**Diversity Workgroup Meeting**

**November 18, 2022**

**9:00am-11:30 pm**

**Webex**

**Meeting Info**

Join from the meeting link

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| --- |
| **Meeting Objectives**  By the end of the session, DWG members and stakeholders will:   * Learn about initiatives related to Equitable Chesapeake Bay Funding and Diversity Workgroup Support * Share updates with each other and provide feedback on DWG staff updates |

**Key**

* Discussion
* Chat
* Presentation
* Action

**Minutes**

**9:00-9:10 AM- Welcome and introductions (10 min)**

* Briana Yancy- focus of meeting is around funding and funding support
* Wendy O’Sullivan- Welcomed DWG and discussed today’s agenda, also asked for announcements from members in the chat

**9:10- 9:50 AM- GIT Funding Update Equitable Grants in CB Watershed (40 min)**

* Equitable grants in the Bay Watershed
* DWG proposed Scope 3: Equitable Grant Funding in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed
* Two contractors for this project: Colmena Consulting and Calm Waters Group
* Presentation is split between overview and discussion
* This project aims at looking into what equitable funding looks like
* First Phase:
  + Engaging with folks throughout the Bay that have not been included in funding opportunities
    - Specific focus on agriculture, tribal needs, and urban communities
  + Looked at funders from small NGOs to Federal Agencies
  + Findings from this phase will inform workshops
* What were they listening for in communities
  + Access to funding
  + Sources of funding
  + Key funding needs
  + Role of community and collaboration
  + Examples of effective grant making
* What were they listening for from funders
  + Perceived challenges in accessing funding
  + URO Role in setting funder priorities
  + Relationship building with community
  + Equitable outcomes
  + Data collection and utilization
  + internal challenges and barriers
* Ask to Funders from Organizations
  + Improved communication
  + A desire for deep engagement with the organization; how much time are funders spending in the community
  + An improved application process; streamline process and provide examples of applications
  + Better access to funders; new and smaller organizations struggle to connect with funders
  + Specific funding needs (funding for deep engagement, startup support specifically with grant development staff, collaboration)
* Key Findings
  + Key message- we are all on the same page and it now down to action; focus on key takeaways for funders with focus on underrepresented organizations
  + Build trust with communities
  + Make equity a priority; talking with grant making staff has not been referencing most recent EPA guidance about equity
  + Agree on clear and shared language; lack of understanding on both sides; a sense that funders are talking in code regarding justice related work; funders are often looking at the science, but communities are looking at things that are impacting them directly; these goals can be aligned if communication of goals is clearer
  + Come out of the black box; grant making process needs to be more transparent and more available
  + Expand ecosystem awareness; already great projects that can be built on; awareness of already existing tools
* Workshop Ideas:
  + Building trust; trust-based philanthropy; community engagement to community ownership
  + Make equity a leadership priority and commitment; participatory strategy in grant making; make sure that staff are aware of most up-to-date guidance on equity in grant making
  + Develop a shared language, definitions, and set of data; equitable evaluation
  + Simplify and streamline processes; work around identifying equitable sponsors and intermediaries.
  + Build awareness across the ecosystem; assets mapping

Chat

* Sherry Witt Love these ideas Melissa. Any thoughts on a building block approach to use a couple of these in a specific order to build upon?
* Wendy O’Sullivan Could a workshop be hands on active assistance to register in SAM and get grant ID numbers. These systems are complicated and barrier. Getting these steps complete opens up access to all federal grants.
* Nicole Chao: This is an amazing overview--thank you! I'm thinking now that stronger guidance for grant REVIEWERS is needed. Getting the shared language right is going to be a process, but in the meantime, that language translates to the guidance given to reviewers is so essential....
* Rebecca Rehr: Would you host these workshops for everyone, or think about tailoring separate ones for funders, some for community based groups, and some perhaps for more well-funded groups who could also play a role in shifting funding TO community-based groups?
* Briana Yancy: Any workshop topics that would benefit workgroup members the most?
* Sherry Witt: Marcus, can you drop the workshop ideas as bullets in the chat to refer back to if needed?
  + Marcus Griswold: Building Trust; Make Equity a Leadership Priority; Commitment Develop a Shared Language, Definitions, and Set of Data; Simplify and Streamline Processes; Build Awareness Across the Ecosystem
* Noelle Chao: At the NPS meeting yesterday afternoon, Eddie sharing the registration process was fantastic--so helpful and much more transparent about what this process looks like to people going through the steps the first time!
* Lora Harris: The National Science Foundation is starting to do novel things in some of their programs to create a more equitable framework for merit review. The Cultural Transformation of Geoscience Communities is one example.
* Lora Harris: The American Geophysical Union is also working on a new NSF "Convergence Accelerator" idea focused on community engaged work and co-production. They recently held a workshop to develop recommendations with community members on equitable approaches. That report is coming out in December and might be another resource for funders to consider.
* Katie Brownson: I would be interested in learning more about insights granting agencies could glean from trust-based philanthropy and how to bring under-resourced communities into the conversations that are happening now about how to improve equity in grant making.
* Julie Mawhorter: I like the idea of general training on those best practices/latest EPA guidance/etc. on building equity into the different aspects of grant making

Discussion:

* Eddie Gonzalez: “Extreme hand holding” is how he envisions making these processes more equitable
* Britt Slattery: RFPs are already written with specificity. Is there any possibility within their work to apply best practices with soliciting funding proposals? Have funders provide examples?
  + Melissa Sines: has done work with how unconscious bias shows up in this process
  + Eddie Gonzalez: lack of post application stage
* Wendy O’Sullivan: what workshop ideas would benefit your organization
  + Trystan Sill: Points of contact for funding sources
    - Virginia Busby: Making these entities known and have informed consent; hard as a grantor to know what is happening with this inequality

**Citizens Advisory Committee Presentation**

* Three projects
  + Water Quality- Conowingo Dam
  + Emerging Issues
  + Equitable Access to grants
* Three part panel
  + Facilitated discussions with three community organizations
  + Overview of findings from a contractor who is evaluating systemic community engagement barriers
  + Conversation with NFWF about changes to incorporate DEIJ in their grant making
* Where things can go wrong
  + Impediments in the grant making and grant execution process
* Barriers and solutions
  + Confusing language
  + Human capital
  + Upfront costs
  + Federal requirements
  + Matching fund requirements
  + Award criteria
* Overall findings
  + Expanded and new grant funding should be developed to explicitly support capacity building for frontline community organizations. This could serve as a pipeline for better access to substantial environmental funding

Discussion

* Eddie Gonzalez: perceived challenge with reimbursement; accessing an entirely different system to get paid
* Jess Blackburn in response to Bo Williams question in the chat regarding how the solutions were developed
  + Solutions were developed through conversations with the panelists and CAC members, while talking through what would be a good way to address the barriers.
* Briana Yancy: What are the next steps
  + Julie Lawson: set to present to Local Government Advisory Committee and Management Board on the findings; hearing from funders to incorporate into their work
* Lora Harris: The insight about more human capital; wondering about the resources available to do this for all the communities; is there a more creative solution such as an umbrella organization that can provide this capital?
  + Jess Blackburn: this came up in the discussion; if there is an umbrella group that can help to get these communities more viable for the funding, then how can we ensure that we are still building up community capacity for funding in the future
  + Julie Lawson: is not a mechanism to do this yet; interest from community to have this additional capacity

Chat

* Eddie Gonzalez: We've heard a lot this week about the challenges reimbursing expenses makes on nonprofits with little funds to advance payments.
* Bo Williams: How were the solutions developed
* Julie Lawson: Blog post on CAC grant equity report: <https://www.chesapeakebay.net/news/blog/taking-steps-toward-equitable-funding-throughout-the-chesapeake-watershed>
  + Sherry Witt: Thanks Julie - if WG members have questions, should they direct them to you? or Jess?
  + Julie Lawson: either or both! We can be reached at lawson.julie@gmail.com and jblackburn@allianceforthebay.org
* Lora Harris: I wonder if there are lessons to learn from the experience of the Environmental Finance Centers? There is one at UMD: https://arch.umd.edu/research-creative-practice/centers/environmental-finance-center
* Bo Williams: Great point Lora. EPA actually recently awarded EFCs to provide tech assistance to under resourced communities: https://www.epa.gov/newsreleases/biden-harris-administration-announces-selection-29-epa-environmental-finance-centers

**9:50- 10:20 AM- Diversity Workgroup Support (30 min)**

Workshop Funding from NPS

* Overview about Bay Program organization- workgroups situated under Goal Implementation Teams (GIT)
  + National Parks Service is charged with many goals from the Watershed Agreement (GIT 5)
    - Protected Lands, Public Access, Stewardship, Diversity and Education workgroups
  + NPS provides funding to support work of DWG
    - Operating dollars for Stewardship and Diversity workgroups
  + This funding can support projects, programs, and initiatives
    - E.g., trainings, honorariums
  + Proposing a pilot year
    - Coordinator and Chairs of workgroups will need to develop an operating budget
  + An attempt to bring additional capacity to these workgroups ($75,000 per year)

Discussion:

* Briana Yancy: One of the biggest barriers for the Bay Program is providing funding for these sorts of engagements
* Sherry Witt: Is there a prioritization process for this funding?
  + Wendy O’Sullivan: a first threshold would be advancing actions within the Logic and Action Plan; helpful to understand if there is a flood of ideas that are received in a way to gauge appropriate budgets
* Sherry Witt: We can look at the Logic and Action plan and see what could use the funding support
  + Wendy O’Sullivan: Potentially could help with cross-workgroup efforts and collaboration
* Britt Slattery: Federal funding comes with guidelines and restrictions; need to identify work first and then see how it fits within those guidelines.
  + Sherry Witt: Develop a guidance document

Chat:

* Melissa Fagan: Wendy, that is excellent! Would this money be available to support community members who want to participate but need financial support/compensation to do so? I feel like we have heard that come up several times.
  + Wendy O’Sullivan: this would need to be from an honorarium standpoint, for a specific service; NPS does not have a way underwrite ongoing participation
  + Melissa Fagan, CRC to everyone: Thanks, this a good starting point that perhaps can be leveraged to secure funding that can be used more freely to help support community members. Thanks to NPS for adding this funding!
  + Briana Yancy: I like that Melissa!
  + Brittany Hall: Join the Steering Committee to help direct the budget!
* Julie Mawhorter: In terms of infiltrating other GITS, I know we have a lot of partners in the tree canopy/urban forestry realm that would be interested in the equitable grant training you are developing
* Briana Yancy: Julie let’s make sure they're connected with Bo, Marcus and Melissa to know when the workshops are happening!

**10:20-10:50- Diversity Workgroup Member Opportunities (30 min)**

**Collective365**

* Bianca Myrick: Co-founder of Collective 365
  + Group that came together to disrupt philanthropy
  + Membership based giving circle
  + Specifically center black and brown-led efforts in their grant making
    - Historically philanthropy has been inaccessible for black and brown led efforts
  + Trust-based funding, not many restrictions to the funding to make it more accessible
  + Grant application assistances through different mechanisms for accessibility
  + Grants committee is comprised of community members
  + Make philanthropy accessible and value every contribution
  + Provides follow-up support post-grant application for those who did not receive funding
  + Provide capacity support through services from organizations in their network

Chat:

* Bianca Myrick: <https://www.collective365.org/>
* Eddie Gonzalez: Being able to follow-up and invest in those organizations that didn't get funded is so great. Love the cultivation.
* Aida Canales : Good morning, could you please repeat the topics. Education...
  + Bianca Myrick: Social justice, workforce development, health, and education

**Nurturing Equitable Exchange with Communities**

* ASPIRE grants
  + Develop curriculum for developing leaders who could do co-production in an equity framework
  + Looking at a model at building boundary spanners; working within communities and within research
  + Collaborated with social scientists to fund five different groups to do this work
    - ID leaders who can help with coproduction in an equitable nature
  + Curriculum aimed to develop a space for learning around how to take the find main findings from the equitable exchange model and turn it into practice
  + Five findings from Thriving Earth Exchange
    - Understanding of critical scientific histories; different knowledge bases
    - Centering community choice
    - Navigating political relationships and understanding what is meant by equal power in political settings
    - Data ownership and reciprocity
    - Care and facilitation
  + Would like to host Chesapeake based training
    - Funding associated with it for reimbursement for participation

Discussion

* Briana Yancy: This is a great opportunity for the Chesapeake region. She will send out the form for involvement after the meeting
* Eddie Gonzalez: Is there opportunity to bring in TEK in to these conversations and making connections from TEK to the issues we are facing in the Chesapeake Bay.
  + Lora Harris: Bringing in these communities would be a great opportunity. There was a very intentional and specific indigenous connection.
* Lora Harris: would love feedback on who needs to be included in these conversations?
  + Briana Yancy: A delicate balance between learning and actions

Chat

* Ava Richardson: Did social capital come up during the exchange? If so, were there ideas for how to foster more social capital?
  + Lora Harris: at the national scale, they have worked with how the NSF is offering their funding. Worked on developing a mechanism at NSF to focus on community co-production. She would be happy to share more information about these conversations with NSF
* Lora Harris: Here is the website from the last offering: https://sites.google.com/umces.edu/equitableexchange/home
* Virginia Busby: There are Indigenous people on whose land UMCES sits who are undertaking a lot of terrific TEK & geoscience partnering and who would greatly inform this goal. <https://e360.yale.edu/features/bringing-back-fire-how-burning-can-help-restore-eastern-lands>
* Rico Newman: Is your program limited to participation by/with Fed tribes and has there been outreach to tribes on both sides of the Chesapeake?
  + Lora Harris: Hi Rico - Nice to meet you. I have only implemented this curriculum at the national scale, and so definitely looking for guidance and work together on how to best meet Chesapeake communities. If it is ok to follow up with you afterwards that would be great.

**Chesapeake Gateway Grants**

* Eddie Gonzalez
* Chesapeake Bay Gateways and Watertrails Network Grant Summary
  + Highlighting how they are communicating the DEIJ considerations into the grant process
  + Referencing other guidance about equity in their grant process
* These grants are for everyone in the watershed; pretty much every is eligible to apply for this program
* Approximately $2 Million for this grant cycle
  + Ability to fund projects that they might not be able to in other grant cycles
* Focus on DEIJA and Community Engagement
* No match required
* Broad eligibility
* All projects must have a public purpose and occur in the Bay Watershed
* Extended application period
* Grant Categories
  + Advancing a major inclusive interpretive initiative with an equity lens
  + Promote resilient communities and landscapers through tourism, sustainability, conservation and local engagement
* Provides examples of projects that they are looking for; unable to provide one on one guidance but hoping these examples are helpful
* Review Criteria: Intentionally focused on DEIJ
* Need to separate the ability to apply for a grant from the ability to run a grant; this grant process tries to address the barriers to applying for a grant

Chat:

* Wendy O'Sullivan: Recordings of Chesapeake Gateways grant workshops : <https://www.youtube.com/c/ChesapeakeNPS/videos> ; NPS Chesapeake Gateways Grants landing page: <https://go.nps.gov/ChesapeakeGrants>; Chesapeake Gateways Grant FAQs: <https://www.nps.gov/chba/getinvolved/grant-faq.htm>

**Bay Program Office Funding**

* Congress appropriates funding to EPA for CBPO and the EPA then manages the funding for the CBP
  + Programs that provide funding for the CBPO:
    - Technical Assistance and General Assistance Grants
    - Small Watershed Grants Program
    - Innovative Nutrient and Sediment Reduction Grant Program
    - State Implementation and Monitoring Grants
  + Not always obvious how Bay Program funding reaches grassroots organizations
    - Providing Grant Guidance
    - Applicants/Recipients on two different levels; not just sub-recipients
    - Reviewers; mentioned Eddie Gonzalez is looking for reviewers for the Gateways program

Chat

* Eddie Gonzalez NPS: Yes, thank you. I'm looking for reviewers. Unfortunately, time commitment is up in the air, but it will likely be a heavy lift in February and March since we may have almost $2M to give out. Let me know if you are interested. Email: [edward\_gonzalez@nps.gov](mailto:edward_gonzalez@nps.gov)
* Melissa Fagan: Is it possible to compile the resources, reports, etc. on the DWG website so we can find them in the future. So much great information shared today.

**10:50 -11:20 AM- Staff and Group Updates (30 min)**

**Staff Updates**

* New Diversity Workgroup Chairs
  + Brittany Hall, NPS
  + Amanda Knobloch, Morgan State University
* Wendy O’Sullivan will be stepping down as chair but plans to remain a member of the workgroup
* Briana Yancy will be leaving the DWG coordinator position
  + Investigating bringing in a detail to help transition the position
* DEIJ Implementation Coordinator
  + Kick-off meeting in two weeks
* Stewardship GIT Staffer
  + Interviews are occurring this week for the staffer position

**Member Updates**

* Wendy O’Sullivan: Released for a 90-day public comment period for a Chesapeake National Recreation Area. First time that there is legislation of this kind that has DEIJ considerations in the language.
  + https://www.vanhollen.senate.gov/cnra
* Julie Lawson: wanted to thank those on this call who met with the cohort from Anacostia High School. Also wanted to thank those that met to discuss federal opportunities and partnerships for the Summer Youth Employment program
  + Liaison form DOEE for DC public schools, focused on redesign of Anacostia High School
    - Embedding environmental project-based learning; graduation rate has increased 25%
* Britt Slattery: Stewardship GIT received funding for three projects
  + One focuses on mapping who is out there working in this space
  + One focuses on workforce needs, ideas and opportunities. First step of this project is a landscape study and identifying pathways
  + One focuses on environmental literacy
* Julie Mawhorter: Works with US Forest Service in the Urban and Community Forest program
  + Program funded at a historic level with recent legislation with specific focus on equity and climate resilience
  + GIT Funding project from last year, currently planning urban tree canopy roundtable. Please reach out to Julie if interested in roundtable
  + Report posted in chat: Reducing Recidivism through Arboriculture Workforce Development https://usfs-public.app.box.com/s/djcaez99tu4mmjm9arqnjp0phe5wt33g

Chat:

* Alisha Camacho: I saw this update on social media and was so happy to see it! and yess to having students on the community assessment program (and paid)!! wonderful news/updates.
* Jess Blackburn: The CAC will hold their final quarterly meeting on Dec 7-8. Their primary goal is to set 2023 priorities. I am happy to share what the members decide at a future Diversity Workgroup meeting.
* Sherry Witt: Action items from today’s meeting (did I forget anything?): (1) If anyone has questions on the presentation Equitable Grants in CB Watershed, send to Briana, Marcus and Melissa: Yancy.briana@epagov; melissa@colmena-consulting.com; Marcus; (2) potentially add to next WG agenda to look at the Logic and Action Plan for potential work where NPS funds could be helpful; (3) Briana to share her CBP funding resource list/presentation for the WG to access; (4) Follow up with Lora on providing input on her community focused course.

**11:20-11:30 AM- Meeting Close/Next Steps (10 min)**

* Next meeting: January 2023
* Include opportunities presented today in meeting materials to share with workgroup

Attendance:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| First Name | Last Name | Affiliation |
| Wellington | Ashe | Civicworks |
| Jess | Blackburn | Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay, CAC Coordinator |
| Katie | Brownson | USFS |
| Lauren | Buckmaster | Chesapeake Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve |
| Virginia | Busby | Accokeek Foundation |
| Alisha | Camacho | Environmental Communicator & Multimedia Designer |
| Jerry | Casagrande | Wilderness Kids Alexandria |
| Laura | Cattell Noll | Local Leadership Workgroup |
| Noelle | Chao | Anne Arundel WSA |
| Ola-Imani | Davis | Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay, LGAC |
| Melissa | Fagan | CRC |
| Max | Fairweather | Chesapeake College |
| Phoebe | Galione | ALLARM |
| Juel | Gibbons | SERCAP |
| Beth | Ginter | Chesapeake Conservation Landscaping Council |
| Amy | Goldfischer | CRC |
| Eddie | Gonzalez | NPS |
| Clare | Gooch | DNREC |
| Marcus | Griswold | Calm Waters Group |
| Brittany | Hall | NPS Chesapeake |
| Lora | Harris | UMCES |
| Amanda | Knobloch | Morgan State |
| Julie | Lawson | Citizen Advisory Committee |
| Julie | Mawhorter | US Forest Service |
| Rico | Newman | Maryland Commission on Indian Affairs |
| Wendy | O'Sullivan | NPS Chesapeake |
| Jacquista | Powell | Maryland Environmental Service |
| Rebecca | Rehr | Maryland LCV |
| Ava | Richardson | Baltimore City Office of Sustainability |
| Gabrielle | Roffe | Chesapeake Conservancy |
| BeKura | Shabazz | First Alliance Consulting |
| Trystan | Sill | MD DNR |
| Melissa | Sines | Colmena Consulting |
| Britt | Slattery | NPS Chesapeake |
| Jake | Solyst | CBP Communication |
| Jamileh | Soueidan | CRC |
| Jennifer | Starr | LGAC |
| Kathy | Stecker | MDE |
| Breck | Sullivan | USGS |
| Bo | Williams | EPA Chesapeake Bay Program |
| Sherry | Witt | GDIT |
| Briana | Yancy | EPA |
| Aida | Canales | UMBC |
| Avery | Lavoie | EPA |
| Bianca | Myrick | Collective365 |