

Diversity, Opportunity, and Inclusion 2023 Annual Report

AGENCY: Marine Resources Commission
YEAR: 2022 - 2023



Plan Goal 1: Access & Success

Objective 1

- Broadened our recruitment strategies to address agency-wide hiring requirements, with an emphasis on attracting candidates from historically underrepresented communities.
 - **Diversified Outreach Events:**
 - Expanded outreach events into diverse communities not previously targeted.
 - Developed culturally sensitive and inclusive outreach materials and presentations.
 - Collaborated with community leaders and organizations to enhance engagement in diverse communities.
 - **Staffing Diversity at Recruiting Events:**
 - Ensured representation from both law enforcement and non-law enforcement staff at recruiting events.
 - Fostered a diverse recruitment team to connect with a broader range of candidates.
 - **Demographic Tracking of Outreach Events:**
 - Implemented a system to track and analyze demographic data from outreach events.
 - Used data to refine future outreach strategies and ensure inclusivity.
- VMRC HR Director made available “Alternative Hiring Process” for people with language barriers and disabilities.
- Revised recruitment process. Revisions applied to the method for screening, interviewing panels and selection of candidates.
 - **Creation of Outreach and Recruitment Position:**
 - Established a dedicated position within law enforcement for outreach and recruitment.
 - Defined the responsibilities and goals of the position, ensuring alignment with the overall recruitment strategy.
- Diversified our recruitment efforts to include various professional organizations, colleges and universities.
 - **Handshake Platform for College Recruiting:**
 - Leveraged Handshake platform to connect with college students interested in law enforcement careers.
 - Established a presence on Handshake through informative profiles, regular updates, and engagement with potential candidates.

- Collaborated with career services departments at universities to maximize the platform's effectiveness.
- **Focus on Conservation Programs:**
 - Strengthened partnerships with universities offering conservation programs.
 - Tailored recruitment materials and messaging to highlight the intersection of law enforcement and conservation.
 - Attended relevant career fairs and events hosted by universities with strong conservation programs.
- Ensured to utilize interview panels that include members of diverse backgrounds, genders and perspectives.
 - **Inclusive Application Review:**
 - Developed a comprehensive review process that considers both conservation and law enforcement backgrounds.
 - Trained application reviewers to assess the unique skills and experiences from diverse backgrounds.
- Increased VMRC workforce by 4.96% with minorities and 4.71% by females. Increased “under age 25” workforce category by 3.79%. (See chart below)

	11/1/2022	%	3/1/2024	%	Improvement %
# - Employees	148		154		
<i>Gender</i>					
# - Females	43	29.05405	52	33.76623	4.712179712
# - Males	105	70.94595	102	66.23377	
	148	100	154	100	
<i>Age</i>					
To 25	4	2.702703	10	6.493506	3.790803791
26 - 39	47	31.75676	47	30.51948	
40 - 59	63	42.56757	66	42.85714	
60 and over	34	22.97297	31	20.12987	
	148	100	154	100	
<i>Ethnicity</i>					
American Indian	2	1.351351	2	1.298701	
Asian	4	2.702703	4	2.597403	
Black	8	5.405405	13	8.441558	3.036153036
Hispanic	1	0.675676	4	2.597403	1.921726922
White	133	89.86486	131	85.06494	
	148	100	154	100	
<u>TOTAL Minority</u>	15	10.13514	23	14.93506	4.957879958
<i>Veteran</i>					
Female	1	0.675676	1	0.649351	
Male	19	12.83784	18	11.68831	
	20	13.51351	19	12.33766	

Objective 2

- Promptly addressed inappropriate workplace behavior, and HR Director partners with Supervisors to ensure the performance management processes in DHRM Policy 1.60 Standards of Conduct is administered consistently and appropriately.

Plan Goal 2: Welcoming & Respectful Culture

Objective 1

- During onboarding, ensure new employees are made welcomed professionally, amicably, made aware and understand the agency's inclusive principles and practices.
- Promote training and development opportunities to all levels of staff; enable staff to participate in programs that are designed for professional growth.
- Ensure accessibility for diverse needs including but not limited to language access, digital access, and access for individuals with disabilities.
- VMRC department of Human Resources (HR) implemented process for application of reasonable accommodations and work modifications for employees, policies, procedures, and best practices; and solicited feedback on improvements that are needed in the day-to-day work environment and with return-to-work for employees with disabilities.

Objective 2

- Recipients of complaints must immediately notify the VMRC Human Resource Director or their Human Resource Analyst. The VMRC Human Resource Director is responsible for coordinating the investigation of the alleged prohibited conduct. All complaints are assigned and investigated in a manner to ensure timely resolution.
- Employees can report alleged discriminatory, non-discriminatory prohibited conduct, and threatening or violent conduct to their direct supervisor or any member of management within their chain of command, the applicable Division Chief, the VMRC Human Resource Director or Human Resource Analyst, or MRC Agency Director.

Plan Goal 3: State Agency DOI Infrastructure & Training

Objective 1

- Incorporated the DOI plan into the agency's strategic plan and reporting efforts.
- Solicited input from DHRM, other Virginia agencies and universities with well-established DOI programs to aid VMRC in more effectively and efficiently implementing DOI principles at VMRC.

Objective 2

- Institute systems of assessment, reporting, accountability, and continuous improvement to optimize the realization of the agency's and/or department's goals.
- Aligned DOI responsibilities and tasks with other human resources functions and provided a point of contact with the human resources department to this office.
- Engaged agency leaders and key stakeholders in reviewing and creating an action plan for diversity.
- Reviewed and still in mode of assessment of internal policies and procedures throughout the agency and/or divisions to identify opportunities to further organizational excellence.

Objective 3

- Increased training opportunities.

Agency Goal 1: Access and Success

Objective 1:

Continue to improve hiring processes and increase access to potential applicants from diverse populations.

- Communicate and train leadership on new recruitment processes.
- Continue to assess and measure recruitment and hiring diversity results.
- Explore new sources of recruitment focusing on diverse applicants and populations.

Objective 2:

Continue to retain and promote a diverse workforce.

- Will create and implement an internship program for the agency, and will continue to review, modify, and build the apprenticeship programs to cultivate future talent pipelines and create more equitable, accessible pathways to careers within VMRC for historically underrepresented and diverse populations.
- Implement intentional outreach to high schools and colleges to increase awareness of environmental study programs.
- Utilized interagency retention focused working groups to identify avenues of retention and promotion within current workforce.

Agency Goal 2: Welcoming and Respectful Culture

Objective 1:

Persist in creating and maintaining a climate that is supportive and respectful and that values and integrates differing perspectives and experiences.

- Incorporate DHRM *Civility in the Workplace* (2.35) & *Standards of Conduct* (1.60) into all performance management planning, conversations, and memos.
- Ensure employees with disabilities receive the accommodations they need to thrive and succeed in their roles.
- Promote cross-collaboration and training among employees to enhance their professional development, foster diversity of perspectives, and encourage innovative problem-solving.
- Organize events that celebrate and acknowledge diversity and independent thinking, fostering a culture of inclusion and appreciation for varied perspectives and contributions.

Objective 2:

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

- Implement employee relations program where HRD partners with field supervisors, providing site visits to MRC field offices to encourage communication and collaboration. Focus should be on employee communication as well as coaching

and training field supervision on civility in the workplace and communication avenues with Human Resources.

- Advocate for effective conflict resolution methods such as mediation, counseling, and training, emphasizing the importance of respecting free speech and expression.
- Ensure swift intervention in cases of inappropriate workplace behavior, maintaining a positive and respectful work environment.
- Disseminate and train on DHRM standardized process for promptly addressing concerns and complaints, ensuring consistency and fairness in resolution procedures.

Agency Goal 3: State Agency DOI Infrastructure

Objective 1:

Continue to amplify opportunities to advance the goals outlined in this framework.

- Integrate DOI plan into the agency's strategic framework and reporting initiatives.
- Develop procedures for transparently disseminating DOI resources and best practices throughout all departments.

Objective 2:

Continue to create structures and processes of accountability to increase organizational effectiveness with the Department of Human Resource Management.

- Implement robust assessment, reporting, and accountability systems to enhance the achievement of MRC goals through continuous improvement.
- Integrate DOI responsibilities with existing human resources functions, ensuring alignment and establishing a dedicated point of contact within the MRC leadership or HR department.
- Maintain ongoing review and evaluation of internal policies and procedures across MRC to identify areas for enhancing organizational effectiveness and excellence.

Objective 3:

Ensure ongoing access to training and educational resources for all employees.

- Provide diverse training and educational options covering skills enhancement, leadership cultivation, and career progression.
- Establish talent management initiatives encompassing internships, succession planning, and ongoing professional growth.
- Ensure accessibility of training programs to all employees through various facilitation methods such as classroom sessions, virtual learning, self-paced online modules, seminars, and conferences.
- Expand the range of training opportunities available to foster continuous learning and development.



DIVERSITY, OPPORTUNITY, AND INCLUSION

STRATEGIC PLAN - FY 2024 - 2025



Virginia Marine Resources Commission

380 Fenwick Road, Building No. 96, Hampton, Virginia 23651

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MESSAGE FROM VIRGINIA MARINE RESOURCES COMMISSIONER



The Virginia Marine Resources Commission (VMRC) is steadfast in its commitment to fostering diversity, opportunity, and inclusion within its workforce and operations. We recognize that a diverse and inclusive workforce is essential for achieving our mission and serving the citizens of the Commonwealth effectively.

We are dedicated to upholding high ethical standards, fairness, and consistency in our actions, considering them as fundamental values of our agency. By embracing diversity, opportunity, and inclusion, we strive to provide the highest quality services to all members of our community.

To achieve these goals, we are committed to implementing non-discriminatory recruitment processes, conducting targeted outreach efforts, regularly reviewing program opportunities, and eliminating barriers to accessing VMRC services. We understand that our workforce is our most valuable asset, and we are committed to ensuring that it reflects the diversity of the communities we serve.

As Commissioner of VMRC, I reaffirm our commitment to diversity, opportunity, and inclusion. I am personally dedicated to enhancing and refining our practices to create an inclusive and supportive workplace environment for all employees. Together, we will continue to build a VMRC that is welcoming, equitable, and representative of the Commonwealth we serve.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "Jamie L. Green". The signature is stylized and cursive.

Jamie L. Green
Commissioner, VMRC

COMMITMENT STATEMENT

The leadership of the Virginia Marine Resources Commission recognizes the importance of expanding opportunities for all residents of Virginia. The following goals and objectives are designed to advance the vision outlined in the Governor's Executive Order 10, both internally and externally, across all aspects of the agency's operations. Our leadership team is dedicated to proactively implementing strategies, ideas, and platforms that embody the principles of diversity, opportunity, and inclusion (DOI), integrating them into our daily practices. Adhering to these principles is vital for the overall effectiveness and well-being of the agency.

VMRC is committed to upholding the overarching mission of the Commonwealth's Plan. We will continually strive for inclusive excellence and employ achievable goals to assess the agency's progress in this objective.



INTRODUCTION

The Virginia Marine Resources Commission (VMRC) stands as one of the oldest agencies within the Virginia State Government, serving the Commonwealth for over a century without interruption. Its primary charge is to balance the demands of a growing population for economic development, commerce, and recreation, with the imperative of conserving and protecting marine environments, aquatic resources, and the tidal waters and habitats that sustain them, for both present and future generations.

Recognizing that our employees are our most treasured asset, VMRC is steadfast in its commitment to fostering a workforce that embodies diverse backgrounds, fosters inclusive environments, and provides equitable opportunities for all. We pledge to advance a comprehensive recruitment strategy aimed at attracting, hiring, developing, and retaining a diverse array of talent. Moreover, we are dedicated to cultivating a learning environment where all staff members gain an understanding of the principles of Diversity, Opportunity, and Inclusion.

We acknowledge the importance of extending these values beyond our agency's walls and into the communities we serve. Through collaboration and partnership building, we are committed to promoting diversity, opportunity, and inclusion throughout our outreach efforts.

Our objective is to enhance and expand our initiatives aimed at advancing workforce diversity, opportunity, and inclusion. These efforts will be guided by goals that are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound (SMART). Achieving these objectives requires the commitment and accountability of every member of our team. It is through collective dedication and responsibility that we will realize our shared vision.



DEFINITIONS

To ensure that there is an established framework for language regarding concepts and practices of Diversity, Opportunity and Inclusion (DOI), the Virginia Marine Resources Commission adopted the definitions of DOI based on the language from the “D5 Racial Opportunity Tools” glossary, the “U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission”, and *DHRM DOI Plan* disseminated in January 2024.

DIVERSITY is broadly defined as all of the characteristics that make individuals unique. It is the practice of appreciating and involving individuals who are different from one another. Diversity encompasses the different characteristics that makes national origin, religion, disability, race, color, gender identity, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, education, marital status, language, physical appearance, veteran status, family structure, etc. unique.

OPPORTUNITY refers to an equal distribution, among individuals, of opportunities for education, training, employment, pay, career development, promotions, and the exercise of power without their being disadvantaged on the basis of their sex, race, language, religion, economic, sexual orientation, or family situation, and so forth. It is the elimination of barriers that have prevents the full participation of marginalized groups in society. It is the process of allocating resources, programs, and opportunities to employees, customers and residents, to address historical discrimination and existing imbalances. Opportunity refers to meeting people where they are to ensure they have the same access, resources and opportunities as others.

INCLUSION is the act of creating an environment where individuals or groups are welcomed, respected, supported and valued to fully participate in any setting. “Inclusive” and “welcoming” are indicative of embracing difference and offers respect in words and actions, for all people. Inclusion connects a culture to everyone of an organization. It encourages collaboration, flexibility and fairness. It leverages diversity throughout the organization so that all employees can participate and contribute at their full potential. It fosters a sense of belonging and respect for the differences and uniqueness that all employees bring to the workplace, without the impact of inequities.

WORKFORCE DIVERSITY is to develop and maintain relationships with diverse colleges and professional organizations to improve a recruitment talent pool of candidates and pipeline, in order to develop a high-performing workforce from all segments of society.

SUSTAINABILITY is to develop strategies and processes to promote an inclusive culture and equip organizations with the ability to manage diversity, articulate expectations and accountability, measure results, and adjust and refine approaches based on collected data.

STRATEGIC GOALS

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Objective 2:

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- Expand the range of training opportunities available to foster continuous learning and development.

EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

The progress and success of our strategic plan for diversity, opportunity, and inclusion will undergo annual review and reporting. These reports will be submitted to both the Commissioner and the Department of Human Resource Management (DHRM). The review process will assess the implementation of actions, measure progress, celebrate successes, and identify areas for improvement.

Evaluation will encompass both qualitative and quantitative assessments. Qualitatively, we will analyze the progress and achievement of our actions. Quantitatively, we will measure the impact of our strategy on employee perceptions and their experiences within the agency's culture.

The findings of this evaluation will inform the development of future action plans, ensuring continuous improvement and alignment with our diversity, opportunity, and inclusion objectives.



SUMMARY

VMRC is dedicated to fostering an inclusive workplace where employees from diverse backgrounds can thrive and contribute their unique perspectives. We value the richness of experiences and perspectives that each individual brings, recognizing that this diversity enhances our agency's ability to innovate and serve our communities effectively.

Our commitment extends beyond mere acknowledgment; we actively seek to embed equitable practices into our daily operations, ensuring that all employees have the support and resources they need to succeed. By fostering a culture of inclusion, we create a supportive environment where every individual feels valued and empowered to reach their full potential.

This commitment to diversity and inclusion is not just a checkbox; it is fundamental to achieving our agency's goals and fulfilling our mission to serve the people of the Commonwealth. We will continue to advance initiatives that promote diversity and inclusion within the Marine Resources Commission, striving to create equal opportunities for all employees.

This effort requires the dedication and collaboration of everyone within our agency. By working together, we can build a workplace that reflects the diversity of our communities and fosters a culture of respect, understanding, and collaboration. Together, we will continue to move forward towards a more inclusive future where everyone can thrive.

