

# Diversity, Opportunity, and Inclusion

## 2023 Annual Report

Agency: Virginia Foundation for Healthy Youth

Year: 2023

<p>2023 Accomplishments</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• VFHY Board of Trustees adopted diversity &amp; inclusion statement for its human resources manual that reads:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ VFHY is a community of diverse constituency possessing a variety of perspectives, identities, and lived experiences. We recognize that to create an inclusive and intellectually vibrant community, we must understand and value both our individual differences and our collective similarities. Therefore, VFHY adopts practices that increase access, success, and inclusive excellence and to create a community that nurtures learning and growth for all of its members and customers.</li></ul></li><li>• Created and have followed staff training schedule regular training on diversity opportunity, and inclusion topics (every other month)</li><li>• Support the First Lady’s Dangers of Fentanyl Pilot Program in City of Roanoke for youth and young adults in effort to duplicate the pilot success statewide.</li><li>• Developed Right Help, Right Now initiative to expand youth awareness of the Dangers of Fentanyl through a free-educational module for teachers to present to youth throughout Virginia.</li></ul>
<p>2024 Goals</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Continue to follow staff training schedule regular training on diversity, opportunity, and inclusion topics (every other month)</li><li>• Continue to support the First Lady’s Dangers of Fentanyl Pilot Program in City of Roanoke for youth and young adults in effort to duplicate the pilot success statewide.</li><li>• Continue to provide support for the Right Help, Right Now initiative to expand youth awareness of the Dangers of Fentanyl through a free-educational module for teachers to present to youth throughout Virginia.</li></ul>



## 2024 Diversity Opportunity and Inclusion Plan

### *Purpose*

The Virginia Foundation for Healthy Youth (VFHY) strives to offer an environment in which staff can have open conversations and be comfortable to share individual views and perspective. We will continue to build a culture in which diverse ideas are welcome so we can adjust our internal and external policies and processes to be more inclusive. VFHY staff will intentionally reflect on the work done implementing the organization's mission to empower youth to make healthy choices. We will also ensure VFHY staff understands, participates in, and can communicate efforts related to diversity, opportunity, and inclusion (DOI). We will implement necessary changes to current operations, systems, and policies to better promote a diverse, opportune, and inclusive culture.

### *Principles of Community*

VFHY is committed to Virginia, the nation, and the world. We are a community of diverse constituency possessing a variety of perspectives, identities, and lived experiences. We recognize that to create an inclusive and intellectually vibrant community, we must understand and value both our individual differences and our collective similarities.

These *Principles of Community* are aspirational statements that embody our commitment and reflect the ideals we seek to uphold. Therefore, we adopt and practice the following principles as fundamental to our ongoing efforts to increase access, success, and inclusive excellence and to create a community that nurtures learning and growth for all of its members and customers:

**We affirm** the inherent dignity and value of every person and strive to maintain a climate for work, service, and learning based on mutual respect and understanding.

**We affirm** the right of each person to express thoughts and opinions freely. We encourage open expression within a climate of civility, sensitivity, and mutual respect.

**We affirm** the value of human diversity because it enriches our lives and our organizations. We acknowledge and respect our differences while affirming our common humanity.

**We affirm** the development of a high-quality, diverse workforce and the equipping of leaders with the skills to leverage diversity as a strength that reflects all segments of our society and values all aspects of our different lived experiences.

**We reject** all forms of prejudice and discrimination, including but not limited to those based on age, color, ability, gender, gender identity, gender expression, national origin, political affiliation, race, religion, sexual orientation, and veteran status. We take individual and collective responsibility for helping to eliminate bias, and discrimination and for increasing our own understanding of these issues through education, training, and interaction with others.

**We affirm** that diversity is a strength and commit to identify and breakdown structural barriers to full inclusion by embedding equity and inclusive excellence into our systems, formal and informal policies, and practices and be accountable for results and outcomes.

**We pledge** our collective commitment to incorporate these principles into VFHY’s mission of Empowering Youth to Make Healthy Choices.

## ***Implementation***

Implementing VFHY’s goals include the following steps:

- Make an organizational commitment to Inclusive Excellence
- Analyze current practices, policies, and data
- Identify and prioritize root causes of systemic inequity and barriers to change
- Develop strategies to eliminate or mitigate root causes and barriers
  - Redesign practices and policies to address opportunity gaps
  - Create new programs; eliminate/redesign harmful or ineffective programs
- Monitor progress of DOI efforts to ensure they remain integrated, intentional, and central to the core mission and functioning of state government

## ***VFHY Goals, Objectives, and Strategies***

### **Goal 1: Access and Success: Recruit and Retain a Diverse Workforce**

**Objective 1.1: Recruit and retain a diverse workforce by increasing access to diverse populations for recruiting.**

#### **Strategies**

1. Prior to recruitment of any position, identify diverse places in which to advertise positions such as university alumni groups, national organizational job boards, Virginia Values Veterans site, organizations that work with people with disabilities, LGBTQI organizations, and others, to help ensure a diverse applicant pool is achieved.
2. Share position advertisements with staff to share with their networks to extend the reach to potential applicants. Identify additional networks with which to share recruitment announcements.
3. Advertise positions with adequate time for screening and interviews.
4. Ensure interview panels have diverse representation
5. Review position descriptions to determine if a degree should be required or if comparable relevant experience is sufficient.
6. Review position descriptions to determine which should include a preference for bilingual staff.
7. Review potential to add a position or long-term consultant with expertise in grassroots programming, community-based engagement and/or addressing health disparities/inequities for ongoing work.
8. Continue to support work/life balance for employee retention.

### **Goal 2: Create and Maintain a Welcoming and Respectful Culture**

**Objective 2.1: Create and sustain an agency culture that affirms and respects diversity and employs inclusive practices throughout daily operations.**

#### **Strategies**

1. VFHY will educate grantees, contractors, attendees of events and trainings, and among the regional advisory boards and board of trustees about relevant DOI principles.
2. Assess the internal culture of hesitancy of the organization by talking directly about racism, homophobia, sexism, classism.
3. Develop and promote specific strategies to address current gaps in VFHY’s DOI practices.
4. Add DOI criteria to Best Value RFPs where feasible and review DOI approach for small

procurements.

5. Create a workgroup or process that allows opportunity for staff input on annual calendar of VFHY activities (e.g. staff meetings, conferences) to avoid conflicts with holidays not recognized on the state's holiday calendar, school calendars, and other conferences or events.
6. Review general operational processes using a DOI lens and adjust as needed.
7. Assess the potential and interest for an ongoing DOI strategy team.

**Objective 2.2: Focus community engagement activities on those that provide measurable, direct, and sustained benefit to all of Virginia's diverse communities.**

**Strategies**

1. Assess methods VFHY may use to ensure all training and communications materials are diverse, equitable and inclusive in content.
2. Build an accountability/review process to assess and implement an equity lens in external work, particularly when issuing Requests for Proposals for funding.
3. Assess methods within procurement processes to prioritize grant funding for children, youth and communities at highest risk of tobacco use and obesity.
4. Collect grantee input on how to better reach diverse communities.
5. Complete an assessment of Regional Advisory Board membership. Develop DOI process to ensure boards are diverse from a perspective of competencies, experiences, and demographic characteristics.
6. Review youth membership recruitment process in our Y St. youth engagement program to ensure we have diverse youth members statewide as well as in the Y St. leadership team.
7. Review marketing campaign materials, messaging and strategies to ensure diverse, equitable, and inclusive representation for youth in Virginia.
8. Develop internal criteria that we can use to ensure we are being inclusive of all identities.

**Objective 2.3: Continue to provide an environment where conflicts, concerns, and complaints are aired and addressed expeditiously.**

**Strategies**

1. Promote productive methods of conflict resolution through mediation, counseling, and training in respect for free speech and expression.
2. Promptly address inappropriate workplace behavior.
3. Promptly address concerns and complaints through a standard process that is consistently followed.

**Goal 3: VFHY Infrastructure & Training**

**Objective 3.1: Engage the workforce in learning the concepts of Diversity, Opportunity and Inclusion, and the importance of these concepts to achieving VFHY's mission.**

**Strategies**

1. Offer professional development for staff on DOI concepts, education about specific groups (e.g. LGBTQI, disabilities, racial/ethnic groups, low socio-economic status) and how those concepts can help the Foundation better achieve its mission.
2. Explore opportunities for individual coaching for staff.
3. Seek out and promote informal education opportunities for staff participation based on their interests such as hosting lunch and learn events, providing reading materials, podcasts, and webinars.

4. Have regularly scheduled staff retreats, staff bonding events, DOI-driven activities, and other staff- wide engagement opportunities

**Objective 3.2: Create and sustain an organizational infrastructure to support accountability in achieving opportunity goals within the agency and the Commonwealth.**

**Strategies**

1. Assess strategies used for each major initiative area to address equity and create new strategies to fill identified gaps (e.g. program grants, marketing campaigns, research grants).
2. Add DOI objectives to strategic plan.
3. Review and modify organizational policies and procedures to ensure they address DOI
4. Assess organization's decision-making process which considers equity impacts when engaging grantees, contractors, community trainers, and vendors.
5. Include DOI performance expectation to position descriptions.
6. Include DOI performance measures in staff evaluations.
7. Add DOI as an agenda item in staff meetings, with advance notice on the topic and resources to allow staff time to prepare for the discussion.
8. Create an inclusive system to assess effectiveness of DOI strategies that welcomes staff feedback.
9. Seek routine feedback for evaluation for all VFHY workshops, trainings, and events in order for future speakers and/or presenters to better reflect DOI principles in their content.