

Chesapeake Bay Program PLANNING FOR 2025 AND BEYOND Modified Outcome Review



DIVERSITY OUTCOME

FOSTERING CHESAPEAKE STEWARDSHIP GIT / DIVERSITY WORKGROUP

2014 WATERSHED AGREEMENT: GOAL & OUTCOME LANGUAGE

DIVERSITY OUTCOME: Identify stakeholder groups not currently represented in leadership, decision-making or implementation of current conservation and restoration activities and create meaningful opportunities and programs to recruit and engage these groups in the partnership's efforts.

STEWARDSHIP GOAL: Increase the number and the diversity of local stewards and local governments that actively support and carry out the conservation and restoration activities that achieve healthy local streams, rivers and a vibrant Chesapeake Bay.

OUTCOME DISPOSITION ADVICE TO MANAGEMENT BOARD:

REPLACE

The Management Board should consider a new outcome for Workforce.

A Workforce Outcome will leverage current and future jurisdiction programs to recruit, train, and retain employees and employers that help the Chesapeake Bay Program meet our outcomes and build professional capacity and economic opportunity in our watershed. **By working collaboratively through the partnership**, jurisdictions can build and strengthen programs that support our regional economies and target environmental employment in areas with the greatest ecological and economic needs.

The [Executive Council's 2024 Charge](#) stipulated that changes to the *Agreement* should "reflect a renewed and greater emphasis on engaging all communities of the watershed as active stewards of a healthy and resilient Chesapeake Bay and its watershed." The Workforce Outcome will directly advance this principle to advance the collective benefits of all watershed communities and people.

As other outcomes within the Fostering Chesapeake Stewardship GIT support capacity building for individual action, for local governments, and for students and educators, the Bay Watershed has a documented gap in workers and employers prepared to implement the projects and policies put forth in the *Watershed Agreement* and the supporting Watershed Implementation Plans.

CBP already has numerous analyses and recommendations of strategies and projects to inform a Workforce Outcome workplan. The 2024 GIT-funded Workforce Landscape Assessment identified a perceived lack of infrastructure in connecting people to training providers, and then to employers. The report specifically recommends the CBP create a feedback loop of employers and training providers to align hiring needs and training offerings, while also demonstrating to job seekers what skills are in demand.

The [2020 annual report](#) from the Stakeholders' Advisory Committee observed "the Chesapeake Bay Program does not track or regularly report the number of jobs supported by the millions of dollars expended by the Federal, State and Local governments each year on watershed restoration efforts. ...The means by which environmental jobs support the economy and how environmental protection prevents more costly clean-ups after an ecosystem is compromised would be helpful to know."

The Local Government Advisory Committee has also repeatedly recommended workforce actions to the Executive Council, [most recently in 2022](#): "LGAC calls on the Chesapeake Executive Council to take the leadership role in promoting the requisite green infrastructure workforce development, training and certification programs as a means to support local economies and continue watershed restoration efforts."

The [CESR report](#) identifies challenges to meeting the TMDL and Watershed Agreement goals due to "implementation gaps." The TMDL indicator on *Chesapeake Progress* reveals that implementation of new practices holds the greatest opportunity for addressing the primary remaining sources of nitrogen–nonpoint sources from urban and agricultural lands. Greater capacity in technical assistance is critical in closing these implementation gaps.

The green/restoration economy provides opportunity for entry-level jobs, skilled labor, and family-sustaining careers, and creates economic opportunity across the watershed, including supporting small businesses and entrepreneurship in the private sector. Recruitment, training, and retention continue to be priorities for Bay jurisdictions. Pennsylvania's recent Clean Water Gathering identified needs to cross-train and develop management and leadership skills among current employees to build resilience from staff turnover and retain staff as they advance in their careers. In 2024, DC's Department of Energy and Environment published a Workforce Development Strategic Plan with the goal of strengthening existing green training programs and more effectively demonstrating the economic impact of green jobs.

To ensure that this replacement outcome is both SMART and furthers the partnership's call for a better connection with the people of the watershed, the Workforce Outcome would be heavily data-driven and include significant community engagement to understand the pipeline of worker readiness and employer needs. As an example, the outcome could be "Grow the regional workforce to meet implementation needs and develop the next generation of conservationists, by quantifying the number of new jobs and trained workers needed to accomplish partner priorities and identifying, growing, and tracking training programs and employers to support these workers by 2030."

Working with the signatory jurisdictions' labor and workforce boards, the CBP can align restoration and conservation jobs with Department of Labor job codes, track labor market data, and create dashboards illustrating gaps in current and future workforce needs. Merging those projections with policy milestones, the CBP can quantify and project gaps in workforce, allowing jurisdictions to lean into training programs that certify workers with industry-recognized credentials. This data can also be filtered at the tributary and regional scale to evaluate where programs are most needed, most feasible, and most successful. Career maps, career exposure, and focused recruitment can draw new workers to the environmental field, and partnerships with local school systems, institutions of higher education, and trade unions will create a clear pathway to employment.