



## COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

Department of Health  
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6/30/26

### MEMORANDUM

TO: The Honorable Abigail D. Spanberger  
Governor of Virginia

The Honorable L. Louise Lucas  
President Pro-Tempore, Senate of Virginia

The Honorable Don Scott  
Speaker, House of Representatives

FROM: Dr. Cameron Webb  
State Health Commissioner, Virginia Department of Health

SUBJECT: Virginia Department of Health Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion  
Report

This report is submitted in compliance with the Virginia Acts of the Assembly – §2.2-602, which states:

*B. The heads of state agencies shall establish and maintain a comprehensive diversity, equity, and inclusion strategic plan in coordination with the Governor's Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.*

*The plan shall integrate the diversity, equity, and inclusion goals into the agency's mission, operations, programs, and infrastructure to enhance equitable opportunities for the populations served by the agency and to foster an increasingly diverse, equitable, and inclusive workplace environment.*

*The plan shall include best practices that (i) proactively address potential barriers to equal employment opportunities pursuant to federal and state equal employment opportunity laws; (ii) foster pay equity pursuant to federal and state equal pay laws; (iii) promote diversity and equity in hiring, promotion,*

*retention, succession planning, and agency leadership opportunities; and (iv) promote employee engagement and inclusivity in the workplace.*

*Each agency shall establish an infrastructure to effectively support ongoing progress and achievements by reporting diversity, equity, and inclusion goals in coordination with the Governor's Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion and the General Assembly.*

*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) 864-7002.

CW/KB  
Enclosure

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

**VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF  
HEALTH**

**DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND  
INCLUSION REPORT**

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REPORT TO THE GOVERNOR AND THE  
GENERAL ASSEMBLY

2026



VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH



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**PREFACE**

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This report was completed by the Virginia Department of Health, which was tasked with the mandate of maintaining a strategic diversity, equity, and inclusion strategic plan in coordination with the Chief Diversity Officer. This report is a summary of the agency's outcomes and activities for 2025. The report is due to the General Assembly on July 1, 2026.

**STUDY CONTRIBUTORS**

**Virginia Department of Health**

Breanne Forbes Hubbard, MPH, Director, Workforce Development & Engagement., Office of the Commissioner

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**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

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The Virginia Department of Health was tasked with providing an annual diversity, equity, and inclusion report to the Governor and General Assembly, by July 1, 2026. The report was completed by the Virginia Department of Health and is a summary of the agency's outcomes and activities for 2025.

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**INTRODUCTION**

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**REPORT MANDATE**

This annual diversity, opportunity, and inclusion report is mandated by Chapter 659 of the 2024 Virginia Acts of Assembly (**Error! Reference source not found.**).

**REPORT OUTLINE**

This report provides an overview of the Virginia Department of Health's efforts during 2025 to elevate employee voice, provide development opportunities, and assure equitable recruitment and retention practices.

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**VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION REPORT**

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Throughout 2025, the Virginia Department of Health continued to work towards the goal of maintaining a competent and valued workforce through elevating employee voice, providing development opportunities, and assuring equitable recruitment and retention practices.

**ELEVATING EMPLOYEE VOICE**

In 2024, VDH participated in the national Public Health Workforce Interest and Needs Survey (PH WINS) and had a high enough participation rate that the agency received an agency-specific dashboard and health district/office-specific dashboards. When those dashboards were released in mid-2025, all directors received customized results to help with workforce planning and ensure that all employees' needs are met.

The agency conducted an employee engagement survey in early 2025. Employee engagement scores rose from 80% in 2022 (the most recent previous survey) to 84% in 2025. Results were shared with all staff, and directors received feedback for their respective health districts and offices. Agency leadership reviewed the specifics and themes of over 2,000 individual comments in addition to aggregate survey data. These survey results were used to drive development of health district- and office-specific engagement plans, and an overall agency engagement plan. These plans were developed in the summer and fall of 2025 and launched at the beginning of 2026. Plans address application of human resources policies, appropriate compensation and classification, career paths, development opportunities, employee wellbeing, work culture improvement, recruitment timelines, retention, peer learning opportunities, and improved internal communication.

Feedback from staff was solicited throughout 2025 via the Employee Advisory Council (EAC) and Culture Assessment, Response, and Engagement (CARE) initiative. EAC representatives are selected from across the agency, ensuring that the Council reflects the tenure, specialty, and geographic area of agency staff. Employees shared 295 pieces of feedback with their EAC representatives, resulting in improved communication, clarification of human resources policies, creation of an employee recognition toolkit, policy development improvements, and orientation and onboarding process improvement.

These efforts to elevate employee voice ensure that the agency incorporates a diversity of opinions, background, and experiences in workforce planning and strategic efforts, ultimately ensuring an equitable and inclusive work environment for staff. During the last year, there was an almost 48% decrease in calls related to HR/culture to the fraud, waste, and abuse hotline. At the end of 2024, the agency turnover rate was 15.52% (voluntary turnover rate of 14.15%). By the end of 2025, that turnover rate dropped by 13.07% (voluntary turnover rate of 11.07%). These metrics indicate that elevating employee voice is having a substantial positive impact on the goal of maintaining a competent and valued workforce.

**PROVIDING DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES**

Leadership Academy: Foundations of Leadership was offered to over 900 VDH leaders during 2025. Planning for the second phase of Leadership Academy began in 2025. The

Leadership Academy curriculum includes servant leadership, managing difficult conversations, multigenerational workforce, essential skills for supervisors, and performance management. Work on career plans continued during 2025 for environmental health, public health nursing, and WIC, ensuring that staff at VDH have the opportunity to advance in their career through management or non-management tracks.

Over the last year, there has been an increase in requests for leadership training sessions, general professional development, and co-creation of courses like the Supervisor Essentials for VDH leaders. These increased requests indicate an improvement in staff awareness of how to request and access development resources, and that the available opportunities are meeting a need within the agency.

#### ASSURING EQUITABLE RECRUITMENT RETENTION PRACTICES

The Office of Human Resources established two new HR Centers of Expertise (CoE) in 2025 - the Compensation & Classification CoE and the Talent Acquisition CoE. These specialized teams strengthen the agency's workforce strategy by enhancing both hiring practices and internal equity.

The Compensation & Classification CoE ensures consistent and data-driven review of salary alignment and position classification, promoting fairness, transparency, and compliance across the agency. This work aligns with and supports the agency Salary Administration Plan, workforce competitiveness, employee retention and reinforces trust in compensation practices. The Talent Acquisition CoE established new streamlined recruitment system and process designed to reduce the time to fill positions and recruit for diverse talent. By implementing structured recruitment timelines and performance metrics, the team has improved hiring efficiency, accountability, and candidate experience. In addition, resources have been added to the Employee Relations and EEO (Equal Employment Opportunity) unit through the addition of two Employee Relations Coordinators specialized in ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) and EEO. These roles strengthen the agency's ability to ensure accountability, provide timely support and guidance, and uphold a workplace free from discrimination and harassment.

Together, these CoE bring strategic focus, operational consistency, and measurable outcomes to the agency's human resources functions, positioning the agency to better compete for diverse talent, retain workforce and maintain an inclusive workplace.

In addition to internal activities, VDH administers Workforce Incentive Programs to support clinicians working in primary care and mental health Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSA). The Virginia State Loan Repayment Program provides an incentive to qualified medical, nursing, dental, behavioral health, and pharmaceutical professionals in return for a minimum of two years of service at an eligible practice site in one of the federally designated HPSA in a qualified field of practice in Virginia. In 2025, 87 awards were made totaling \$1,307,000. The Virginia Behavioral Health Student Loan Repayment Program was created in 2021 to help recruit and retain behavioral health professionals to practice in underserved areas of the Commonwealth and/or provide counseling and treatment to underserved populations. In 2025, 70 awards were made totaling \$305,388.88. The Mary Marshall Nursing Scholarship Program is for students that are residents of Virginia and enrolled in or graduated from the

Certified Nurse Assistant (CNA) program. CNA programs include 120 hours of education, are clinical, and pass the National Nurse Aide Assessment leading to licensure in Virginia. In 2025, 34 awards were made totaling \$34,445. The Virginia Nursing Preceptor Incentive Program was established in 2021 to provide financial incentives for practitioners who serve as otherwise uncompensated preceptors for students to help increase access to care, address the primary care shortage, handle mental health crises, and manage chronic diseases. In 2025, 347 awards were made totaling \$684,250. Across VDH's Workforce Incentive Programs, 539 awards were made in 2025 totaling \$2,331,083.88.

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APPENDIX A – CHAPTER 659 OF THE 2024 ACTS OF ASSEMBLY

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Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That § [2.2-602](#) of the Code of Virginia is amended and reenacted as follows:

§ [2.2-602](#). Duties of agencies and their appointing authorities; establishment of personnel standards; diversity, equity, and inclusion strategic plans.

A. The heads of state agencies shall be the appointing authorities of the respective agencies, and shall establish and maintain within their agencies methods of administration relating to the establishment and maintenance of personnel standards on a merit basis that are approved by the Governor for the proper and efficient enforcement of the Virginia Personnel Act (§ [2.2-2900](#) et seq.). But the Governor shall exercise no authority with respect to the selection or tenure of office of any individual employed in accordance with such methods, except when the Governor is the appointing authority.

Appointing authorities may assign to the personnel officers or to other officers and employees of their agencies such personnel duties as they see fit.

Agencies shall establish and maintain rosters of their employees that shall set forth, as to each employee, the class title, pay, and status and such other data as they may deem desirable to produce significant facts pertaining to personnel administration.

Agencies shall establish and maintain such promotion and employment lists, rated according to merit and fitness, as they deem desirable. Agencies may make use of the employment list kept by the Department of Human Resource Management in lieu of keeping employment lists for their agencies.

Agencies shall supply the Governor with any information he deems necessary for the performance of his duties in connection with the administration of Virginia Personnel Act (§ [2.2-2900](#) et seq.).

B. The heads of state agencies shall establish and maintain a comprehensive diversity, equity, and inclusion strategic plan in coordination with the Governor's Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.

The plan shall integrate the diversity, equity, and inclusion goals into the agency's mission, operations, programs, and infrastructure to enhance equitable opportunities for the populations served by the agency and to foster an increasingly diverse, equitable, and inclusive workplace environment.

The plan shall include best practices that (i) proactively address potential barriers to equal employment opportunities pursuant to federal and state equal employment opportunity laws; (ii) foster pay equity pursuant to federal and state equal pay laws; (iii) promote diversity and equity in hiring, promotion, retention, succession planning, and agency leadership opportunities; and (iv) promote employee engagement and inclusivity in the workplace.

Each agency shall establish an infrastructure to effectively support ongoing progress and achievements by reporting diversity, equity, and inclusion goals in coordination with the Governor's Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion and the General Assembly.

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.

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**APPENDIX B – ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS**

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This is a listing of the acronyms and abbreviations appearing throughout the report and its appendices.

ADA – Americans with Disabilities Act

CARE – Culture Assessment, Response, and Engagement

CNA – Certified Nurse Assistant

CoE – Centers of Expertise

EAC – Employee Advisory Council

EEO – Equal Employment Opportunity

HPSA – Health Professional Shortage Area

PH WINS – Public Health Workforce Interest and Needs Survey

VDH – Virginia Department of Health

WIC – Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children