

Diversity, Opportunity, and Inclusion Plan
AGENCY: Department of Veterans Services (912)
YEAR: 2025
ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Goal 1: Access and Success

Recruit and retain a diverse workforce by increasing access to diverse populations for recruiting.

Objective 1: *Continue to improve hiring process and increase access to potential applicants from diverse populations. In 2024, the Department of Veterans Services (DVS):*

- a. Developed pathways for additional training, education and career growth by developing a Career Development Plan to address retention.
- b. Continued to build a talent pipeline and workforce partnerships with community organizations, colleges and universities, veteran associations, and the military.
- c. Implemented employee development activities and encouraged stretch assignments to increase skills and opportunities for career advancement.
- d. Developed recommendations to address retention challenges based on exit interview survey feedback.

Objective 2: *Continue to retain and promote a diverse workforce. In 2024, DVS:*

- a. Ensured access and accommodations via the interactive process for individuals with a physical or mental impairment.
- b. Ensured the agency's commitment to diversity, opportunity, and inclusion is visible on the agency website, job advertisements, and official documents.
- c. Encouraged religious and cultural diversity by accommodating different practices and beliefs.
- d. Continued promoting an equitable work environment that recognizes team members from diverse backgrounds bring different perspectives and experiences that will enhance how DVS serves our veterans and their families.

Goal 2: Welcoming and Respectful Culture

Create and sustain a culture that welcomes and embraces diverse opinions, independent thinking, and respectful interactions to deliver optimal results for the organization and its customers.

Objective 1: *Create and maintain a climate that is supportive and respectful and that values and integrates differing perspectives and experiences. In 2024, DVS:*

- a. Promoted a culture of respect, civility and conduct consistent with the expectations included in the Department of Human Resource Management (DHRM) Civility in the Workplace and Standards of Conduct Policies.
- b. Conducted monthly staff luncheons to facilitate diverse dialogue, education and shared experiences.
- c. Encouraged all DVS employees to take responsibility for creating a culture that recognizes and welcomes differences.
- d. Encouraged participation in team building activities to promote dialogue and acknowledgement of diverse issues and experiences.

Objective 2: *Continue to provide an environment where conflicts, concerns, and complaints are aired and addressed expeditiously. In 2024, DVS:*

- a. Encouraged employees to address concerns through the appropriate management channels utilizing communication or mediation to resolve concerns.
- b. Promptly addressed employee safety concerns partnering with the appropriate resources for guidance.
- c. Facilitated conflict discussions through counseling, mediation and coaching with the goal of resolution.
- d. Created a safe and supported environment free of retaliation.

Goal 3: State Agency DOI Infrastructure & Training

Maintain a plan and infrastructure that continues to provide individualized skills training and career development for state employees.

Objective 1: *Continue to amplify opportunities to advance the goals outlined in the Diversity, Opportunity, and Inclusion framework. In 2024, DVS:*

- a. Engaged members of DVS' senior leadership team to lead and communicate the values of this framework in creating a productive work environment.
- b. Developed agency policies and practices with a focus on diversity, opportunity, and inclusion.
- c. Through training and ongoing discussion, shared DOI-related resources at agency events and meetings.

Objective 2: *Continue to create structures and processes of accountability to increase organizational effectiveness with the Department of Veterans Services. In 2024, DVS:*

- a. Developed, updated, and implemented agency policies and procedures to ensure consistency and compliance with DHRM policies and federal and state employment laws.

- b. Conducted leadership training on the Commonwealth of Virginia's new Performance Management system to ensure managers were accountable for fostering a workplace culture of continuous feedback, coaching, and overall employee development.

Objective 3: Continue to provide training and educational workshops available to all employees.
In 2024, DVS:

- a. Promoted professional development training, including attendance at conferences, classroom sessions, and virtual learning to include the Commonwealth Management Institute and the Virginia Executive Institute.
- b. Encouraged employee development and skills training to promote career development and learning.
- c. Participated in DOI training opportunities provided by the Commonwealth of Virginia's Learning Center.