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Division of Legislative Automated Systems
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1001 East Broad Street
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Attention: Legislative Documents and Reports Processing

Dear Laura Wilborn:

I am pleased to transmit to you the accompanying Virginia DMV 2025 Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Annual Report in accordance with § 2.2-602(B) of the *Code of Virginia*.

Questions about the report may be directed to

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Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Saundra M. Jack".

Saundra M. Jack



Department of Motor Vehicles DEI Annual Report

2025 DEI ANNUAL REPORT

Contents

2025 DMV DEI Annual Report: Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Annual Progress Report	2
Strategic Framework Overview.....	2
1. Access & Success:	2
2. Welcoming & Respectful Culture:	2
3. DEI Infrastructure & Training:	2
Strategic Timeline	2
Access & Success	3
Goal 1: Career Advancement.....	3
Phase I - Compensation Modernization	3
Phase II - Career Pathing & Role Stages.....	3
Project Upshift: Role Stage Distribution.....	4
Goal 2: Turnover & Retention	5
Welcoming & Respectful Culture	5
Goal 1: Cultural Conversations	5
Implementation Steps.....	6
Core Benefits	6
Employee Resource Groups (ERGs): Building Community	6
ERG Initiative: Progress & Next Steps.....	7
Upcoming Phases:	7
ERG Key Metrics	8
Goal 2: Belonging and Engagement Survey	8
Overview	8
DEI Infrastructure & Training.....	9
Goal 1: Inclusive Leadership.....	9
Training Outcomes	10
Training Evaluation Results: Exceptional Outcomes.....	10
Professional Learning & Development: 2025-2026.....	10
Goal 2: Sustainable Accountability	11
Assessment	11
Appendix: DMV Belonging & Engagement Survey (2026 Results)	12

DMV AGENCY REPORT

2025 DMV DEI Annual Report: Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Annual Progress Report

This report outlines the agency's ongoing commitment to equity and inclusion through three strategic pillars: Access and Success, Welcoming and Respectful Culture, and DEI Infrastructure and Training. It highlights key milestones, data, and initiatives from 2025-2026 that reflect measurable progress, strengthen accountability, and support a workplace where every employee and customer can thrive.

Strategic Framework Overview

The Agency's DEI goals are organized around three interconnected pillars, each designed to advance equity, inclusion, and organizational excellence across all levels of the DMV workforce.

1. **Access & Success:** This pillar focuses on expanding career advancement opportunities and maintaining a historic low turnover through transparent pathways and data-driven support strategies.
2. **Welcoming & Respectful Culture:** This pillar aims to foster dialogue across differences, psychological safety, and mutual respect through structured engagement and annual culture assessments.
3. **DEI Infrastructure & Training:** This pillar builds internal capacity through inclusive leadership training and formalizes accountability mechanisms for sustainable DEI efforts.

Strategic Timeline

- **2024:** A historic low turnover rate was achieved, which set the foundation for an equity-focused workforce strategy.
- **2025:** Project Upshift was launched, Employee Resource Groups (ERGs) development was initiated, and inclusive leadership training was delivered.
- **2026:** The Belonging & Engagement Survey was administered, ERG leadership was finalized, and Cultural Conversations were planned for rollout.
- **2026–2027:** The agency will execute a full rollout of the Cultural Conversations series alongside continued ERG programming and accountability integration.

Access & Success

Goal 1: Career Advancement

The agency aims to increase access to career advancement opportunities for all employees by implementing clear promotion and development pathways, with measurable outcomes tracked annually.

Project Upshift is DMV's comprehensive workforce modernization initiative designed to create a more equitable, transparent, and market-aligned compensation and career development framework for all employees.

Phase I - Compensation Modernization

This phase represents an agency-wide effort to create equitable, market-aligned pay and clarified job responsibilities. The agency updated salary structures using public and private market data, adjusted minimum pay levels, standardized job titles, and evaluated each department in scheduled waves between August and December 2025.

- **60% Staff Received Raises:** Nearly 60% of all DMV employees received salary increases as part of Phase I compensation modernization, with no employee experiencing a pay reduction.
- The agency introduced a Northern Virginia differential.
- Management set consistent hiring and promotion minimums.
- **Equity in Pay:** The compensation modernization effort was grounded in equity, ensuring that pay reflects the market value of roles and the demonstrated proficiency of employees rather than just tenure or historical inequities.

Phase II - Career Pathing & Role Stages

This phase introduces DMV's structured career pathing program, creating consistent, transparent pathways for employee development, growth, and compensation progression. All agency roles were organized into Capability Clusters with four Role Stages tied to specific salary ranges.

- **Foundational:** This stage covers entry-level proficiency.
- **Emerging:** This stage indicates growing responsibility.
- **Seasoned:** This stage represents demonstrated expertise.
- **Expert:** This stage demands the highest level of impact and leadership.

Pay increases align with demonstrated proficiency rather than tenure alone, reinforcing internal equity and career clarity.

- **1,701 Employees Evaluated:** All 1,701 DMV employees were evaluated and placed into one of four Role Stages under Phase II, each with a defined salary range and advancement pathway.
- **Transparency in Advancement:** Employees now have clear visibility into what is expected at each Role Stage, which removes ambiguity from promotion decisions and creates a fairer path to career growth.
- **Capability Clusters:** All agency roles were organized into Capability Clusters, creating a consistent and transparent framework for career development and compensation progression.
- **Sustained Investment:** Project Upshift represents DMV's long-term commitment to building a workforce where every employee has the tools, clarity, and opportunity to advance and thrive.

Project Upshift: Role Stage Distribution

The distribution across Role Stages reflects the agency's diverse workforce at varying levels of proficiency and impact.

- **Foundational (356 Employees):** This stage represents entry-level proficiency, where employees are building core skills and learning agency systems, processes, and expectations.
- **Emerging (720 Employees):** This is the largest cohort, consisting of employees who are actively growing their responsibilities and developing deeper expertise within their roles.
- **Seasoned (531 Employees):** This cohort features demonstrated expertise and consistent high performance, including employees who serve as key contributors and informal mentors.
- **Expert (94 Employees):** This tier represents the highest impact and leadership, comprising employees who drive strategy, innovation, and organizational excellence across the agency.

The Emerging stage represents the largest cohort with 720 employees, reflecting a workforce actively developing skills and growing into greater responsibility. Together, the four stages encompass 1,701 employees across the agency, each with a clearly defined pathway for advancement and compensation growth.

Goal 2: Turnover & Retention

The agency has established a turnover target of less than 10%. The agency is committed to sustaining the historic low turnover rates achieved in 2024 by analyzing feedback from the Belonging and Engagement Survey and implementing targeted support strategies based on identified gaps. This goal recognizes that retention is not simply a metric; rather, it reflects the quality of the employee experience, the strength of leadership, and the effectiveness of the agency's culture and support systems.

*Note: Additional data and analysis from HR are forthcoming and will be incorporated into future reporting to provide a complete picture of retention trends and the impact of targeted interventions.

- **Data-Informed Decisions:** The leadership team is using Belonging and Engagement survey results to identify and address operational gaps.
- **Exit Interview Analysis:** Structured exit interviews are conducted with departing employees to identify patterns, uncover root causes of attrition, and inform targeted retention strategies across departments.
- **Leadership Development:** The agency is investing in managers to improve team culture and reduce attrition.
- **Manager Effectiveness:** Supervisory relationships are a key driver of retention, so DMV invests in manager training and feedback mechanisms to ensure leaders are equipped to support and retain their teams.
- **Employee Support Systems:** The department establishes targeted programs to support employee well-being and career growth.
- **Onboarding & Integration:** A strong onboarding experience sets the foundation for long-term retention, prompting DMV to continually refine its onboarding process to ensure new employees feel welcomed, supported, and set up for success from day one.

Welcoming & Respectful Culture

Goal 1: Cultural Conversations

The agency will launch a Cultural Conversation Series to provide consistent, structured opportunities for employees to engage in dialogue across lines of difference, strengthening empathy, understanding, and connection.

Due to competing organizational priorities and operational demands that emerged during 2025, the implementation of the DMV Cultural Conversations initiative was deferred and incorporated into the 2026-2027 implementation timeline. While the postponement adjusted the original schedule, the agency remained committed to advancing workplace culture and leadership development efforts through targeted training initiatives designed to strengthen inclusion, engagement, and employee well-being. These efforts provide a strong foundation for the broader Cultural Conversations initiative scheduled for implementation during the 2026-2027 period.

Implementation Steps

1. **Design & Planning:** The team will develop a curriculum and facilitation guides tailored specifically to the DMV's workforce.
2. **Facilitator Training:** The agency will equip internal facilitators with the tools and skills required to lead inclusive dialogue.
3. **Pilot Sessions:** Program coordinators will launch pilot conversations across select departments to gather initial feedback.
4. **Agency-Wide Rollout:** The team plans to expand the series to all teams and locations across the agency.

Core Benefits

- **Building Empathy:** Structured dialogue across lines of difference helps employees develop deeper empathy and understanding, which reduces bias and strengthens interpersonal relationships across teams and departments.
- **Psychological Safety:** Cultural Conversations create a foundation of trust where employees feel safe to share their perspectives, ask questions, and engage authentically without fear of judgment or retaliation.
- **Organizational Cohesion:** By fostering connection and mutual respect, the series strengthens the agency's collective identity and reinforces a shared commitment to an inclusive, welcoming workplace for all.

Employee Resource Groups (ERGs): Building Community

A major milestone in DMV's DEI efforts has been the development and implementation of Employee Resource Groups, a process that began in 2025 and has continued into 2026 with several key milestones. This phased and intentional approach ensures DMV is building a sustainable ERG framework that will strengthen employee engagement, foster belonging,

support professional development, and create meaningful opportunities for employees to connect, collaborate, and contribute to the agency's culture and success.

Values and Impact

- **Belonging & Community:** ERGs create spaces where employees with shared identities and experiences can connect, support one another, and build a stronger sense of belonging within the agency.
- **Professional Development:** ERG membership provides opportunities for leadership growth, mentorship, skill-building, and visibility across the organization.
- **Organizational Impact:** ERGs serve as a bridge between employees and leadership, offering valuable perspectives that inform agency culture, policy, and DEI strategy.

ERG Initiative: Progress & Next Steps

Milestones Achieved:

- Agency-wide informational sessions were conducted to educate employees on ERG purpose and value.
- An agency-wide survey was distributed to identify and prioritize ERGs for Phase I.
- Leadership applications were opened to employees interested in ERG leadership roles.
- Executive Sponsors were identified and appointed for each ERG.
- Leadership interviews are currently underway, and leadership teams are being finalized.
- ERG Charter templates were developed to guide each group's mission, vision, and governance structure.
- The DEI Office hosted listening sessions to gather employee input on ERG priorities and programming needs.
- A cross-functional advisory committee was established to provide ongoing guidance and support to ERG leaders.

Upcoming Phases:

- The office will introduce ERG leader development and training to equip leaders to guide their groups.
- Staff will launch member recruitment campaigns across the agency.

- Leaders will initiate strategic planning and governance development for each ERG.
- Teams will execute the official launch of programming, networking opportunities, and educational events.
- Organizers will facilitate engagement activities that are closely aligned with each ERG's mission and goals.

ERG Key Metrics

- **500+ Survey Responses:** Over 500 employees responded to the agency-wide ERG interest survey, signaling strong demand for community-building initiatives. The strong response to both the survey and leadership applications demonstrated significant employee interest and enthusiasm for creating communities that support connection, engagement, and professional growth.
- **5 ERGs Planned:** Five Employee Resource Groups have been identified for the Phase I launch, with each group receiving an appointed Executive Sponsor and a forming leadership team.
- **100% Executive Sponsorship:** Every ERG has a dedicated Executive Sponsor, ensuring senior-level visibility, support, and accountability from the start.

Goal 2: Belonging and Engagement Survey

The agency implemented the Belonging and Engagement Survey to assess workplace culture and climate annually, using the results to inform actions that promote psychological safety and mutual respect across all teams.

Overview

- **Annual Assessment:** The Belonging and Engagement Survey serves as the agency's primary instrument for measuring workplace culture and climate, providing a consistent baseline for year-over-year comparison and trend analysis.
- **Psychological Safety:** Survey results are used to identify gaps in psychological safety and mutual respect, informing targeted interventions that help all employees feel valued, heard, and empowered to contribute.
- **Action Planning:** Results are integrated into annual planning processes, ensuring that data-driven insights translate into concrete actions at the team, department, and agency levels.

- **Communication & Transparency:** Leaders are expected to share survey results with their teams and outline specific steps being taken in response to employee feedback.
- **Team-Level Action Plans:** Each department develops targeted action plans based on their unique survey results, ensuring localized and relevant responses to identified gaps.
- **Progress Monitoring:** Follow-up assessments and check-ins track whether implemented actions are producing meaningful improvements in workplace culture and climate.

The DMV Belonging and Engagement Survey, which launched in 2026, represents a significant evolution of this commitment by providing richer, more nuanced data on the employee experience. Full details can be reviewed in the survey results section.

DEI Infrastructure & Training

Goal 1: Inclusive Leadership

The agency works to build internal capacity by offering ongoing, role-specific training to managers and staff focused on inclusive leadership.

- **Implicit Bias Training:** All DMV people leaders completed Implicit Bias Training focused on increasing awareness of unconscious biases, promoting equitable decision-making, and enhancing leaders' ability to foster inclusive workplace environments.
- **Psychological Safety & Emotional Intelligence:** Specialized training was delivered to Western Region District Managers and Assistant Managers through four full-day sessions, equipping leaders with practical tools to build trust, strengthen communication, and create empowering environments.

The training emphasized key competencies including emotional intelligence, self-awareness, emotional regulation, active listening, effective communication, conflict management, and strategies for fostering psychological safety within teams. Participants engaged in interactive discussions, self-assessments, reflective exercises, and practical application activities.

Training Outcomes

- **Increased Self-Awareness:** Leaders developed a deeper understanding of their own biases and communication styles, enabling more equitable decision-making.
- **Stronger Team Trust:** Participants reported an improved ability to build psychological safety and trust within their teams following the training.
- **Practical Application:** Interactive exercises and self-assessments gave leaders concrete tools to apply inclusive practices in day-to-day leadership.

Training Evaluation Results: Exceptional Outcomes

Evaluation data collected from 38 participants across the Psychological Safety and Emotional Intelligence training sessions demonstrated exceptionally positive outcomes across all measured dimensions.

- **84% Rated Excellent:** An additional 16% rated the training as Good, meaning no participants rated the sessions below the "Good" threshold.
- **76% Extremely Relevant:** The remaining 24% indicated the content was Very Relevant, leaving no low relevance ratings recorded.
- **100% Emotional Intelligence:** All 38 participants reported an increased understanding of Emotional Intelligence.
- **100% Psychological Safety:** All 38 participants reported an increased understanding of Psychological Safety in the Workplace.

"The activities and conversations helped me to understand and truly do some self-reflection."

— *Workshop Participant*

Professional Learning & Development: 2025-2026

DMV demonstrated a strong commitment to employee growth through participation in a variety of professional learning opportunities. In 2025, 1,225 employees participated in leadership and professional development programs. Momentum continued into 2026, with 681 employees participating in the first five months alone.

The inaugural Leadership Catalyst Program launched its first cohort with 19 emerging leaders in 2026, while the Professional Development Program experienced significant growth with 407 participants. This shift reflects DMV's ongoing investment in building

leadership capacity and creating development pathways that support both individual career growth and organizational success.

Goal 2: Sustainable Accountability

Assessment

The agency aims to establish a sustainable infrastructure for DEI efforts by formalizing accountability mechanisms, such as departmental goals, data tracking, and the integration of survey results into annual planning.

- **Departmental Integration:** DEI objectives are embedded into departmental planning with measurable goals and collaborative partnerships across divisions to support shared ownership.
- **Data Tracking:** The DEI Office tracks participation and attendance across training, engagement, and development initiatives while evaluating programs to assess effectiveness and identify areas for improvement.
- **Continuous Improvement:** Workforce data, program evaluation, employee feedback, and Belonging and Engagement Survey results inform targeted strategies that support an inclusive workplace culture and long-term organizational success.
- **Annual DEI Reporting:** Formal annual reports document progress across all three strategic pillars, ensuring transparency and organizational accountability to employees and stakeholders.
- **Survey-Driven Planning:** Results from the Belonging and Engagement Survey are directly integrated into departmental action plans, closing the loop between employee feedback and leadership response.
- **Cross-Division Collaboration:** DEI goals are co-owned across divisions, with shared metrics and regular check-ins ensuring consistent progress and collective responsibility.

This work reflects a crucial shift from individual initiatives to a comprehensive framework that aligns diversity, equity, inclusion, employee engagement, and organizational effectiveness across the entire agency.

Appendix: DMV Belonging & Engagement Survey (2026 Results)

The inaugural Belonging and Engagement Survey was administered in 2026. This effort was led by Dr. Yolanda Avent, Director of DEI, and Adria Merritt, Director of Organizational Development and Employee Experience. The survey was developed as a customized instrument designed specifically to measure the employee experience within the DMV.

- **1,398 Employees Responded:** Out of 2,336 invited staff members, this represents a 60% response rate.
- **70.7% Overall Positive Score:** The data shows that DMV is a high-belonging organization with a strong overall employee experience.

Identified Strengths

- **Belonging (83%+):** Employees feel a strong sense of community.
- **Role Clarity (90%+):** Staff members understand their daily duties and expectations.
- **Inclusive Supervision (90%):** A vast majority of employees feel respected and included. Workers feel respected by colleagues, included in team activities, and comfortable being themselves.
- **Growth (80%):** Employees recognize opportunities for advancement.
- **Job Satisfaction (85.3%):** There is high overall job satisfaction and a strong likelihood that employees will remain with the agency.

Identified Opportunities

The survey revealed key areas where the agency can improve its focus moving forward:

- Policy & Fairness
- Work-Life Balance
- Psychological Safety
- Employee Input

The Belonging and Engagement Survey is intended to be more than a measurement tool, as it serves as a foundation for continuous organizational improvement. DMV is committed to translating survey findings into meaningful action by developing and implementing targeted strategies that address identified opportunities while building on existing strengths.