



Virginia Department of
Emergency Management

DIVERSITY, OPPORTUNITY, AND INCLUSION ANNUAL REPORT

2023



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2023 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Office of Community Impact (OCI) Formation (February 2023)

- Combined the Partners in Preparedness program and the former Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion into the Office of Community Impact.
- OCI's mission is to ensure inclusive practices through all phases of emergency management, with a focus on vulnerable populations.

Emergency Management Equity Working Group

- Established and maintained under the Code of Virginia (§ 44-146.18 (B19)).
- Aims to examine emergency management practices and offer guidance to the State Coordinator to ensure that programs and plans provide support to at-risk individuals and populations disproportionately impacted by disasters.

DOI Guidance for Localities

- Released guidance to assist localities in integrating inclusive language into their Emergency Operations Plans per statute (Code of Virginia (§ 44-146.19 (E))).
- Providing support to local Emergency Managers to understand their community demographics using data-driven analytics.

Partners in Preparedness Program

- Launched in May 2022 to ensure equal access to life-saving preparedness information regardless of barriers that may be in place due to circumstances (language, economic, isolation, age, Access and Functional Needs, etc.).
- Over 700 Partners from non-profits, faith-based communities, businesses, cultural centers, education, local government, and more are assisting in spreading the preparedness message.

Language Access for Limited English Proficiency Individuals

- Providing translation of emergency preparedness information into the top 7 languages identified in Virginia.
- Ensuring sign language interpreters are available for press conferences involving VDEM.

Preparedness Materials for Vulnerable Communities

- Distributing printed preparedness materials in English, Spanish, & Chinese.
- Digital versions are available on the website in additional languages.
- Braille materials, large print, & Access and Functional Needs (AFN)-specific preparedness information is planned for 2024.

Community Outreach

- The Office of Community Impact actively participates in outreach events, focusing on vulnerable communities and populations across the Commonwealth, including engagements with Virginia's diverse Native American tribes.



Grant Funding for Mitigation Projects

- Our grants team has worked to secure funding for mitigation projects in under-resourced communities.

VEST (Virginia Emergency Support Team) Support: Diversity, Opportunity, & Inclusion Officers

- Two officers in VEST leading diversity, opportunity, and inclusion efforts.
- Responsible for strategic leadership, training initiatives, and collaboration with the Virginia Department of Health (VDH).

Tool Development for Hazard Identification

- Developing a tool to help Virginians identify their top hazards and connect them with tailored preparedness information based on their self-identified circumstances.

Internship Program for Minority Youth

- Planned in summer 2024 for high school students, encouraging interest in a career in Emergency Management/Public Service.

Active Participation in Projects/Committees with Other State Agencies

- Contributing DOI-related insights to projects such as the Commonwealth Shelter Strategy, AFN Advisory Committee, and currently developing DOI Training for Emergency Operations in collaboration with the Department of Social Services.

Planning Support

- Providing DOI-related insight and inclusion for various internal plans, such as the Winter Weather Annex, Family Assistance Center Annex, Volunteer & Donations Management Plan Annex, Hurricane Playbook, and Agency Support Plan.



2024 AGENCY DOI GOALS

GOAL 1: OFFER CAREER DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES TO UNDERREPRESENTED YOUTH

Career focused mentoring is crucial for underrepresented groups as it supports their professional development and career advancement.

OBJECTIVE 1: Increase employee diversity by recruiting and retaining talent from different backgrounds.

- VDEM will partner with the Boys and Girls Club of Richmond and Matoaca High School to provide an internship program that introduces youth to the Emergency Management profession.
- The internship programs will last 6-8 weeks and will provide on-the-job training.

OBJECTIVE 2: Review and ensure that student internship and fellowship programs are diverse and have candidates from different backgrounds.

- Measure percentage of interns converted and hired for permanent employment.
- Coordinate outreach and recruitment efforts based on required qualifications, needed skills, and diversity.

GOAL 2: SUPPORT DIVERSITY AND EQUALITY IN THE WORKPLACE AND OUR COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Include and Engage Everyone in the Workplace

OBJECTIVE 1: Cultivate a supportive, welcoming, inclusive, and fair workplace culture that allows employees to feel connected to the agency's mission and contribute to their full potential.

- Pursue a comprehensive strategy to build and maintain a high-performing workforce that is inclusive of a diverse culture.
- Hold career fairs in conjunction with the Office of Community Impact to interact with diverse communities and organizations.

OBJECTIVE 2: Create a diversity video effectively showcasing commitment to diversity and inclusion. The video can be shared on the agency's SharePoint website.

OBJECTIVE 3: Establish Employee Resource Groups (ERGs)

- Establish ERGs bringing together employees with common identities or experiences, such as gender, race, or ethnicity. These groups provide a platform for sharing perspectives, experiences, and ideas, helping to promote a more inclusive work environment.



Goal 3: Foster a Diverse, High-Performing Workforce using data-driven approaches to Recruitment and Retention

Pursue a comprehensive strategy to build and maintain a high-performing workforce that is inclusive of all sectors of the population.

OBJECTIVE 1: Partner with leadership to coordinate outreach and recruitment efforts based on required qualifications, needed skills, and diversity.

- Review and ensure that recruitment, student internship and fellowship programs have diverse pipelines to draw candidates from all segments of society.
- Identify opportunities to continue to embed diversity and inclusion practices within the agency's work.