2024 DEI Report

Virginia Information Technologies Agency

BACKGROUND

The Virginia Information Technologies Agency (VITA) submits this 2024 diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) legislative report, pursuant to Virginia Code § 2.2-602(B), as amended in 2024, which provides:

> Each agency shall establish an infrastructure to effectively support ongoing progress and achievements by reporting diversity, equity, and inclusion goals in coordination with the Governor's Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion and the General Assembly.

> Each agency shall submit an annual report to the Governor and the General Assembly by July 1 of each year assessing the impact of the strategic plan on the populations served by the agency and on the agency's workforce and budget.

This report covers 2023 through June 30, 2024.

A copy of VITA's 2024 DEI plan is attached. This report addresses that plan, VITA's diversity steps and achievements, and the effects on the agency's workforce, budget, and customers/populations served.

REPORT

VITA workforce development initiatives seek to grow and develop the agency workforce. The agency has an internal leadership development program that provides employees the opportunity for leadership development training facilitated by agency leaders. The third cohort of the program concluded in the spring of 2024. VITA also has started a junior associate program that enables a few high school students to work at the agency and gain paid, professional work experience. VITA's college internship program has grown significantly in the past two summers as well, with the 2024 cohort representing a bright, diverse group of students placed within business units throughout the agency.

Through internal communications, affinity groups, and programming, VITA seeks to recognize our diverse workforce and encourage an inclusive agency culture. The main affinity group, IncludingU, has year-round programs that provide opportunities for employee engagement, mentoring, volunteering, and networking.

VITA recruitment efforts have significantly grown in the past two years, and the agency workforce has increased substantially in size.

VITA addresses diversity and inclusion as part of normal agency operations, including in the budget process as well as in service to its customers and populations it serves.

EFFECT ON AGENCY WORKFORCE

VITA's workforce has benefited greatly from the above initiatives (internal leadership development, IncludingU affinity group, the junior associate program for high school students, and an expanded

college internship program). The agency's recruitment and development efforts assist in creating a dynamic and supportive environment, which is necessary for a growing and diverse workforce.

Leadership Development Program (LDP):

LDP promotions:
        FY23 – 9 promotions
        FY24 – 11 promotions

Number of leaders who taught/facilitated LDP:
        10 leaders in Cohort 1
        15 leaders in Cohort 2
        22 leaders in Cohort 3

Number of employees who have attended LDP:
        20 participants in Cohort 1
        25 participants in Cohort 2
        24 participants in Cohort 3

IncludingU Affinity Group Program Events for FY 2023 and 2024:

Invest in Women discussion with special guest speaker, Anne Holton. Honoring local women from the past and present who have taken the lead to show the importance of change and to establish firmer safeguards, practices, and legislation reflecting these values. (March 2023)

Women's Equality Day with keynote speaker, Henrico Commonwealth Attorney, Shannon Taylor. (August 2023)

Dress for Success clothing drive: In all, a total of 13 boxes and 2 containers of women's professional clothing attire were collected and donated. (June 2023)

IncludingU's "Go Pink Day" at VITA focused on promoting awareness of breast cancer and raising money for research. VITA staff dressed in pink, took a walk together, enjoyed pink lemonade, bought pink ribbon pins and watched an informational presentation. (October 2023)

Agency Values & Strategic Plan

VITA has a culture of inclusive collaboration that is incorporated into VITA's FY23-27 strategic business plan and VITA's values. See https://www.vita.virginia.gov/media/vitavirginiagov/about/pdf/VITA-Strategic-Business-Plan.pdf.

Recruitment

Since VITA's internal human resources (HR) function was created in 2020, VITA HR has internally directed that interview panel members must be diverse. Interview panel members must also be at an appropriate level (the same or a higher role than the position being filled) and hold confidential all information related to the interviewed applicants and the recommendation or selection. During FY25, VITA intends to review and augment related process and training documentation and diversity data tracking.

Workforce Data

2023 Agency Demographic Data

Total Employees (as of 1/1/23): 224

Women	Men
White: 56	White: 79
Black: 42	Black: 18
Hispanic: 2	Hispanic: 2
Asian: 5	Asian: 5
American Indian: 1	African American (?): 1
2+ Races: 3	2+ Races: 2
Non-Specified: 2	Non-Specified: 6

Total Employees (as of 7/1/23): 283

Women	Men
White: 75	White: 96
Black: 44	Black: 22
Hispanic: 2	Hispanic: 2
Asian: 5	Asian: 9
Asian Indian: 1	Asian Indian: 1
African American: 3	African American: 3
American Indian: 1	American Indian: 0
2+ Races: 2	2+ Races: 5
Non-Specified: 7	Non-Specified: 5

2024 Agency Demographic Data

Total Employees (as of 6/25/24): 314

Women	Men	Unknown Gender
White: 84	White: 108	White: 1
Black: 49	Black: 27	Black: 0
Hispanic: 3	Hispanic: 2	Hispanic: 0
Asian: 4	Asian: 12	Asian: 0
Asian Indian: 1	Asian Indian: 2	Asian Indian: 0
African American: 2	African American: 4	African American: 0
American Indian: 1	American Indian: 0	American Indian: 0
2+ Races: 2	2 + Races: 6	2+ Races: 0
Non-Specified: 4	Non-Specified: 2	Non-Specified: 0

AGENCY BUDGET

Diversity and inclusion efforts are part of normal agency operations. There is a position within VITA HR that has lead responsibility for such efforts, but that position also performs other HR-related functions, and there is no dedicated DEI budget. All DEI-related agency expenditures have been from general agency HR and/or activity funds.

EFFECT ON AGENCY CUSTOMERS/POPULATION SERVED

VITA provides IT infrastructure services to 67 executive branch agencies, as well as statewide

contracts and information security support and guidance beyond the executive branch. VITA also regularly interacts with a diverse supplier community and other stakeholders outside state government. Meeting the needs of customer agencies and partnering to serve, support, and protect Virginians requires understanding the complexity and diversity of the Commonwealth and the stakeholder communities who partner with and rely on VITA.

CONCLUSION

VITA's DEI plan has been developed with leadership support and input. Diversity and inclusion are part of the operations of the agency. Agency initiatives to develop, grow, and diversify the workforce align with the plan and better enable VITA to fully support the needs of Commonwealth agencies and Virginians.

Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Strategic Plan

Effective July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2027

At VITA, we recognize that our people are our most important asset. We also recognize that diversity, equity, and inclusion, are essential to the agency's ability to effectively carry out its mission. These fundamental and value enhancing tenets of our mission-oriented culture dictate that we continuously work to attract, hire, develop, retain high-quality, diverse talent, and achieve equitable opportunity for our workforce.

The recognition of these tenets allows us to build and maintain a workforce that reflects a diversity of backgrounds and experiences, as well as the diversity of customers we serve. Our culture of diversity, equity, and inclusion will not only be inclusive, but one in which we work together within a team environment of mutual respect, honesty, and integrity.

This update of VITA's Diversity Equity, and Inclusion Strategic Plan will continue to provide a blueprint to build upon. We aim to continue making progress toward promoting workforce diversity, equity, and inclusion. This Plan includes measurable actions that are designed to help fully integrate diversity, equity, and inclusion in the strategic decision-making of the agency, enhance organizational effectiveness, and meet future challenges.

The Diversity Advisory Committee (DAC) was created to provide insight and recommendations to VITA leadership. Led by the HR Program Manager DEI Leader, this diverse group meets regularly to work to address issues, make recommendations, promote training, and lead events to bring awareness to diversity, equity, and inclusion within the agency. The DAC partners with the HR Program Manager DEI Leader to communicate shared knowledge, resources, and engagement opportunities. The DAC also develops updates to the Strategic Plan, provides plan status updates, and assists with the update reporting to the Executive Team.

This Plan envisions that VITA's leadership, in partnership with the Diversity Advisory Committee, will assume responsibility for its implementation. VITA's leaders recognize that the promotion of diversity, the enhancement of inclusive behavior and the advancement of equitable opportunities are both an individual and a collective responsibility. It is critical that these principles are a prominent part of the fabric and culture of the agency.

DEFINING DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION

Diversity is defined broadly and refers to the range of similarities and differences in individual and organizational characteristics that shape our workplace. These include national origin, language, race, color, disability, ethnicity, gender, age, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, socioeconomic status, veteran status, and family structure. The concept also encompasses other differences among people, including geographic differences and, importantly, diversity of thought and life experiences.

Equity at its core means fairness. We must ensure that individuals, or groups of individuals, are not treated less favorably because of their protected characteristics. Equity also means equality of opportunity, ensuring that those who may be disadvantaged can get the tools to access the same, fair, opportunities as their peers.

Inclusion refers to a culture that connects each employee to the organization; encourages collaboration, flexibility, and fairness; and leverages diversity throughout the organization so all employees can participate and contribute to their full potential.

THE MISSION CASE FOR DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION

There continues to be a strong support for the conclusion that diversity in both leadership and the workforce is essential for maximizing mission effectiveness and impact. In creating a culture of inclusion, we understand that it isn't just the right thing to do, it's also the smart thing. Diverse agencies are more innovative and better positioned to succeed.

We strive to create workplaces that reflect the communities we serve and where everyone feels empowered to bring their full, authentic selves to work. There is work to be done, but we are dedicated to our people, customers, and community to achieve the goals set forth in this plan.

CONNECTING TO VITA's STRATEGIC BUSINESS GOALS

The Plan is designed to support VITA's primary strategic goals listed below:

Goal 1: Accountability, Inclusive Collaboration
Invest in and empower our people to foster a customer-oriented and innovative workforce invested in and empower our people to foster a customer-oriented.

Goal 2: Growth Mindset
Partner with customers to develop positive customer experiences and achieve business outcomes through technology and innovative workforce.

Goal 3: Effectiveness and Persistence
Address risk, seize opportunities and mitigate costs through proactive governance.

OBJECTIVES OF THIS DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION STRATEGIC PLAN

This Plan sets forth four overarching objectives in support of diversity and inclusion:

GOAL 1: Demonstrate leadership commitment and accountability.
Demonstrate leadership commitment and accountability through agency policy, messaging, and behavior that advances diversity and inclusion goals and objectives.

GOAL 2: Foster a connected culture.
Cultivate a supportive, welcoming, inclusive, and fair work environment that allows employees to feel connected to the agency's mission and contribute to their full potential.

GOAL 3: Build a diverse talent pipeline.
Pursue a comprehensive strategy and plan to build and maintain a high-performing workforce.

GOAL 4: Leverage diversity, equity, and inclusion for mission effectiveness.
Use VITA resources and services in a manner that reflects the diversity of our customers and suppliers.

VITA DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION GOALS

Goal 1: Demonstrate leadership commitment and accountability.

Demonstrate leadership commitment and accountability through agency policy, messaging, and behavior that advances diversity and inclusion goals and objectives.

1a. Strategic Planning
Maintain a Strategic Plan that aligns diversity and inclusion efforts with VITA strategic goals and objectives.

1b. Communication Strategy
Maintain a communication strategy that further elevates diversity and inclusion as a key strategic priority and reinforces leadership commitment.

1c. Accountability
- Ensure and enforce that leadership teams, managers, and supervisors understand how diversity and inclusion performance impacts results.
- Explore the feasibility of diversity and inclusion performance metrics to promote accountability and best practices.

1d. Transparency
- Partner with Diversity Advisory Committee to raise awareness by promoting information about diversity and inclusion on the Teams page (currently in creation) and other tools (newsletters, blast, etc.) to provide updated diversity data to VITA team members.

Goal 2: Foster a connected culture. Cultivate a supportive, welcoming, inclusive, and fair work environment that allows employees to feel connected to the agency's mission and contribute to their full potential.

2a. Equal Employment Opportunity
- Use quantitative and qualitative data to evaluate programs and processes and identify barriers that may deter inclusivity and opportunity for all.
- Continue to develop and implement initiatives designed to prevent discrimination, harassment, and other actions that undermine our commitment to diversity, inclusion, and equal opportunity.
- Expand the new hire onboarding process to ensure we are appropriately preparing our new hires for success. Onboarding will continue to include an overview of the agency's history, culture and values, and instructions on scheduling a meet and greet with each executive team member within their first 60 days of employment. The onboarding will be expanded by adding a building tour, welcome email, points of contact for addressing questions/issues new hires may have, and 30, 60, 90-day check-ins. Additionally, to foster a sense of connection and collaboration, we will host a scavenger hunt for new hires.

2b. Fair and Unbiased Selection Processes
- Administer a fair and systematic approach for recruiting, evaluating, and selecting individuals for competitive service, excepted service, senior management, and professional development programs, including when assembling interview panels.

2c. Employee Engagement and Satisfaction

- Use employee feedback, including survey data, to create, update, and implement action plans to improve organizational culture; encourage leadership approaches that support employee engagement and belonging; and address specific employee concerns.
- Collect new team member feedback from multiple sources, to include but not limited to onboarding (30, 60, 90-day feedback), stay interviews, exit interviews, annual employee surveys, and training feedback to capture and address gaps and concerns to continue to foster an environment of feedback accessibility and accountability.

2d. Professional Development and Mentorship

Create and develop a Mentoring Program to enhance opportunities for career development, assistance with goal setting, performance, and advancement throughout their employment cycle, as well as encouraging collaboration among divisions. Explore the options of establishing development opportunities, such as a rotation program, stretch opportunities, etc.

Encourage cross-collaboration and rotational assignments among employees to enrich the employee experience, promote education and growth, foster diversity of thought, and inspire innovative solutions. Cross training opportunities also creates workforce sustainability, increases employee engagement, and makes the agency more agile.

Incorporate leader skills trainings that include team collaboration to achieve agency business goals and create more innovative work environment strategies to promote collaboration within our teams and highlight collaboration and development.

Collaboration: Collaboration is more than just camaraderie; it involves creative problem-solving, communication, knowledge sharing, and innovation. It encourages enthusiastic participation from everyone on the team.

Benefits of Team Collaboration:
- Efficiency: Collaborative teams' complete tasks faster and achieve better results.
- Idea Contribution: Provide more opportunities for team members to share creative ideas.
- Knowledge Sharing: Improve knowledge sharing within the agency.
- Decision-Making: Foster team-focused decision-making.

Offer events that recognize, value, and honor diversity and independent thinking as well as events that promote wellness, community involvement, and educational sharing.

Increase the Leadership Development Program footprint, while adding at least two additional training and development programs that allow the opportunity for all levels of the agency staff to participate in their professional growth.

Launch the Individual Development Plans (IDP) initiative. Train and coach managers on the purpose of IDP's, as well as how to deliver, encourage, and promote development in their groups.

Offer training opportunities to include the skills that help keep dialogue flowing in the face of disagreement for improved relationships and results.

Creation of training library to promote training opportunities throughout the year to all agency staff, to include VITA Values (included but not limited to Unconscious Bias, Making Accessibility Accessible, How to Your Team, Taking Initiative, Producing High Quality Work, Setting & Meeting Expectations, Dedication, Teamwork, Confidence), Crucial Conversations, establishing open dialogue. Expanding as needed to meet the development need of the workforce.

2e. Disability Inclusion and Training
- Ensure the VITA work environment is welcoming, accessible, and inclusive of individuals with disabilities; encourage support for programs and activities; and support hiring and promotion of individuals with disabilities.
- Verify that accessibility needs are incorporated into all training offerings to include but not limited to directions and schedules that are clearly communicated both audibly and visually using clear concise methods as well as listening to accommodation needs and make the best accommodations possible. Test trainings to ensure they are truly accessible.
- Provide employees with disabilities the necessary accommodations for them to be successful.
- Listen to team members requesting accommodations to ensure we offer the best tools possible to be successful in their positions. Considering options such as adjustments in job tasks, flexible work schedules, including flex scheduling, improved office accessibility, specialized software and/or equipment, and alternative supervisory structure or methods.
- Promote respect of all individuals and provide clear expectations for collegial interactions and compliance with the Civility in the Workplace Policy.
- Provide, review, and discuss with new team members the importance of reviewing, understanding, complying, and asking questions if needed on the policy.
- Share information, articles, tools, etc. on the importance of respect, independent thinking, providing expectational customer service, modeling agency believes, employee rights, etc. via multiple sources such as VITACOMMS, DEIAC Newsletter, IncludingU Teams Page, VITA Townsquare Channel, etc.

Goal 3: Build a diverse talent pipeline, pursue a comprehensive strategy to build and maintain a high-performing workforce drawn from all segments of society.

3a. Outreach
- Engage in strategic outreach and broad recruitment, utilizing a variety of sources including diverse professional organizations, to maximize the agency's ability to attract a diverse pool of applicants for employment and internship opportunities.

3b. Recruitment
- Increase and maintain relationships with targeted sources, to include but not limited to area high schools (such as Richmond Public Schools/Work-Based Learning &Testing Department); area universities such as Virginia Commonwealth University and Historically Black Colleges Universities (HBCU's) across the DMV (DC, Maryland, and Virginia) area; and organizations like the Richmond Technical Center and CodeRVA that promote STEM, information technology, and cyber security. Provide information series, FAQ sessions, attend events that are focused on diversity and inclusion, tagging relevant groups and organizations on social media to promote agency vacancies, and posting on niche job boards that are focused on diverse candidates.
- Utilize the Commonwealth's "Alternative Hiring Process" for people with disabilities. Continue to ensure all job postings note and meet accessibility standards. Address and report to DHRM any

platform issues with features such as properly color-contrasted, large text, and compatibility with screen readers and other assistive technologies.

- Ensure inclusive job description phrasing and structuring are appropriate by avoiding the use of ableist terms or clichéd requirements. Instead, focus on clear, concise language and shorter sentences that are easier to read, and assure that job descriptions are between 300 to 650 words to strike a balance. Move beyond the generic equal opportunities statement and explicitly mention accommodations that we'll provide during the recruitment process.
- Regularly collect and analyze diversity data to understand the representation of candidates with disabilities in our applicant pool and workforce, and utilize this information to tailor our recruitment strategies. Diversity data to include race, ethnicity, gender identity, age, and disability status. Tracking documents will be created to ensure efficiency and validate data. Quarterly status reporting of the data will be reported to agency leadership.
- Train hiring managers on disability awareness, unconscious bias, and inclusive practices. Equip them with the knowledge and skills needed to engage effectively with candidates with disabilities.
- Anticipate and make accommodations for applicants during the recruitment process. Demonstrate inclusivity by showcasing how our agency is already acting inclusively, including by highlighting employee resource groups, accessibility initiatives, and success stories related to employees with disabilities. Transparency is a key point in attracting disabled candidates.
- Populate the interview panels with members from different races, ages, religions, backgrounds, etc. from across the agency. This will help improve not only the agency's hiring process but also set the example and show the applicant and team members that we have a strong commitment to them and to a diverse workforce. Unconscious bias training will be required for all panelists.
- Screen all applicants with the same set of questions and use a rubric to rate their responses allowing all candidates to showcase their expertise equally and remove any questions that could result from unconscious bias.
- Train agency managers to ensure they are prepared to screen candidates with diversity and inclusion in mind. Communicate new hiring practices, updates etc. as they are implemented, and provide resource guides and/or FAQs on their role is in the new process.

3c. Diversity Partnerships
- Establish and maintain partnerships with minority, women, and other diverse professional associations to help develop and maintain a pipeline of diverse candidates for employment in professional occupations needed to meet agency needs.

Goal 4: Leverage diversity, equity, and inclusion for mission effectiveness. Use VITA resources and services in a manner that reflects diversity of customers and stakeholders.

4a. Diverse Perspectives
- Promote diverse participation and perspectives in all facets of the VITA's mission and in the Diversity Advisory Committee.
- Recognize rules and practices that are effective in meeting the needs of a diverse client base, workforce, and community.
- Offer opportunities for workforce and client-base to have open conversations to resolve conflicts with the utilization of mediation process.
- Offer opportunities for agency-wide and targeted discussions (e.g., Town Hall meetings, roundtables, and small group discussions) on issues related to diversity and inclusion, such as generational diversity, unconscious bias, disability inclusion, and other critical topics.
- Promote an open-door practice to allow employees of the agency to communicate with senior management without any barriers. The benefits include improvement in teamwork,

communication, and information sharing, solving problems quickly and avoiding larger issues, fostering healthy and open discussions, boosting morale, trust, and productivity, and reducing turnover and making the workplace better.

4b. Public-Facing Diversity and Inclusion
- Identify opportunities to embed diversity and inclusion priorities into all aspects of the VITA work.
- Ensure that diverse voices are represented in programming, such as agency-wide events, mission-focused training, advisory committee composition, and participation in roundtables and similar events.

4c. Diversity Accountability
- Fully implement a new performance standard for supervisors and managers that focuses on accountability, employee career development, and the cultivation of an inclusive, constructive work environment that is committed to Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) policies and principles and is built upon transparent communication, mutual trust, and respect.
- Develop and implement a plan to provide all managers resources to services to receive employee feedback and coaching for inclusion at work.
- Mature the DEI model to improve the consistency of desired outcomes by strengthening accountability, utilizing technology, and enhancing training.

EVALUATION METHODOLOGY
The continuous effectiveness and achievement of VITA's diversity and inclusion goals will be reviewed twice annually. The HR Program Manager DEI Leader in partnership with the Diversity Advisory Committee will institute systems of assessment reporting accessibility and continuous improvement to optimize the realization of the state of the agency providing the reporting to the VITA Executive Team and cascaded down to team members. The report will focus on suggested improvements on the implementation of the actions, progress made and key successes.

The HR Program Manager DEI Leader and the Diversity Advisory Committee are also committed to the updates of the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion collaboration site for the sharing of knowledge, resources, engagement opportunities, and real time updates on the plan status.

The Strategy Update Report will include:
- A qualitative assessment of progress or achievement of the actions
- A quantitative assessment of the impact of the strategy on employee perceptions and experience of VITA's culture

The outcome of the evaluation and review will guide the development of further action plans.

Approval

Robert O'Snow
_____
Agency Head Signature

6/24/224
_____
Date

Date Created: 06/29/2021