Diversity, Opportunity, and Inclusion 2023 Annual Report

Department of Forensic Science

March 25, 2024

2023 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Plan Goal 1: Access & Success

Objective 1 – Recruit and hire a diverse workforce at every level of leadership (with a focus on recruiting new staff and promoting existing staff)

Objective 2 – Retain and promote a more compositionally diverse workforce (with a focus on retaining current staff)

Accomplishments –

- Leveraged social media platforms (i.e., LinkedIn, Facebook) to increase reach of agency opportunities
- Conducted outreach to colleges/universities that historically serve underrepresented populations
- Ensured the use of gender neutral/inclusive language in job postings

Plan Goal 2: Climate and Intergroup Relations

Objective 1- Create and sustain a climate that is supportive, respectful and that value and integrates differing perspectives and experiences

Accomplishments –

- Emphasized the Department's commitment to DOI during the annual Director's Address to staff
- Continued to normalize and encourage flexible work schedules through progressive policy and practice
- Updated the Employee Personal Data Sheet to reflect greater inclusivity

Plan Goal 3: Education and Training

Objective 1 – Offer training and workshops that achieve DOI learning goals

Accomplishments –

- Incorporated the Working Together for Virginia training module into the Department's onboarding training bundle
- Implemented an agency-wide annual review of DHRM Policy 2.35 Civility in the Workplace
- Conducted a section-wide training on Psychological Safety
- Provided recruitment & selection training to managers/supervisors during the 2023 Leadership Retreat

2023 ACCOMPLISHMENTS	**Plan Goal 4: Infrastructure and Accountability** Objective 1 – Sustain and increase agency or department efforts designed to amplify opportunities to advance the goals outlined in this framework Objective 2 – Create structures and processes of accountability for organizational leadership and effectiveness Accomplishments – - Incorporated DOI into the Agency's mission, values and strategic plan - Updated the DFS Hiring Procedure and Checklist to specify mandated training - Added DOI language to all Employee Work Profiles (EWPs) **Plan Goal 5: Community Engagement** Objective 1 – Improve outcomes and experiences for underrepresented groups by developing a pipeline for underrepresented groups to become forensic scientists Accomplishment – - DFS staff provided 49 outreach opportunities to community groups and students ranging from elementary school to university-level
2024 AGENCY DOI GOALS	**Agency Goal 1 – Access & Success** Objective 1 – Expand sources for recruiting diverse talent, particularly in the scientific disciplines Objective 2 – Evaluate the results of the DHRM engagement survey, exit interviews, and other sources to seek opportunities for improvement **Agency Goal 2 – Welcoming and Respectful Culture** Objective 1 – Encourage cross-collaboration among employees to enrich the employee experience Objective 2 – Continue to enroll new hires into Arbinger Training and promote Arbinger principles and practices **Agency Goal 3 – State Agency DOI Infrastructure & Training** Objective 1 – Review and revise promotion process/policies to standardize and make more transparent Objective 2 – Offer training and educational workshops for skills training, leadership development, and career advancement

Virginia Department of Forensic Science
Diversity, Opportunity, and Inclusion Plan

The Department of Forensic Science (DFS) is a nationally accredited forensic laboratory system established by Virginia Law to provide forensic laboratory services to the Commonwealth's state and local law enforcement agencies, medical examiners, Commonwealth's Attorneys, fire departments, and state agencies in the investigation of a criminal matters. DFS recognizes that its commitment to diversity, opportunity and inclusion supports and represents the pursuit of excellence in the delivery of forensic science services to the Commonwealth. We strive to create and sustain an inclusive environment that respects and values the perspectives of all individuals. Advancing the culture of our agency requires time, commitment, and the participation of every employee. Our people are our greatest strength. By doing this, we empower our staff to achieve their highest potential and to contribute to making Virginia the best place to live, work, and raise a family.

To execute this vision, we took a comprehensive look at how to (1) increase access to our job opportunities and ensure continuing success for all employees, (2) build a lasting culture that enhances, values, and capitalizes on the diversity in our workforce, and (3) develop a high-performing workforce.

Goal 1: Access and Success

Recruit and retain a diverse workforce by increasing access to diverse populations for recruiting.

Objective 1:

Expand sources for recruiting diverse talent, particularly in the scientific disciplines

a. Promote greater visibility of DFS job opportunities by attending at least one career fair in each of our four laboratory regions
b. Promote a positive brand image through a public awareness campaign
c. Continue to utilize the "Alternative Hiring Process" for individuals with disabilities

Objective 2

Continue to retain and promote a diverse workforce

a. Evaluate DFS Exit Interview form responses and the Mercer exit survey quarterly reports and seek opportunities for improvement
b. Evaluate the results of the DHRM engagement survey and seek opportunities for improvement
c. Investigate the potential for a formal recognition program for noteworthy performance

and/or achievements
d. Continue to ensure accessibility for diverse needs including, but not limited to, language access, digital access, and access for individuals with disabilities

Goal 2:   Welcoming and Respectful Culture

Create and sustain a culture that welcomes and embraces diverse opinions, independent thinking, and respectful interactions to deliver optimal results for the organization and its customers.

Objective 1

Establish a collaboration culture.
a. Encourage cross-functional team learning among employees to enrich the employee experience
b. Identify a minimum of one existing agency-wide challenge or opportunity and establish a cross-functional team to develop possible solution paths
c. Continue to hold agency-wide Section Spotlights

Objective 2

Continue to promote and embrace the Arbinger outward mindset principles and practices.
a. Continue to enroll all new hires into Arbinger training
b. Provide a minimum of one agency-wide Arbinger refresher training exercise
c. Continue to promote Mindset Mondays
d. Introduce a psychological safety training agency-wide

Goal 3:   State Agency DOI Infrastructure & Training

Maintain a plan and infrastructure that continues to provide individualized skills training and career development for state employees.

Objective 1

Review and revise promotion process/policies to standardize and make more transparent.

a. Develop a formal process for the advancement of Forensic Scientists

Objective 2

Continue to provide training and educational workshops for skills training, leadership development, and career advancement.

a. Continue to promote staff development training goals of:
   • Forensic Scientist/Toxicologist – 16 hours per year
   • Administration & Finance, Human Resources, Forensic Laboratory Specialists (FLS) V - VII – 8 hours per year
   • General Administration, FLS II/III – 4 hours per year