**Chesapeake Bay Program – Diversity from a business perspective**

We live in a deeply connected and global world. The Chesapeake Bay Watershed is an example of cultural, economic, historical and recreational connectedness. The decision-makers within the Chesapeake Bay program are driving the world’s most vital engine of prosperity and new ideas to managing natural resources and sustaining aquatic ecosystems. If the end goal is excellence, diversity of expertise and social diversity are essential ingredients.

The benefits of diversity of expertise are easy to identify, especially in natural resource management and policy. However, what are the benefits of social diversity? What good comes from diversity of race, ethnicity, gender, religion, income or sexual orientation? Research has shown that social diversity in a group can cause discomfort, rougher interactions, lower communication and greater perceived interpersonal conflict. With all of these potential downsides, why is the Chesapeake Bay Program so diligent in creating a more socially diverse community of leaders, employees and decision makers?

The answer is, if the Chesapeake Bay Program plans to continue leading the world in building innovative region-based strategies to achieving water restoration and water quality goals, social diversity must also be achieved.

Social diversity enhances creativity, increases the sourcing talent pool, expands the depth of an organization’s informational diversity, boosts an organization’s image, provokes thought and most importantly improves objective and financial performance. **A study conducted by McKinsey and Company found that for every 10 percent elevation in ethnic diversity in the executive leadership of US companies, there was a 0.8 percent improvement in earnings before interest and tax (EBIT). In America, companies in the top quartile for ethnic diversity in leadership roles had a 20% higher probability of above-average financial performance than those companies in the bottom quartile.** Above-median financial performance was achieved by a higher percentage of companies in the top quartile than the bottom quartile for ethnic diversity in all the countries and regions investigated by [McKinsey and company](https://www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/organization/our-insights/why-diversity-matters).

Recruiting, retaining, and developing a diverse, high-performing workforce to maintain the Chesapeake Bay watershed’s ecological, cultural, economic, historic and recreational values not only makes sense from a social perspective, but also a scientific, engineering and economically beneficial standpoint.