



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

Department of Medical Assistance Services

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MEMORANDUM

TO: The Honorable Abigail D. Spanberger
Governor of Virginia

The Honorable Don Scott
Speaker, Virginia House of Delegates

The Honorable Scott A. Surovell
Majority Leader, Senate of Virginia

FROM: Steve Ford
Director, Virginia Department of Medical Assistance Services

SUBJECT: Virginia Department of Medical Assistance Services (DMAS) Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Strategic Plan & Report 2025

This report is submitted in compliance with Section 2.2-602.B. of the Code of Virginia, which states:

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.

Should you have any questions or need additional information, please feel free to contact me at (804) 664-2660.

SF/wrf

Enclosure

Pc: The Honorable Marvin B. Figueroa, Secretary of Health and Human Resources

Our Mission & Values

To improve the health and well-being of Virginians through access to high-quality health care coverage and services.



Service



Collaboration



Trust



Adaptability



Problem Solving



VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF MEDICAL ASSISTANCE SERVICES (DMAS) DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION STRATEGIC PLAN & REPORT 2025



CardinalCare
Virginia's Medicaid Program

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Strategic Plan

Vision: To cultivate a workforce that reflects the communities we serve and fosters an inclusive culture where every employee feels valued, respected and empowered to contribute to the Agency's Mission. A strong workforce is built on more than talent alone, it is built on trust, respect, opportunities for all, and belonging. By fostering an inclusive culture and ensuring equitable growth and development, we strengthen our ability to serve Virginians while creating an environment where every employee can thrive. This strategic plan and report reflect our commitment to building a workplace that values diverse perspectives, encourages innovation, and empowers every team member to contribute to our shared success.

Mission: To advance diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging through intentional workforce strategies, equitable practices, leadership accountability, and employee engagement.

DMAS Organizational Workforce Statistics

Maintaining and analyzing workforce statistics is essential to understand the agency's current and future operational needs. Workforce data provides critical insight into staffing trends, vacancies, turnover, retirements/separations, recruitment timelines, workload distribution, and workforce demographics. By leveraging these metrics, agency leadership can make informed decisions regarding resource allocation, succession planning, workforce development, and organizational capacity to ensure continued delivery of mission-critical services. In addition, allows leadership to prioritize workforce investments, strategically align staffing resources, and implement solutions that support employee engagement.

As of 6/16/2026, DMAS has 552 filled classified positions, with a filled rate of 95% and 5% vacancy rate. There are 644 total resources (not including staff augmentation contractors) dedicated to the DMAS mission of improving the health and wellbeing of Virginians through access to high quality healthcare coverage and services.

Understanding demographics and generational workforce data is critical to effective planning for the agency's current and future workforce needs. These insights help leadership better understand employee preferences across different career stages, generational trends, workforce flexibility strategies, diverse experiences, communication preferences, workstyle preferences, and workforce engagement efforts. All to better support employee satisfaction, retention and organizational effectiveness.

Generational work style trends can provide valuable insight into how employees may prefer to communicate, collaborate, learn, and engage in the workplace. While individual preferences vary, generational perspectives may influence expectations related to feedback, technology use, workplace flexibility, career development, communication methods and leadership styles. Understanding these strengthens employee engagement, team collaboration, recruitment, and retention.

DMAS is currently comprised of majority female, minorities, and generation X & millennials who have been at DMAS for 5 - 9 years.

Currently, 46% of the Workforce has been at DMAS for less than 5 years, which presents both opportunities and considerations for organizational planning. New employees bring fresh perspectives, innovation, and adaptability; however, it also indicates increased needs related to institutional knowledge transfer, workforce development, and employee retention. This trend reinforces the importance of intentional strategies to support employee engagement, leadership development, succession planning, and operational continuity.

Agency Strategic Goals:

- Build and sustain a diverse workforce by enhancing recruitment strategies to attract diverse and qualified talent:
 - Innovative outreach methods to attract diverse candidates
 - Expand partnerships with colleges, universities and professional organizations to strengthen internship programs.
 - Increase participation in career fairs targeting diverse talent pools.
 - Ensure diverse interview panel members.
 - Enhance onboarding and orientation experiences
 - Increase # of diverse candidates to include employees with disabilities
 - Increase # of filled wage/part-time and classified recruitments with internship participants
 - Increase representation in underrepresented occupational groups.

Key Accomplishments:

- Standardized hiring manager communication and strengthened recruitment pipelines for diverse candidates. Initiated onboarding automation, improving speed, accuracy, and cross-unit coordination to ensure we do not lose candidates.
 - Expanded outreach through federal career fairs, digital campaigns generating 100k+ impressions, and leadership of the DHRM Veteran & Military Spouse workgroup.
 - From its implementation in 2024, the Agency hosted 49 interns and 7 cohorts assigned to various Divisions based on their interest and educational backgrounds. To date, DMAS has hired 41% of interns who graduated from our program, resulting in successfully creating a new pipeline of diverse employment opportunities.
 - Increased the number of colleges and university partnerships, that increased the number of participants within the DMAS Internship Program. The Agency currently partners with the following 20 colleges and universities, to which 20% are Historically Black Colleges (HBCUs): **Virginia Commonwealth University, William & Mary, Randolph-Macon, Virginia State University, Eastern Mennonite University, James Madison University, Liberty University, Virginia Union University, University of Virginia, Virginia Tech University, University of Miami, Mississippi State University, Quinnipiac University, George Mason University, Rice University, Old Dominion University, University of Richmond, Pennsylvania State University, Hampton University, and Howard University.**
- Ensure equitable hiring practices and compensation
 - Consistent review of hiring and compensation processes & policies annually for potential barriers.
 - Consistent review of employee compensation to ensure internal alignment within role titles and responsibilities.
 - Ensuring equitable interviewing processes and evaluation criteria in adherence to DHRM Policies and procedures; to include quality assurance reviews of all recruitment documents and processes.

- Mandatory training courses for all leadership annually to ensure adherence to recruitment policies and procedures.

Key Accomplishments:

- Delivered multi-year compensation modernization and salary compression alignments.
 - Annual revision of the Salary Administration Plan, SharePoint content updates, and creation of training modules and videos for EWP, compensation forms, and classification processes.
 - Completed 115+ salary recommendations and supported workforce planning with updated SAP, EWP training modules, and compensation guidance.
- Foster an inclusive Workplace Culture that is conducive to an environment to which employees feel valued and respected.
 - Conduct employee engagement surveys
 - Develop inclusive leaders and provide inclusive leadership training, to increase trust in leadership.
 - Utilization of Organizational metrics such as turnover, retention engagement trends, and overall workforce data (i.e. generational gaps, manager/employee ratios, and etc.) to make informed decisions.
 - Continue to strengthen the communication mechanisms across the agency to ensure that information is being shared timely.
 - Promote employee resource groups and affinity networks
 - Celebrate cultural awareness and engagement events.
 - Encourage open dialogue and feedback opportunities.
 - Enhancement of mentorship opportunities
 - Develop innovative recognition programs that celebrate diverse contributions.
 - Continuing to provide an environment where concerns and employee relation issues are addressed expeditiously and equitably; in addition, reducing employee relations concerns.
 - Increase the percentage of retaining classified critical workforce members to 97%

Key Accomplishments:

- Maintained a Classified filled rate of 96% with a low vacancy rate of 4%. The average vacancy rate within a Medicaid Agency is 17%; with the highest vacancy rate of 30%-40%. DMAS' current vacancy rate is low due to strategic engagement and retention strategies.
- Resolution of workplace complaints and concluded agency grievances and EEOC matters.
- DMAS transformed engagement and recognition into a vibrant, multi-faceted program. Beginning with foundational policies and welcome kits, evolving into wellness and community partnerships, and culminating in creative celebrations and innovative recognition tools, these accomplishments reflect a sustained commitment to valuing employees, fostering connection, and building a culture of appreciation across the agency.
 - The agency expanded its professional development portfolio with the launch of the DMAS Medicaid Academy for leaders.
 - Training engagement was reimagined through innovative formats such as Jeopardy, scavenger hunts, and bingo, making learning interactive and accessible. Engagement was further enriched through Medicaid Trivia Team-Building Lunches, seasonal drives like the Fall Food Drive and CVC September Bake Sale, and Service Recognition Awards

- DMAS embraced fun and creativity with Employee Association (EA) events such as Bunny Grams, Pizza Lunches, Ice Cream Socials, and Boo Grams—lighthearted activities that strengthened camaraderie and morale across the workforce.
 - The team supported workforce engagement through the 90-Day Check-in Survey, providing valuable insights into employee experiences during their first months
 - Conducted comprehensive reviews, updates, and coordination of all HCD policies aligned to DHRM changes and federal/state requirements.
 - SharePoint resources, Lunch and Learn sessions, and agency-wide training initiatives further enriched opportunities for growth
 - Increased open rates to 50% for the internal “DMAS Dispatch” e-newsletter that is sent out to employees 3x a week on helpful Agency & Commonwealth information.
 - Holiday and wellness initiatives included Operation Santa and a CommonHealth Preventative Maintenance Campaign, and implementing the Agency’s first Mental Health First Aid Initiative reinforcing the agency’s commitment to employee well-being
- Goal 4: Ensure all employees have the tools needed to carry out the essential business functions that directly affect the delivery of services to our Medicaid members.
 - Expand leadership development programs
 - Increase access to professional development opportunities for all employees
 - Implement transparent career pathways
 - Continue to provide training and educational workshops
 - Alignment of adequate resources with essential business functions, and continued enhancements to the continuity of operations plans and business impact analysis.
 - Greater focus on succession planning
 - Gather employee perspectives to inform operational improvements
 - Promote cross-functional collaboration

Key Accomplishments:

- Maintained agency-wide HR policy SharePoint pages, business continuity content, and division procedures.
- Enhanced Learning Objectives, Employee Relations and Performance Management Processes.
- Developed the DMAS Employee Work Profile redesign and created agencywide training to strengthen performance management alignment.
- Digitized over 830 personnel folders, established SOPs, and created a secure electronic archive for permanent HR records.
- Enhancements were made to the organizational chart process and the probationary review system, while updates to Standard Operating Procedures emphasized cross-training and business continuity
- Innovative eLearning modules in the COVLC system.



In accordance with the [Code of Virginia § 2.2-602](#), The Department of Medical Assistance Services (DMAS) is providing their Diversity, Equity and Inclusion report for Fiscal Year 2026. The report shall provide a summary of progress towards 2025 initiatives that promote inclusive ideas, policies and practices for all workforce members.

Agency 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 processes and increase access to potential applicants from diverse populations.

- Over the past year, DMAS has intentionally strengthened and modernized our recruitment processes to support a workforce that reflects the communities we serve. We have continued to take steps to ensure our hiring practices are equitable, inclusive, and designed to attract top talent from a broad range of backgrounds and experiences. These have included expanding outreach to LinkedIn Recruitment and recruitment search firms under DHRM to market across diverse professional networks, educational institutions, workforce organizations and community partnerships. In addition, mandatory Recruitment Meetings and Trainings for Hiring Managers to ensure accurate and enhanced job postings and that qualifications are aligned with essential job functions. We have focused on reducing barriers within the recruitment processes, emphasizing competencies and transferable skills, and utilizing workforce and applicant data to identify trends and opportunities to improve outreach to diverse talent pools. These enhancements help ensure we attract qualified candidates from a wide range of backgrounds while fostering a workforce positioned to effectively meet the needs of the populations we serve.
- Established January 2024, the DMAS Internship Program provides a talent channel that prepares government leaders and fosters strong relationships with institutions of higher education. To date, DMAS has hosted a total of 35 interns from higher education institutions across the Commonwealth through 6 separate, 14-week cohorts. Of these 35, DMAS has hired 11 interns for part-time wage or classified positions. This represents a 31% hire rate. Cohort 7 is underway May 25, 2026, through August 25, 2026 and includes a record of twelve interns in one cohort, two of which are high school students. The DMAS Internship Program is closely aligned with Governor Spanberger's InternshipsVA initiative, providing structured learning, community service, mentorship and

The mission of the Virginia Medicaid agency is to improve the health and well-being of Virginians through access to high-quality health care coverage and services.

The Department of Medical Assistance Services (DMAS) administers Virginia's Medicaid and Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) programs for 1.8 million Virginians.

Members have access to primary and specialty health services, inpatient care, dental, behavioral health as well as addiction and recovery treatment services. In addition, Medicaid long-term services and supports enable thousands of Virginians to remain in their homes or to access residential and nursing home care.

Medicaid members historically have included children, pregnant individuals, parents and caretakers, older adults, and individuals with disabilities. In 2019, Virginia expanded the Medicaid eligibility rules to make health care coverage available to more than 600,000 low-income adults.

Medicaid and CHIP (known in Virginia as Family Access to Medical Insurance Security, or FAMIS) are jointly funded by Virginia and the federal government under Title XIX and Title XXI of the Social Security Act. Virginia generally receives a dollar-for-dollar federal spending match in the Medicaid program. Medicaid expansion qualifies the Commonwealth for a federal funding match of no less than 90% for newly eligible adults, generating cost savings that benefit the Commonwealth.

professional development opportunities. DMAS intern supervisors have taken advantage of the InternshipsVA training for leaders. The DMAS Internship Program expands beyond the InternshipsVA model by providing a year-round program versus operating seasonally, including high school students, exposing interns to the legislative and public sector work experience, and continuously engaging intern alumni. Due to its success, DMAS continues investing in the program and continuously improving on the intern development model, making it a more mature and robust program with each successive cohort.

Objective 2: Continue to retain and promote a diverse workforce

- DMAS consistently maintained an average vacancy rate of only 5-6% across FY2026. The Agency continues to strive for above-benchmark retention goals through strategic engagement initiatives. The average vacancy rate within a Medicaid Agency is 17%; with the highest vacancy rate of 30%-40%. DMAS' current vacancy rate has been relatively low due to various engagement activities focusing on retention. As noted in annual DEI goals, there is an emphasis on robust recruiting/onboarding and recognition practices.
- Mental health plays a vital role in overall well-being and can directly impact the workplace and employees. As part of the Agency's commitment to providing timely and relevant learning opportunities to the workforce, DMAS partnered with our sister agency, the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services (DBHDS) to offer an 8-hour Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) training course to workforce members. DMAS workforce members have received their certification.
- Another example of DMAS's retention efforts and value for diverse feedback is the agency's tradition of weeklong Public Service Week (PSW) celebrations. DMAS has developed a culture for employee-driven planning and a reputation for fun and enriching PSW celebrations that focus on employee connection and appreciation. This year the employee-led planning committee applied staff feedback from FY25 PSW and significantly increased hybrid celebration opportunities to be more inclusive for field-based staff and staff with ADA accommodations. As a result, FY2026 PSW celebrations saw record-level participation across 5 days of scheduled recognition activities.
- A new engagement and retention strategy for FY26 is the first DMAS Employee Resource Fair. The Resource Fair is designed to connect workforce members with tools, services, education and support that will improve both work life and personal wellbeing. The event is scheduled for June 16 and includes vendor booths that will offer financial, wellness, economic, entertainment handouts, demos and face-to-face interaction with resource experts. The atmosphere will be engaging with music, raffles, and vendor giveaways.

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

- A strong new hire orientation process is critical to employee success, engagement, and long-term retention; as it serves as the employee's first formal introduction to the organization's mission, culture, expectations and operational culture. It's the foundation of the employee experience. DMAS has put a great focus on ensuring that we revamped our New Hire Orientation to help employees feel welcomed, informed, and equipped to successfully transition into their roles. Some items include ensuring providing information on organizational structure, priorities, policies, performance

expectations, and available resources while helping employees understand how their work contributes to broader agency goals and outcomes.

- DMAS continues to focus on innovative recognition opportunities to meet a diverse workforce, some of those include allowing the employee to have input on how they are recognized, as long as it's in compliance with DHRM and Agency policies. In addition, recognizing employees within the month of our employee's birthday month to continue to support work-life balance. This recognition effort continues to be highly impactful for employees and is the 3rd year of its implementation.
- Throughout FY2026, DMAS continued to plan and implement key engagement events designed to bring together all workforce members and create space for sharing, learning, and celebrating diverse opinions and lived experiences. One of the most significant of these events was the celebration of Medicaid's 60th Anniversary. The anniversary celebration brought together a wide range of stakeholders, including DMAS staff, legislators, sister agencies, and community partners whose perspectives, backgrounds, and roles within the Medicaid system differ greatly. By highlighting collaborative milestones across six decades, the event showcased how Medicaid's success has always relied on contributions from individuals and communities with varied experiences.
- The DMAS Culture and Engagement Committee (CEC) is an employee-led group with an Executive Board (nominated & voted for by the committee) that is formed to promote positive workplace culture and inform agency leadership of opportunities for workforce engagement:
 - This year much of the CEC's work focused on supporting staff through various changes in leadership at the state and federal level. Additionally, the CEC continues to be a champion for employee belonging and overall wellness. This year the CEC is supporting the Agency's first-ever resource fair focused on providing workforce members with the opportunity to explore valuable services, supports, and community resources.

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

- DMAS continues to enhance its Employee Relations Process through the following methods:
 - Updating Agency processes to increase transparency into the interactive employee relations process. The updated process documentation was published via policy for all workforce members versus primarily emphasizing employee relations education for leaders and ensuring all leaders within the respective impacted have input during the process. In addition, it ensures proactive efforts have been made by leadership to minimize conflict and provide any development /training tools to help mitigate performance issues. This has produced an added benefit of more expeditious resolutions due to the increased awareness from all parties.
 - Advancing transparency by ensuring all levels of employee relations documentation via DocuSign to ensure that complaints are addressed, documented, and resolved timely.
 - Leveraging Employee Relations metrics, separation data, and DMAS exit interview feedback to provide targeted training to the workforce areas with the most frequent complaints or staff turnover.

Agency Goal 3: State Agency DEI Infrastructure & Training

Maintain a plan and infrastructure that continues to provide individualized skills training and career development for state employees. Agencies report annually on DEI goals and accomplishments.

Objective 1: Continue to amplify opportunities to advance the goals outlined in this framework

- This year DMAS continued to build on the work of the previous year by analyzing employee learning objectives and professional development data collected during the performance cycle. The Agency identified the top requested skills training topics and began building a database of resources to support workforce training needs. Topics include public speaking, delegating, multigenerational communication, and more.
- The Agency has continued to revamp performance management training to provide employees and managers with key resources to support the ongoing development of the workforce, including the identification of annual learning goals. Additionally, the Agency continues to educate workforce members on how to identify and evaluate key components of the statewide competencies and navigate the new statewide performance management platform. The Agency hosted nearly 10 training sessions to ensure managers had the tools and confidence to discuss employee development and ultimately evaluate performance.

Objective 2: Continue to create structures and processes of accountability to increase organizational effectiveness with the Department of Human Resource Management.

- DMAS recognizes the retention benefits of ensuring employees have feedback mechanisms and opportunities to positively influence agency operations and workplace culture. In FY2026, this strategy was put into action to amend the Agency recognition policy to increase employee awareness of recognition options and agency to select their preferred recognition type.
- DMAS enhanced mandatory training monitoring to include targeted feedback prior to noncompliance with all training and workshops provided by DHRM.

Objective 3: Continue to provide training and educational workshops available to all employees.

- DMAS advanced educational opportunities for all employees through a successful monthly lunch and Learn series across FY2026. The Lunch and Learn series prioritized topics that would increase cross-divisional collaboration and provide timely training for emerging business priorities, such as new HR1 legislation and implementation. Examples of FY26 Lunch and Learn topics include:
 - PRSS Unlocked: Accessing the Provider Information You Need
 - State Buy-In Program. Federal and State funded Premium Payment program for Medicare Part A and Part B members.
 - Understanding the new DMAS Change Management Ticketing System
 - Bite into better coverage: Learn about Virginia Medicaid's Dental Benefits
 - Cardinal Care Branding Best Practices
 - Behind the Lines: Cover Virginia and the Incarcerated Unit uncovered
 - Unlock the Look: Cardinal Care Branding
 - Precision Matters – The Role of PERM and MEQC
 - AvePoint Unplugged: Your Backstage Pass to DMAS
 - New Noncitizen and Citizenship Requirements Policy
- A primary strategy for providing employees with just-in-time and accessible training is LinkedIn Learning. This platform provides robust and continuously modernizing content that employees can search for and select learning courses that meet their individual needs and professional development goals. DMAS leverages LinkedIn Learning technical support to curate targeted learning content and to monitor employee utilization and successful metrics.

