

DIVERSITY, OPPORTUNITY, AND INCLUSION

STRATEGIC PLAN - FY 2025 - 2026



Virginia Marine Resources Commission

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

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MESSAGE FROM VIRGINIA MARINE RESOURCES COMMISSIONER



Virginia Marine Resources Commission (VMRC) remains deeply committed to cultivating a workplace and agency culture rooted in diversity, opportunity, and inclusion. We recognize that a broad range of perspectives, backgrounds, and experiences strengthens our mission and enhances our service to the people of the Commonwealth.

Our agency continues to uphold the highest standards of equity, fairness, and ethical conduct in all our operations. These principles guide the way we work, inform our decisions, and shape our engagement with the public.

We are focused on expanding access to our programs, removing barriers to participation, and ensuring that our services reflect the needs of every community we serve. Through inclusive hiring practices, strategic outreach, and consistent evaluation, we are building a workforce that is as diverse and dynamic as the Commonwealth itself.

As Commissioner, I reaffirm our ongoing commitment to these values. Building a more inclusive and equitable VMRC is a shared responsibility and a vital part of our future. I am dedicated to creating a workplace where every employee feels respected, supported, and empowered to contribute to our mission. Together, we will continue to move forward with purpose and integrity.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "Jamie L. Green". The signature is stylized with large, flowing loops.

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

Agency Goal 1: Access and Success

Objective 1:

Continue to monitor and focus on advanced equitable hiring by refining processes as necessary that increase reach, reduce familiarity bias, and attract talent from a broad spectrum of backgrounds and experiences, expanding access and appeal to a wider range of qualified candidates from underrepresented diverse communities.

- Continue to assess and measure recruitment, interview and selection processes against hiring diversity results.
- Explore new sources of recruitment focusing on diverse applicants and populations.
- Develop and deliver targeted training for interview panelists and direct supervisors on inclusive recruitment practices, emphasizing the strategic benefits of diverse perspectives in hiring decisions.

Objective 2:

Continue to retain and promote a diverse workforce.

- Continue to support a robust internship program while expanding and refining apprenticeship opportunities to strengthen future talent pipelines and create more equitable, accessible career pathways 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:

Foster and sustain a supportive, respectful and harmonious workplace culture rooted in inclusion—where diverse perspectives and lived experiences are not only welcomed but meaningfully integrated into daily operations, and where embracing diverse perspectives fuels creativity and continuous improvement.

- Ensure employees with disabilities receive the accommodations they need to thrive and succeed in their roles.

- Facilitate cross-functional collaboration and continuous learning to strengthen employee development, broaden perspectives, and cultivate creative solutions.
- Organize, promote and/or host events that celebrate diversity and independent thinking, reinforcing a culture of inclusion, respect, 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:

Strengthen and integrate the agency's DOI infrastructure across all operations to ensure consistency, transparency, and alignment with strategic opportunities in diversity.

- Maintain ongoing review and evaluation of internal policies and procedures across MRC to identify areas for enhancing organizational effectiveness and excellence.
- Incorporate the DOI plan into the agency's broader strategic and reporting frameworks to reinforce its role in guiding organizational priorities and outcomes.

Objective 2:

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

- Develop and implement standardized DOI metrics and reporting tools to monitor progress, promote accountability, and inform continuous improvement across all agency operations.
- 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.

EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

The progress and outcomes of our strategic plan for Diversity, Opportunity, and Inclusion (DOI) will be reviewed and reported annually. These reports will be submitted to both the Commissioner and the Department of Human Resource Management (DHRM). The review process will evaluate the implementation of planned actions, track measurable progress, recognize achievements, and highlight areas for improvement. Evaluation will include both qualitative and quantitative analysis—assessing action completion, as well as the strategy’s impact on employee perceptions and 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.

