

Diversity, Opportunity, and Inclusion

2025 Annual Report Template

VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

2024
ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Emergency Management Working Group

- Formally established in alignment with the Code of Virginia (§ 44-146.18 (B19)) and maintained as a standing entity.
- Charged with reviewing emergency management policies and recommending improvement to better support at-risk and disproportionately impacted populations.
- Ensured underserved communities are prioritized during disaster response efforts.

DOI Guidance for Localities

- Released updated guidance to help localities incorporate inclusive language in Emergency Operations Plans in accordance with the Code of Virginia (§ 44-146.19 (E)).
- Provided localized demographic data and analytics to support opportunity-focused planning at the community level.

Partners in Preparedness Program

- Engaged over 700 community partners, including nonprofits, faith-based organizations, educational institutions, and local governments, to advance public preparedness.
- Embedded Access and Functional Needs (AFN) liaisons into Emergency Operations Center (EOC) activations to enhance inclusion during incident response.

Language Access for Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Communities

- Translated preparedness materials into the seven most commonly spoken languages across Virginia.
- Ensured the availability of sign language interpreters at public briefings and press conferences hosted by VDEM.

Equitable Preparedness Materials Distribution

- Disseminated printed materials in English, Spanish, and Chinese to support outreach in vulnerable communities.
- Used culturally appropriate language and formats to communicate preparedness information across diverse populations...

Community Engagement and Outreach

- The Office of Community Impact expanded outreach efforts, prioritizing vulnerable populations and engaging with all 11 of Virginia's federally and state-recognized tribal communities.
- Facilitated planning dialogue with historically underserved and marginalized communities to inform agency strategies.

DOI Leadership within Virginia Emergency Support Team VEST)

- Assigned two DOI Officers to provide strategic guidance, training support, and cross-agency collaboration with the Virginia Department of Health (VDH) during emergency activations.

Hazard Identification Tool Development

- Designed an interactive tool to help Virginians self-assess their top hazard risks and receive personalized preparedness guidance tailored to their household needs.

Minority Youth Internship Program

- Completed a successful summer 2024 internship initiative for high school students, aimed at increasing interest in emergency management and public service careers among youth from underrepresented backgrounds.

Interagency Collaboration and Committee Participation

- Provided DOI insights and recommendations to several statewide projects and committees, including the Commonwealth Shelter Strategy, the AFN Advisory Committee, and the DOI Emergency Operations Training development in partnership with the Department of Social Services.

Inclusive Planning Contributions

- Actively contributed DOI guidance and opportunity considerations to internal emergency management documents including:
 - Winter Weather Annex
 - Family Assistance Center Annex
 - Volunteer & Donations Management Plan Annex
 - Hurricane Playbook

GOAL 1: Develop an Inclusive Workforce through Equitable Opportunities

Advance representation by expanding access for underrepresented groups in emergency management.

OBJECTIVE 1: Enhance workforce diversity by attracting and retaining talent from a broad range of backgrounds..

- a. Collaborate with minority-serving programs, institutions, colleges, and disability advocacy organizations to build a diverse applicant pool.
- b. Implement 6-8 weeks internship programs that provide hands-on, job-relevant experience.

OBJECTIVE 2: Strengthen the opportunity and impact of internship and fellowship programs.

- a. Regularly assess the diversity of intern and fellow cohorts to ensure inclusion of varied backgrounds..
- b. Track conversion rates of interns to permanent hires and align outreach with required skills, qualifications, and DOI priorities.

Goal 2: Promote Diversity and Equality Across the Workplace and Community

Foster an environment where all employees feel valued, included, and empowered to contribute.

OBJECTIVE 1: Build a workplace culture rooted in inclusion, respect, and belonging.

- a. Implement a comprehensive workforce strategy that supports cultural inclusivity and equitable advancement.
- b. Host career fairs in partnership with the Office of Community Impact to connect with diverse populations and community groups.

OBJECTIVE 2: Produce a diversity-focused video that communicates the agency's values and commitment to inclusion

- a. Share the video on internal platforms such as the agency SharePoint to elevate visibility and engagement.

Goal 3: Build a Diverse, High-Performing Workforce through Strategic Recruitment and Retention

Use data-informed practices to sustain an inclusive and resilient talent pipeline

OBJECTIVE 1: Align recruitment and retention strategies with diversity, skill needs, and leadership support.

- a. Evaluate recruitment and internship pipelines to ensure they reflect the full spectrum of society.
- b. Continuously identify opportunities to embed inclusive practices into all facets of HR and agency operations.

