

DEI Strategy (DRAFT)

Based on the outcomes of the DEI Readiness Assessment Findings and Recommendations, the project team identified a series of recommendations to help CBP build on its strengths and further advance diversity, equity, inclusion and environmental justice. The DEI Strategy includes recommendations that are grouped into four focus areas, based on the DEI Framework categories:

1. Strengthen CBP's authorizing environment. (Objective 1)
2. Advance DEI internally. (Objectives 2-4)
3. Advance DEI through mission-related work. (Objectives 5-7)
4. Advance DEI of CBP partners. (Objective 8)

1. Strengthen CBP's Authorizing Environment

To strengthen CBP's authorizing environment for DEI:

1. *Adopt a clear and succinct DEI statement that fully captures definitions for DEI and EJ and how each of these topics relates to and advances the mission of CBP.*
2. *Update the Management Strategies, as needed, to explicitly articulate the roles of diversity, equity, inclusion and environmental justice in achieving CBP's mission and guiding implementation of the agreement (including distinguishing equity and inclusion from diversity and articulating the relationship between the three concepts).*
3. *Clarify language in authorizing 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.)*
4. *Update the Governance and Management Framework for the Chesapeake Bay Partnership to include a) explicit diversity goals for each group in their "Leadership and Membership" sections, b) language describing the role and impact of DEI and EJ considerations in the "Process for Decision-Making" section, and c) mechanisms for raising and addressing DEI issues.¹*
5. *Biennially, incorporate changes related to the DEI Strategy annual action priorities throughout both the Diversity Outcome Management Strategy and the DWG Outcome Logic Table and Workplan.*
6. *Explicitly articulate equity and inclusion (in addition to diversity) in the 2025 Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement.*

It was a major success to have the 2015 Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement clearly articulate a diversity outcome and state as a goal incorporating an EJ principle. The 2025 Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement should reflect the progress CBP makes between 2015 and 2025.

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2. Advance DEI Internally

To advance DEI internally:

1. *Increase diversity and inclusion for staff, appointees, and volunteer bodies:*
 - a. Document and biennially evaluate efforts to promote DEI in hiring, promotion and tenure policies.²
 - b. Re-structure hiring and promotion committees as needed to include people of color and other underrepresented groups.
 - c. Document and biennially evaluate efforts to increase representation of people of color and other underrepresented groups (including recommendations from “d” below) across management, CBP staff, intern positions, Management Board, Advisory Committees, Goal Implementation Teams and Workgroups.
 - d. Ask people of color and other underrepresented groups (in a supportive setting) 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.
 - e. Track number, percent, retention and advancement of people of color and other underrepresented groups across management, CBP staff, intern positions, Management Board, Advisory Committees, Goal Implementation Teams and Workgroups over time.
2. *Build common understanding of and expanded capacity for DEI:*
 - a. Prominently advertise, incentivize and recruit for the 2019-2020 trainings.
 - b. Use the 2019-2020 trainings to build a common understanding of the meaning of diversity, equity and inclusion and connect these topics to CBP’s mission. Discussion during these trainings may inform development of the DEI statement recommended above.
 - c. Develop and prioritize a list of additional trainings CBP can provide annually. (In the near-term, ask 2019-2020 training participants to evaluate the training(s) they attend and provide feedback on what additional training could be valuable for them and for their colleagues. See also recommendations from CBP staff in the summary of the CBP’s Internal Culture around DEI focus group (Attachment B).)
 - d. Include discussion time regarding the newly adopted DEI statement and the changes to the Governance and Management Framework into the agendas of each group identified in the Governance and Management Framework document.
 - e. Set aside specific funding to send management board and staff members to DEI-related conferences and events so that they can start building a professional network focused on advancing DEI in watershed restoration work.
3. *Institutionalize efforts to advance DEI internally:*
 - a. Develop and broadly disseminate the tools CBP identifies and/or develops on DEI, racial equity and EJ issues.

² The federal hiring process includes some constraints that may make this goal difficult to achieve; therefore, close monitoring and yearly adjustments to amplify the strategies that are working is recommended

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- b. Seek additional funding for implementing the annual action priorities of the DEI Strategy.
- c. Document and biennially evaluate effort to raise and address DEI and EJ issues by each group in the Governance and Management Framework .
- d. Integrate a self-evaluation of DEI efforts into staff performance evaluations.

Building momentum to implement these actions may be a significant cultural shift for an organization where decision-making has historically been focused on environmental metrics; therefore, close monitoring and yearly adjustments to amplify the DEI strategies that are working is recommended.

3. Advance DEI through Mission-Related Work

To advance DEI through watershed restoration work:

1. *Clarify the distinction between (1) organizations that are run by and primarily serve communities of color and other underrepresented communities and (2) other organizations that engage these communities:*
 - a. Clarify language in DEI planning documents, grant-making guidance and related implementation actions 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 those communities).
 - b. Ensure that tracking efforts – especially those tracking 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.

There is value in supporting both types of community-based groups; however, if the distinction is not made in goals and data tracking, resources usually gravitate towards organizations that are not led by the community they serve or engage due to the fact that organizations founded and led by people of color and other underrepresented groups have historically been under-resourced and had challenges breaking into mainstream, predominately white environmental funding streams.

2. *Build relationships with communities of color, low income communities and other underrepresented groups, and incorporate these leaders into decision-making and implementation:*
 - a. Identify specific decision-points and other milestones within the GIT workplans and other governance and management processes supporting the development and implementation of the Chesapeake Bay Agreement, where communities of color, low income communities and other underrepresented groups can influence the development and implementation of the Chesapeake Bay Agreement.
 - b. Participate in EJ-led gatherings, such as ongoing engagement in the University of Maryland School of Public Health DMV EJ conference (consider becoming a sponsor) to

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build CBP's professional network and bring discussion about implementation of the Chesapeake Bay Agreement directly into EJ-led spaces.

- c. Evaluate the possibility of starting a Community Advisory Board (or similar entity) – composed of compensated environmental justice 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 Agreement, including GIT workplans and grant-making, and (2) a feeder pool 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.
3. *Advance diversity, equity and inclusion through grantmaking:*
 - a. Annually, review the U.S. EPA CBP Office Grant and Cooperative Agreement Guidance to include DEI and EJ considerations/language.
 - b. Include DEI and EJ criteria in grant targets and evaluation controlled directly by CBP.
 - c. Develop grantmaking guidelines that promote non-discriminatory policies among applicant organizations, incentivize applicants to increase DEI in their organizational practices, and encourage restoration investments that align with community-identified needs and benefits.
 - d. Begin increasing and tracking representation of people of color and other underrepresented groups on grant review committees.
 - e. Host or participate in a gathering of funders to share lessons learned and build CBP's professional network for advancing DEI and EJ through grantmaking.
 4. *Review and strengthen diversity, equity and inclusion in watershed restoration materials and activities:*
 - a. Implement existing DWG Management Approaches that promote partnerships with organizations that engage people of color, low income communities or other underrepresented groups (e.g., management approaches 1.3, 1.4, 4.2 and 4.3) and track outcomes and lessons learned.
 - b. Expand DWG Management Approaches that promote partnerships with organizations that are run by and primarily serve communities of color and other underrepresented communities.
 - c. Develop an evaluation template for GITs to use during the next workplan update cycle to (1) explicitly consider the equitable distribution of benefits and improvements and (2) to explicitly consider the reduction of disproportionate adverse environmental impacts.
 - d. Conduct a review of communications materials to identify potential areas for improvement, and develop straightforward, accessible DEI communications guidance to ensure future communications materials feel welcoming and are accessible to all.
 - e. Develop and distribute straightforward, accessible guidance on distribution of communication materials – including a living database of distribution avenues that reach people of color, low income communities and other underrepresented groups.

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- f. Develop straightforward, accessible guidance on promoting DEI in contracting and consulting.
- g. Review these preliminary recommendations with communities of color, low income communities and other underrepresented groups to ensure that the recommendations are well-informed prior to implementation.

4. Serve as a Thought Leader and Advance DEI Performance of Partners

To serve as a thought-leader in the field to advance DEI performance of partners:

1. *Prominently advertise, incentivize and recruit for the 2019-2020 trainings and distribute tools developed under this grant to CBP Partners. 2019-2020 training participants and tool recipients to evaluate the trainings and tools and provide feedback on what additional trainings and tools could be valuable for them and for their colleagues.*
2. *Once CBP's DEI statement or policy is developed, share this succinct statement with CPB partners. Consider offering a webinar or pursuing other opportunities for discussion and dissemination of both the CBP DEI statement and the lessons learned in developing and adopting the statement. (For example, the annual Chesapeake Bay Watershed Forum may be a good venue to share the CBP DEI statement and goals with a broader watershed-wide audience, as well as the annual Choose Clean Water Coalition conference.)*
3. *Build off the dissemination of the DEI statement by offering a follow up webinar for CBP Partners that takes a deeper dive into DEI plans, tracking and assessment.*
4. *Develop and distribute straightforward, accessible guidance on including DEI and EJ criteria in grant targets and evaluation to CBP members.*
5. *Share the DEI communication and distribution guidance developed in response to recommendations broadly among CBP Partners.*
6. *Develop tracking and reporting guidance to share broadly among CBP Partners. Where feasible, point CBP Partners to tools that are already established in the field. Develop an annual report to capture CBP Partner tracking outcomes to help build momentum and accountability across the partnership*