staff Committee and Executive Council. The full partnership must take ownership of this plan, ensuring actions are taken, with strong support from leadership, the Diversity Workgroup, and DEIJ champions across the Bay Program GITs, workgroups and advisory committees.

We know we will have achieved success when we have an equitable distribution of races, genders, ethnicities and religions seated around our table, guiding decisions on restoring the Bay that benefit them, as well as everyone else. Success will be found when every organization and individual in this watershed feels represented in our work. And finally, success will be achieved with a clean and healthy Bay and its watershed, where all residents feel valued and that their voices were heard in achieving this outcome. We know this won't be an easy road, but this work is critical to focus on now. This Implementation Plan is paving the foundation for the future, where the Chesapeake Bay watershed is an equitable, inclusive, diverse and healthy place to live, work and recreate.

INTRODUCTION

The Chesapeake Bay Program firmly believes that the diversity of its partnership should reflect the diversity of the watershed it is working to conserve and restore. And the Chesapeake Bay watershed is one of the most distinct in the world, supporting more than 3,600 species of plants and animals, 11,684 miles of shoreline, 150 major rivers and streams and over 18.4 million people. But increasing the racial, ethnic, cultural, gender and sexual diversity of the partnership requires more than simply hiring more people of varied backgrounds. It is prioritizing identifying and building relationships with stakeholder groups that are not currently represented in Chesapeake Bay watershed conservation and restoration activities. It is creating meaningful opportunities and programs to recruit and engage these groups and individuals in the work and decision making of the Chesapeake Bay Program. And it is ensuring that diversity, equity, inclusion and justice (DEIJ) principles are considered and included in everything the partnership does.

Over the past year, a dedicated action team representing the states of Delaware, Maryland, Pennsylvania and Virginia, the District of Columbia, federal agencies, non-profit organizations, academic institutions and the three Chesapeake Bay Program Advisory Committees: Citizens, Local Government and Scientific and Technical, drafted the Chesapeake Bay Program Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Justice Strategy Implementation Plan (Implementation Plan).

The Implementation Plan presents a roadmap for advancing the recommendations found in [Restoration from the Inside Out: A Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Justice Strategy for the Chesapeake Bay Program](#) (DEIJ Strategy). Finalized in 2020 by an independent consultant, the DEIJ Strategy provides a visionary framework to be used by the Chesapeake Bay Program as a guide to help integrate DEIJ considerations into the implementation of management strategies and logic and action plan activities that achieve the outcomes of the [Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement](#). It contains recommendations for strengthening and improving DEIJ in the Bay Program organizational structure, leadership, policies and strategic goals, and for fostering a culture of inclusion, respect and mutual learning.

Since its formation, the Chesapeake Bay Program has considered DEIJ in its work. This Implementation Plan builds upon the foundation which was formally recognized for the first time in [Chesapeake 2000](#). From acknowledging the importance of outreach to underrepresented and under-resourced communities throughout the watershed, to the formation of the first environmental justice task force to hosting a Chesapeake Bay Environmental Justice Forum in 2003, the partnership was well-positioned to include a [Diversity Outcome](#) in the most recent Watershed Agreement.

In 2020, the [Chesapeake Executive Council](#)—made up of the governors of Delaware, Maryland, New York, Pennsylvania, Virginia and West Virginia, the mayor of the District of Columbia, the chair of the tri-state legislative Chesapeake Bay Commission and the administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, on behalf of the federal government—[signed a statement](#) reconfirming their commitment to embracing DEIJ in all areas of the partnership. In addition, they directed the Chesapeake Bay Program Principals' Staff Committee to move forward with the implementation of the DEIJ Strategy. Following the release of a [companion directive from the Principals' Staff Committee](#) in August 2020, a [Diversity Action Team](#) was formed to develop this Implementation Plan.

This Implementation Plan is the natural next step to inform this critical work. But the partnership recognizes that this is just the beginning. More work is needed to build an equitable and inclusive Chesapeake Bay Program; one that can thrive and produce lasting results that not only advance the restoration of the Chesapeake Bay and its watershed but do so with the support and involvement of all its residents.

And there is no better time to bring attention to the need for this critical work. The majority of the 31 outcomes (including Diversity) of the *Watershed Agreement* are striving to meet their targets by 2025. For the past 38 years, the Chesapeake Bay Program has been the convener that brings federal, state and local governments, non-profit organizations and academia together to restore and conserve the Chesapeake Bay watershed. It is time for us to ensure that every background has a seat at our table and a voice in the restoration and conservation of the nation's largest estuary.



Kids in kayaks at Middle Branch Park in Baltimore, Maryland. Photo by the Chesapeake Bay Program.

DEFINITIONS

For the purposes of this Implementation Plan, the below DEIJ key terms are defined to underscore that each has a unique meaning and different implications for action. Unless otherwise noted, the definitions below were adapted from or developed by the [D5 Coalition](#). Field descriptions and a list of common terms and abbreviations used throughout this document, along with their meanings, are provided in the appendix.

DIVERSITY: The demographic mix of a specific collection of people, considering 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 or the relationship to the natural environment. (Credit: Skeo adapted from the D5 Coalition)

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.” (Credit: Environmental Protection Agency, Bunyan Bryant)

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. (Credit: D5 Coalition)

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.

SOCIAL JUSTICE: Equal access to wealth, opportunities and privileges within a society. This may mean addressing the present-day impacts of past inequities in order to achieve equity going forward.

UNDERREPRESENTED GROUPS/COMMUNITIES: Populations whose representation in a particular space is lower than their representation in the United States population. Their absence contributes to knowledge gaps in that space. Representation is commonly assessed using population groups like sex or race/ethnicity; however, when assessing underrepresentation, it is a best practice to consider whose lives will be impacted by decision-making (e.g., underserved or overburdened populations, environmental justice communities) and ensure that those groups are represented and included in that decision-making. (Credit: Skeo)

UNDERRESOURCED OR OVERBURDENED: Populations who receive inadequate or inequitable investment and services, who experience environmental and/or quality-of-life disparities when compared to surrounding populations, and who may in some circumstances have little power or influence over outside decisions that impact their daily quality of life. (Credit: Skeo)

PURPOSE

The purpose of this implementation Plan is to help the CBP to:

▶ Grow racial and ethnic diversity from 13% to 25% (including 15% of leadership).

▶ Help partners develop as DEIJ leaders who understand, respect and embrace cultural diversity.

▶ Provide partners with the tools to continually assess progress toward diversity goals.

DEIJ FRAMEWORK FOCUS AREAS

The Implementation Plan actions are grouped into four DEIJ framework focus areas.



Focus Area 1: Strengthening the CBP's authorizing environment for DEIJ

By adopting a succinct DEIJ statement for the CBP and updating authorizing and governance documents (e.g., the [Governance and Management Framework](#) for the CBP) as well as management strategies to include language that reflects DEIJ priorities.



Focus Area 2: Advancing DEIJ internally

By increasing diversity and inclusion for staff, appointees and volunteer bodies, building a common understanding of and expanding capacity for DEIJ, as well as institutionalizing efforts to advance DEIJ internally.



Focus Area 3: Advance DEIJ through mission-related work

By building relationships with communities of color, low-income communities and other underrepresented groups, and incorporating these leaders into decision-making and implementation, advancing DEIJ in management strategies and workplans, implementation and grantmaking, and strengthening DEIJ in watershed restoration outreach, materials, activities and events.



Focus Area 4: Advance DEIJ performance of partners

By increasing access to DEIJ training and capacity building, sharing the CBP's DEIJ statement and communications, and developing and distributing straightforward, accessible guidance on including DEIJ and EJ criteria in grants, tracking, and reporting.

DEIJ OBJECTIVES

1

Create an authorizing environment for DEIJ.

2

Increase DEIJ in hiring, promotion and tenure.

3

Increase DEIJ in appointee and volunteer bodies.

4

Increase DEIJ in internal culture and training.

5

Advance DEIJ through GIT workplans and outcomes.

6

Advance DEIJ through communications.

7

Advance DEIJ through grant-making and contracting.

8

Increase DEIJ Performance of Partners.



Barrels by the Bay in Baltimore, Maryland. Photo by the Chesapeake Bay Program.

APPENDIX A. TERMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

Below is a short list of common terms and abbreviations used throughout this document, along with their meanings.

DEIJ	Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Justice
CBP	The Chesapeake Bay Program
CBPO	The Environmental Protection Agency Chesapeake Bay Program Office
HBCU	Historically Black Colleges and Universities
MSI	Minority Serving Institution
Partners	All members of the Chesapeake Bay Program partnership (members of the Executive Council, Principals' Staff Committee, Management Board, Goal Implementation Teams, workgroups, advisory committees, and actions teams) as well as their organizations. Partners include "Signatories" and "Partnership Organizations".
Staffing Organizations	Organizations providing staffing support and internships for the CBP. For example, the Chesapeake Research Consortium provides staff support through the Environmental Management Career Development Program.
Partnership Organizations	Organizations engaged with the CBP, including federal agencies, local governments, non-profit organizations and academic institutions.
Signatories	Signatories of the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement, including the tri-state legislative Chesapeake Bay Commission, Delaware, Maryland, New York, Pennsylvania, Virginia, West Virginia and the Environmental Protection Agency on behalf of the federal government.
Strategy Review System (SRS)	The CBP's structured review process that applies adaptive management to its work toward meeting the goals and outcomes of the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement.
Grant-Making Organizations	Organizations that provide funding to meet the goals and outcomes of the Watershed Agreement in the form of grants.

APPENDIX B. HOW TO READ THE IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Below is a short list of common terms and abbreviations used throughout this document, along with their meanings.

Action	Value that uniquely identifies each action under a given Objective.
Subtask	A sequential task to be completed as an element of a larger Action.
Description	A description of the Action or Subtask.
Related Actions	Actions that relate to or are dependent on the given Action or Subtask.
Lead	The primary entity responsible for completing the Action or Subtask.
Support	Entity or entities responsible for supporting completion of the Action or Subtask.
Timeframe	The period in which the Action or Subtask is planned to take place.
Short Term	2021-2023
Mid-Term	2023-2025
Long-Term	Post-2025
Ongoing	Action does not have a discrete endpoint and/or is taken continually.
Annually	Action is taken on annual basis.
Semi-Annually	Action is taken on a semi-annual basis.
SRS Schedule	Action follows the timeline of the SRS (e.g., Quarterly Progress Review Meetings).
Status	Current state of progress for an Action or Subtask.
Resources, Tools, Notes	Open-ended field for relevant information.