



Chesapeake Bay Program
Science. Restoration. Partnership.

BACKGROUND

Statement in Support of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Justice

Background

The Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement acknowledges the importance of diversity, equity, inclusion and justice (DEIJ) in our efforts, stating that “Chesapeake Bay Program partners envision an environmentally and economically sustainable Chesapeake Bay watershed with clean water, abundant life, conserved lands and access to the water, a vibrant cultural heritage, and a diversity of engaged citizens and stakeholders.” To achieve this vision means to include a wide range of people of all races, ethnicities, income levels, faiths, genders, ages, sexual orientations and disabilities, along with other diverse groups, at all levels of the partnership.

The Chesapeake Bay Program Diversity Workgroup started working with a DEIJ consultant in 2018 to develop a tailored DEIJ Strategy that helps the partnership to:

- Grow racial and ethnic diversity from 13% to 25% (including 15% of leadership).
- Help partners to develop as DEIJ leaders who understand, respect and embrace cultural diversity.
- Provide partners with the tools to continually assess progress towards diversity goals.

The DEIJ Strategy provides a framework to be used by the partnership as a guide to help integrate DEIJ into the implementation of management strategies and inform biennial logic and action plan activities that achieve the outcomes of the *Chesapeake Bay Watershed*

Agreement. The Principals’ Staff Committee amplified these efforts by signing a DEIJ Action Statement, which provides actionable commitments they will oversee. The Executive Council Statement provides our partnership’s commitment to DEIJ at the highest level.

The Statement

The *Chesapeake Executive Council: Statement in Support of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Justice* recognizes that individually, each partner has established policies and programs with the goal of advancing environmental and public health protection for all. The Statement also recognizes that there is more that must be done as a united partnership, and for this reason, it is necessary that the Chesapeake Bay Program explicitly and tangibly commits to diversity, equity, inclusion and environmental justice.

The Statement describes the partnership’s commitment to strengthening DEIJ throughout its organizations and programs, as well as engaging, recruiting and retaining diverse staff and leadership. It highlights our commitment to fostering an inclusive workplace culture that continues to evolve and improve, to including federally recognized Tribes in our partnership activities and to developing relationships with organizations that serve communities of color. The statement also highlights the Bay Program’s commitment to ensuring that the benefits of our efforts are equitably distributed—a particularly important goal in light of the disparities highlighted by the COVID-19 health crisis.