**Stakeholders’ Advisory Committee Honorarium Program**

**Briefing on Goal, Strategies, Approach, and Timeline**

**Goal**

Address a barrier to a recommendation in the Principals’ Staff Committee endorsed DEIJ Implementation Plan to *increase diversity and inclusion for staff, appointees, and volunteer bodies.*

Members of the Stakeholders’ Advisory Committee are appointed to volunteer and collectively advise the CBP leadership with residents’ perspectives on the progress and approaches to the goals of the *Chesapeake Watershed Agreement*. Some members experience a financial burden to fully participate in Committee work. A solution to address this barrier to equitable and inclusive access is to create and support a needs-based honorarium program.

**Strategies:**

1. The Honorarium Program provides needs-based support for members who self-certify that they experience a financial burden because of time away from work while conducting Committee business. The program compensates eligible members for documented Committee work equivalent to the grant’s EPA-approved volunteer rate.
2. To institutionalize the program within the Chesapeake Bay Program partnership and ensure that sustainable funding is provided on an annual basis to the Stakeholders’ Advisory Committee coordinating organization (Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay) to distribute to members in accordance with the program’s intention, guidelines, and eligibility requirements.

**Approaches / Values**

1. **Promote Simplicity.** A one-page Program Election Form was created to communicate intention, guidelines and eligibility simply and succinctly.Honorariums are tracked based on a quarterly hour form already used by the members to track volunteer hours and mileage reimbursement.
2. **Protect Privacy.** A self-certification approach was adopted to protect the financial privacy of the members. All members were asked to select their intention to participate or forgo from the program by signing an Honorarium Program Election Form.As of August 2024, three members of the Stakeholders’ Committee have elected to participate.
3. **Follow existing successful examples.** Members of the team researched and learned from a sample of similar programs in the watershedthen assessed the applicability for the Stakeholders’ Advisory Committee.
4. **Why this is unique for the Stakeholders’ Committee:** In order for members to be effective, they are expected to learn and engage across multiple levels and outcomes across the Chesapeake Bay Program. Unlike most members of the partnership that are funded through their current positions with federal, state, local government, NGO or universities, the Stakeholders’ Advisory Committee members are typically not paid as part of their current job to participate. The voluntary nature of Committee membership enhances the ability to incorporate more diverse perspectives that are often not otherwise included within the Chesapeake Bay Program partnership, posing a challenge as those members are not being paid as part of their job to participate.
5. **Minimal annual expenditure:** Estimated cost is approximately $20,000/year for less than 25% of the Stakeholders’ Committee membership.

**Historical Timeline**

Aug 2020 PSC signs the DEIJ Action Statement to advance the principles internally

Aug 2022 Committee writes a letter to the EC Chair, EPA Administrator Regan requesting stipends/honorarium as an action to advance DEIJ internally

Aug 2022 CBPO Director Boyd acknowledges the letter and states that the partnership is looking forward to their annual recommendations

Sept 2022 Honorarium included in the Stakeholders' Committee annual report of recommendations

July 2023 Stipends workgroup forms

*Members include*: Martha Shimkin (EPA), Amy Handen (EPA), Anna Killius (CBC), Matt Rowe (MD), and Stakeholders’ Committee members- Julie Lawson, and Chuck Herrick, with staff Jess Blackburn

Oct 2023 Honorarium again mentioned in the annual report of recommendations

Dec 2023 Honorarium Program created and piloted with small grant from the Foundation of PA Watersheds, fund supports members for one quarter

Feb 2024 First offline MB jurisdictional discussion on the honorarium program as a part of a larger discussion of all three Advisory Committee 2023 recommendations

Mar 2024 CBP Response to 2023 Stakeholders’ Committee recommendations

“We appreciate the dedicated work that a small group of Chesapeake Bay Program partners, including members of the Stakeholders' Committee, has invested over the past year to develop an honorarium program for the Stakeholders' Committee that supports and addresses a barrier to equitable and inclusive access by some members. **The Management Board is interested in moving forward with establishing a need-based honorarium to further support members of the committee and will strive over the next year to identify appropriate funding sources for this initiative**.”

Aug 2024 First need-based honorarium topic on the MB agenda