

Recommendations and Narratives

1. **Governance and accountability**

Utilize an independent expert on equitable and collaborative partnerships to reimagine the governance, structure, accountability framework, and decision-making process of the Chesapeake Bay Program. This would increase public transparency, establish a participatory priority and budget setting process, and strengthen power-sharing with an expanded group of collaborators. As part of this work, consider broadening signatories, centering leadership at the Goal Implementation Team level, and codifying a governance structure that empowers the Advisory Committees and a broader community of diverse representatives to participate in decision-making and ensure accountability of all partners and the partnership.

Narrative:

- Centering people is not just adding the word ‘people’ into a goal. It requires the role of people to be codified in the governance of the program and therefore integrated throughout all of it (funding, staffing, training, public engagement strategy)
- Reimagining the framework in a way that will provide real oversight and accountability to the partnership – one that thinks creatively about how to utilize the tools in other state and federal agencies’ toolboxes and the elevated role the stakeholders and public can play in oversight as well.
- As the influence of, and responsiveness to, the advisory committees was a strong theme in our discussions, it is critical that we advocate for their strength in this process, including their role within the accountability framework.
- Broadening signatories would ensure other stakeholders, those representing non-profits working within the Chesapeake region or local governments, are better integrated throughout the partnership structure and have a voice in the decision-making process.
- Broadening signatory participation will ensure that the full scope of partners’ work for the Program are reflected in tracking progress and decision-making.

2. **Representative Goals and Outcomes**

The Goals and Outcomes of the Chesapeake Bay Program, codified in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement, need to reflect the needs of people at the most local level and the impacts of a changing environment on the people that live within the watershed. The Chesapeake Bay Program’s measures of success should be developed through community engagement and should reflect the priorities of the communities who live within the watershed. The Program’s goals, metrics and messaging must resonate with and meet the relative needs of watershed residents whose health and livelihoods depend on a healthy environment and sound governmental policy.

Narrative:

- Need to redefine success beyond purely technical metrics like nutrient levels, emphasizing broader benefits to communities.

- With this recommendation, the People group wants to ensure that future goals and outcomes account for changing land use, climate change, public health, recreation and access and environmental education.
- In communicating about the goals and outcomes, the Program should readily identify measures of success in its public engagement plan and supporting communications materials.
- This will require us to rethink how we measure progress, goals and success—both qualitatively and quantitatively.
- It may also require the Program to adjust its structure and rethink the membership of leadership roles on the Management Board and Principals' Staff Committee.

3. **Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Justice**

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Justice (DEIJ) must be the frame from which all work of the Chesapeake Bay Program flows, which can be accomplished by institutionalizing and activating the DEIJ Implementation Plan throughout the partnership's structure and efforts. This will require the Program to provide the capacity and financial resources necessary for effective and sustained implementation of the plan.

Narrative:

- When DEIJ is the frame in which the partnership approaches its work, people automatically become a priority.
- It also becomes about more than just diversity. Equity and inclusion are just as important. How equitable are the seats at the table and has the table been set for the people being invited? Those questions will be resolved when DEIJ becomes the frame of the work.
- The Program has agreed to a Diversity Statement and an Implementation Plan, which have not been implemented and/or integrated into the Program. So there is a commitment that is not being met.
- Part of the reason for this lack of progress is because the resources necessary meaningfully integrate this work have not been provided—that includes funding and capacity.
- Priority should be given to hiring a permanent Diversity Workgroup Coordinator and Cross-Outcome DEIJ Coordinator. While a DEIJ Implementation Strategy consultant is helpful, a senior-level DEIJ executive should be installed within the leadership of the Chesapeake Bay Program and physically located in the office, to ensure DEIJ integration into all levels of the partnership. Strong measures should be taken to ensure job retention for these positions. It should be noted that the Diversity Workgroup is tasked to action the Diversity Outcome, while a full time DEIJ Coordinator will work across outcomes to implement DEIJ across the partnership's goals, outcomes, and governance.

4. **Networks and capacity building**

Create intentional partnerships with networks focused on issues related to *Watershed Agreement* goals, and/or the audiences impacted by them. This facilitates two-way information sharing and learning, while helping to collaboratively accelerate outcome attainment. To support this, the Bay Program should embrace its role as a convener of and capacity provider for partners, working with them to identify shared priorities, funding those priorities, sharing best practices, and recognizing their voice in CBP management actions and decision-making. The Chesapeake Bay Program must ensure that communities of color and other underrepresented groups are empowered to help shape the future.

Narrative:

- There are dozens of networks that currently exist within the watershed that can and should be better engaged in order to further our goals. These networks have already established trust and relationships with a diverse array of communities across the watershed, and can serve as trusted messengers and connectors.
- Engaging with new communities will require the Program to change the way it approaches its work, including providing meaningful and authentic public engagement opportunities, funding and stipends for participation, and meeting communities and people where they already are.
- It is unrealistic to think the CBP can reach every person or entity throughout the Chesapeake Bay watershed.
- CBP is uniquely positioned to bring together all types of organizations and individuals; embracing the role of convener will empower the partnership to be a leader in developing these networks of networks.
- In strengthening collaboration and engagement, the CBP must be prepared to react to and address community priorities that may not match their own. The partnership must figure out a way in which to respond to new threats and opportunities from those working on the ground with priority audiences.
- The CBP must be willing to work with each network, rather than attempting to lead the network.

5. **Social science**

Create a budget and staffing allocation plan to support the strategic application of social science best practices, research, and synthesis to advance goal achievement and ensure partnership impact.

Narrative:

- Social science is integral in progressing the goals and outcomes of the Watershed Agreement. Engaging with the human perspectives of conservation and management is needed to create the most robust and impactful conservation policies, actions and outcomes.

- Investments should be made in further understanding and knowledge of social science principles is needed across the partnership.
- Future programs and projects must have social science considerations, such as robust audience research or time to assess success, built into their planning, rather than simply being an afterthought.