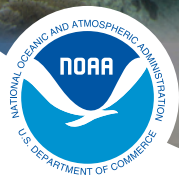


National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan

Fiscal Years 2020—2024



NOAA's Mission: Science, Service and Stewardship

1. To understand and predict changes in climate, weather, oceans and coasts;
2. To share that knowledge and information with others; and
3. To conserve and manage coastal and marine ecosystems and resources.

NOAA's Vision of the Future

1. Resilient Ecosystems, Communities, and Economies; and
2. Healthy ecosystems, communities and economies that are resilient in the face of change.

NOAA Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan

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Leadership Commitment

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) commits to provide our workforce and job applicants with a full and fair opportunity for employment, career advancement, and access to resources and programs. We recognize that diversity is about more than race and gender, and we strive to foster an inclusive culture for everyone. We value the unique differences and shared values of each member of the NOAA team.

Dr. Neil Jacobs

Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Environmental Observation and Prediction

Benjamin P. Friedman

Deputy Under Secretary for Operations

Nicole LeBoeuf

Assistant Administrator, National Ocean Service (A)

Craig McLean

Assistant Administrator, Oceanic & Atmospheric Research

RDML Michael Silah

*Director, Office of Marine & Aviation Operations
Director, NOAA Corps*

Sean Clayton

Acting Director, Office of Human Capital Services

Deirdre Jones

Chief Administrative Officer

Zach Goldstein

Chief Information Officer

NOAA is committed to incorporating the principles of diversity as one of our core values. Empowering a workforce that includes diversity of thought, diversity in its people, and diversity in its business practices demonstrates that we are capable of understanding and responding effectively to the needs of our workforce and to our mission. We pledge to create and promote a workplace where the talents of all individuals are recognized and appreciated.

RDML Timothy Gallaudet

Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere

Kenneth M. Bailey

Director, Office of Inclusion and Civil Rights

Chris Oliver

Assistant Administrator, National Marine Fisheries Service

Dr. Louis Uccellini

Assistant Administrator, National Weather Service

Dr. Stephen Volz

Assistant Administrator, National Environmental Satellite, Data & Information Service

Mark Seiler

Chief Financial Officer

Jeffrey Thomas

Director, Acquisition and Grants Office

Louisa Koch

Director, NOAA Office of Education

NOAA Administrator's Diversity and Inclusion Policy Statement

In today's highly competitive environment, when everyone is fighting for limited resources and talent, having a workplace that integrates diversity and inclusion into its business practices is not just a good idea, it is a vital component for organizational success. Research shows that organizations are more productive, innovative, and better able to attract talent when they embrace diversity and inclusion. For a scientific agency like NOAA, innovation is a key driver of growth. Without diversity, we limit our ability to innovate. Without inclusion, diversity becomes meaningless, and any benefits associated with diversity will not be realized. The two concepts are inseparable, and begin with an inclusive environment.

We must strive to create inclusive workplaces that are free of discrimination, harassment, and reprisal, where integrity, fairness, teamwork, and equity are the norm, not the exception. These are environments where employees feel they truly belong and are safe to be their authentic selves, and where every person is treated with dignity and respect. When we create these types of environments, we can attain inclusion. It is then, and only then, when we reap the full benefits of diversity and can embrace the unique perspectives that diversity provides us to propel us towards greater success, both individually and organizationally.

Because there has been so much individual focus on diversity and inclusion, there can be a tendency for individuals to assume a "check the box" mentality. Where they host or attend a training class or some other event on diversity and inclusion and feel they are done. However, diversity and inclusion are so much more than that. They are not concepts to be understood solely through training and organizational initiatives, but rather by adopting a cultural attitude that embraces them—a mindset rooted in the basic components of good leadership. It is impossible to articulate how critical a role diversity and inclusion play in helping NOAA effectively accomplish its mission.

I strongly support diversity and inclusion and reaffirm my commitment to seeing that NOAA not only embraces these concepts, but fully integrates them into our business practices and our organizational culture. It is not something that can be done by simply implementing a broad-sweeping organizational initiative. Each and every one of us needs to be fully committed to achieving this goal if we are to be successful. All of us share in the responsibility for creating and maintaining an inclusive workplace. At its most basic level, this means treating everyone with dignity and respect. If we cannot afford our colleagues that simple courtesy, no matter what the organization does, we will not be able to create a truly inclusive environment.

Creating inclusive environments that value diversity can be difficult because it forces us to embrace that which is different from us. It challenges our beliefs and requires not only a fundamental change in what we do, say, and think, but also to constantly self-assess and adjust our behaviors. This can be difficult, but the benefits of diversity come from a unique mix of all of our differences where together we are far better. So, I challenge each and every one of you. Take the time to self-reflect and ask yourself, "Am I doing all I can do to create an inclusive environment in my workplace?" Then, personally commit to helping make NOAA a more inclusive environment. If we all work together, we can make NOAA the best it can be, and achieve the goal of becoming a Model Workplace.

Sincerely,



Dr. Neil Jacobs

*Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Environmental Observation and Prediction,
Performing the duties of Under Secretary of Commerce
for Oceans and Atmosphere*

Executive Summary

NOAA's unique mission of science, service and stewardship demands a diverse workforce to reflect, understand, and respond to the varied communities and stakeholders we serve. Equally important is an inclusive work environment that enhances organizational performance. NOAA's sustained commitment to strengthening diversity and enriching inclusion is critical to enable preeminent weather research and forecasting, promote sustainable economic uses of America's oceans and coasts, and support ecosystems that are resilient to inevitable change.

Fostering a diverse and inclusive workforce is a top priority for the Federal Government and a mission imperative for NOAA. Empirical studies demonstrate that diversity management is a first step in improving workplace performance, and individuals' sense of inclusion within their organization is necessary to leverage the diversity and maximize productivity. Sabharwal (2014), for example, found that "productive workplaces exist when employees are encouraged to express their opinions, and their input is sought before making important organizational decisions."

This Plan provides a roadmap for building a more inclusive work environment that expands and leverages diversity to achieve mission goals and

business objectives. Inherent to NOAA's approach is the reality that diverse workforces require inclusive environments to thrive. Inclusion requires a culture that connects each team member to the organization and encourages communication, flexibility, and fairness. NOAA celebrates diversity throughout the organization and aims to provide culture in which all individuals are welcomed to contribute to their full potential.

Strengthening leadership accountability at all levels is critical for sustaining progress toward the diversity and inclusion goals articulated in this plan. However, successful implementation of the goals and objectives in this plan requires contributions from every individual within our Agency. The FY20-24 NOAA Inclusive Diversity Strategic Plan builds on the ambitious FY17-19 plan and addresses gaps identified through NOAA's Management Directive 715. Line and Staff Offices (LO/SOs) were engaged in evolving NOAA's strategic approach. This Plan also links the goals and objectives of the Department of Commerce to Line Office diversity and inclusion strategic plans and incorporates government-wide priorities established by the Office of Personnel Management.

1 e.g., Sabharwal, M. (2014). Is Diversity Management Sufficient? Organizational Inclusion to Further Performance. *Public Personnel Management*, 1, 21.

Summary of Goals and Objectives

GOALS	OBJECTIVES
<p>1. WORKFORCE DIVERSITY: Recruit and attract a diverse, highly-capable workforce</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Effectively recruit qualified individuals at all levels whose diverse backgrounds, experience, education and skills will advance NOAA's mission. 2. Reduce barriers and biases in NOAA's hiring of diverse, highly-qualified candidates 3. Create a culture that promotes the employment of individuals with disabilities.
<p>2. WORKPLACE INCLUSION: Build a Work Environment That Promotes Inclusion</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Cultivate an inclusive work environment that empowers and engages every NOAA team member. 2. Ensure all staff have equal access to career development opportunities in order to retain a diverse and qualified workforce.
<p>3. SUSTAINABILITY: Build Sustained and Adaptive Leadership Commitment to a Diverse and Inclusive NOAA Through Accountability, Data and Education.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Expand leadership accountability for managing diversity and inclusion across NOAA. 2. Increase the visibility of leaders in diversity-related activities. 3. Eradicate racial inequalities and all forms of discrimination and harassment, especially sexual assault and sexual harassment (SASH).



Introduction

Envisioning Diversity & Inclusion

NOAA's Vision for Diversity and Inclusion

An inclusive environment in which NOAA leverages diversity to achieve mission goals and business objectives and maximizes the potential of individuals and the organization.

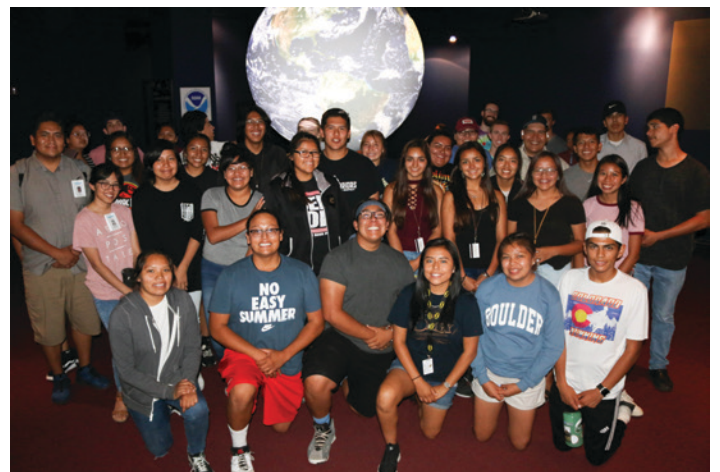
Defining Diversity & Inclusion



Assessing Diversity & Inclusion

Measuring the impact of various initiatives to improve D&I is often a difficult proposition. To assist agencies with this issue the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) has included questions in the Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (FEVS)² that are used to gauge employee perceptions of D&I within their respective agencies. These measures provide quantitative benchmarks for agencies to use to measure their progress with D&I initiatives.

NOAA FEVS responses are combined into D&I categories by the Best Places to Work in the Federal Government® NOAA Agency Report.³



2 <https://www.opm.gov/fevs/>

3 <https://bestplacestowork.org/rankings/detail/CM54>

Valuing Diversity & Inclusion

NOAA is an agency that enriches life through science. Our reach goes from the surface of the sun to the depths of the ocean floor as we work to keep the public informed of the changing environment around them. The multiple mission areas for NOAA are rapidly evolving and increasingly complex, demanding higher levels of collective readiness and capabilities across NOAA's workforce. At the same time, the communities NOAA serves are becoming increasingly diverse. OPM describes three tangible benefits to focusing on diversity and inclusion: serving our communities and being socially responsible, increasing innovation, and getting a return on investment. NOAA requires these benefits to sustain our long-term organizational excellence in science, stewardship, and service.

To provide high-quality, responsive customer service to the public, we need a workforce that reflects the best and brightest of American society. A diverse workforce provides exactly this through varied backgrounds, perspectives, and skills. By fully including our workforce, we can maximize our

performance by taking full advantage of our workforce diversity. This will provide NOAA with stronger capabilities to advance our ability to understand and anticipate changes in the Earth's environment, improve society's ability to make scientifically informed decisions, and conserve and manage ocean and coastal ecosystems and resources.

Committing to Diversity & Inclusion

NOAA is fully committed to advancing diversity and inclusion at all levels to achieve our mission goals and business objectives, and maximize the potential of our workforce and the organization as a whole. In making this commitment, NOAA recognizes that all employees, contractors, supervisors, and leaders at all levels play a critical role in realizing this vision. All team members support a diverse workforce and an inclusive environment by demonstrating respect and integrity with and for each other in every aspect of daily work.



Goal 1–Workforce Diversity

Recruit and attract a diverse, highly-capable workforce

Key Objectives

- Effectively recruit qualified individuals at all levels whose diverse backgrounds, experience, education and skills will advance NOAA’s mission.
- Reduce barriers and biases in NOAA’s hiring of diverse, highly-qualified candidates.
- Create a culture that promotes the employment of individuals with disabilities.

Objective 1: Effectively recruit qualified individuals at all levels whose diverse backgrounds, experience, education and skills will advance NOAA’s mission.

TACTICS/ACTIONS	METRICS	RESPONSIBLE
1. Use Office of Inclusion and Civil Rights (OICR) and Line Office/Staff Office (LO/SO) workforce analysis data to target recruitment and to attract diverse candidates with the requisite skills and competencies identified in staffing and succession plans.	The number of recruitment activities specifically targeting underrepresented groups in occupations of need as identified in staffing and succession plans	LO/SO, OHCS, OICR
2. Use interview questions to identify managers, supervisors, and executives who demonstrate support for diversity and inclusion.	The proportion of interview question sets used that include D&I-centric questions	OHCS
3. Conduct education and outreach activities to engage and train NOAA’s future workforce and build the NOAA brand among underrepresented populations including women, minorities, and persons with disabilities in partnership with Minority Serving Institutions and other appropriate entities.	The number of postsecondary degrees awarded to NOAA-supported students in higher education programs at Minority Serving Institutions	NOAA Education
	The number of outreach activities specifically targeting underrepresented populations and placements	LO/SO, OICR, OHCS
4. Analyze applicant flow to identify and eliminate triggers and barriers in recruitment and hiring practices.	The proportion of triggers and barriers to recruitment and hiring eliminated	OICR & OHCS

Objective 2: Reduce barriers and biases in NOAA’s hiring of diverse, highly-qualified candidates.

TACTICS/ACTIONS	METRICS	RESPONSIBLE
1. Use diverse hiring panels, when available, to create an inclusive interview environment.	The proportion (%) of hiring panels with diverse members	LO/SO
2. Require hiring managers to complete Implicit Bias Training to eliminate potential barriers in recruitment and selection practices.	The proportion (%) of managers trained in IBT within the last 3 years at the line and staff level	LO/SO
3. Educate hiring managers and selection officials about special hiring authorities and direct hiring capabilities that support the selection and hire of diverse applicants.	The number of managers trained regarding special hiring authorities and programs that facilitate expeditious hiring of diverse applicants	LO/SO

Objective 3: Create a culture that promotes the employment of individuals with disabilities.

TACTICS/ACTIONS	METRICS	RESPONSIBLE
1. Leverage partnerships and resources to recruit and hire qualified individuals with disabilities (IWD) and targeted disabilities (IWTD).	The number of partnerships and amount of resources leveraged to recruit IWD and IWTD	LO/SO, OHCS, OICR
2. Target advertisements to colleges, universities, institutions, and communities for IWDs.	Number of entities receiving targeted advertisements	LO/SO & OHCS



Goal 2–Workplace Inclusion

Build a Work Environment That Promotes Inclusion

Key Objectives

- Cultivate an inclusive work environment that empowers and engages every NOAA team member.
- Ensure all staff have equal access to career development opportunities in order to retain a diverse and qualified workforce.

Objective 1: Cultivate an inclusive work environment that empowers and engages every NOAA team member.		
TACTICS/ACTIONS	METRICS	RESPONSIBLE
1. Leaders promote participation in employee resource/affinity groups, special observances, special emphasis programs, and D&I training.	The number of participants in NOAA-recognized affinity groups, ERGs, and SEP events	OICR: ERGs, SEPs
	The number of ERGs and D&I councils within individual LO/SOs	LO/SO
2. Administer robust orientation and onboarding programs for new team members and leaders that highlights the importance of inclusion.	The percentage of orientation participants informed about NOAA’s D&I policy/initiatives	OHCS & LO/SO
3. Increase awareness of and participation in work/life balance programs.	FEVS survey data for Work/life balance	OHCS & LO/SO
4. Develop an adaptable workplace that accommodates and reduces attrition of qualified individuals with disabilities.	Proportion of Reasonable Accommodations Approved, and Exit Survey data	LO/SO & OICR
5. Leaders regularly seek out feedback by conducting stay interviews, workforce engagement surveys, etc.	Number of stay interviews, surveys, etc. conducted	LO/SO

Objective 2: Ensure all staff have equal access to career development opportunities in order to retain a diverse and qualified workforce.		
TACTICS/ACTIONS	METRICS	RESPONSIBLE
1. Using staffing and succession plans to prioritize skills development, leaders facilitate the participation of diverse populations in NOAA leadership and professional development programs.	The number of demographically diverse participants in leadership or professional development programs	OHCS
2. Increase the participation of underrepresented groups within the NOAA Mentoring Program.	The number of minority participants in NOAA’s Mentoring Program	OHCS & LO/SO

Goal 3–Sustainability

Build Sustained and Adaptive Leadership Commitment to a Diverse and Inclusive NOAA Through Accountability, Data and Education.

Key Objectives

- Expand leadership accountability for managing diversity and inclusion across NOAA.
- Increase the visibility of leaders in diversity-related activities.

Objective 1: Expand leadership accountability for managing diversity and inclusion across NOAA.

TACTICS/ACTIONS	METRICS	RESPONSIBLE
1. Assess the performance of managers and supervisors regarding D&I based on the New Inclusion Quotient (New IQ) ⁴ scores for their respective offices.	The NEW IQ scores for each respective office	LO/SO & OICR
2. Assistant Administrators and SO Directors are responsible for ensuring the development of LO/SO D&I Implementation plans to meet the objectives of the NOAA D&I Strategic Plan.	The number of LO/SO Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plans developed and implemented	LO/SO
	The number of NOAA D&I Strategic Plan tactics completed	LO/SO

Objective 2: Increase the visibility of leaders in diversity-related activities

TACTICS/ACTIONS	METRICS	RESPONSIBLE
1. NOAA senior leaders provide regular updates to the workforce on NOAA's progress toward Diversity and Inclusion Plan goals.	The number of quarterly progress reports that indicate improvements toward NOAA D&I goals	USEC/DUSO
2. Line and Staff Office leaders regularly communicate and promote the value of D&I.	The number of communications pertaining to D&I and including D&I	LO/SO
	The number of meetings, activities, and events conducted relating specifically to D&I	LO/SO
	The number of D&I related trainings	LO/SO

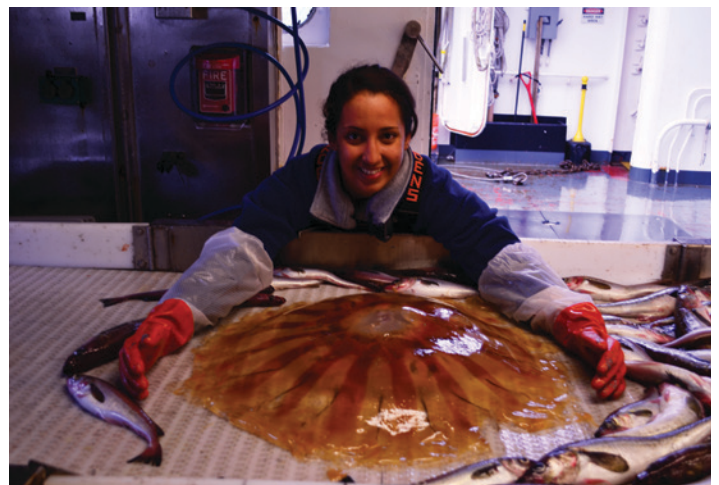
⁴ The New IQ consists of 20 questions in the FEVS grouped into five categories, known as the “Habits of Inclusion”, which directly correlate to the employees’ sense of inclusion in their workplaces – meaning how Fair, Open, Cooperative, Supportive and Empowering they perceive their workplaces to be.

Objective 3: Eradicate racial inequalities and all forms of discrimination and harassment, especially sexual assault and sexual harassment (SASH).

TACTICS/ACTIONS	METRICS	RESPONSIBLE
1. Leaders expand reporting mechanisms, victim advocacy, and prevention measures as it relates to SASH.	The number of mechanisms available for reporting throughout the agency	USEC/DUSO
	The number of preventive steps taken	
2. Leaders conduct assessments to identify and revise any policies, practices, or procedures that perpetuate racial inequality across the agency.	The number of policies, practices, and procedures changed	USEC/DUSO
3. Leaders contribute to ongoing cultural change by providing continuing learning opportunities for leaders that promote racial equality and anti-racist behaviors.	The number of learning activities made available	USEC/DUSO
	The number with leadership participation	
4. NOAA senior leaders use a variety of mechanisms to regularly gather employee feedback on issues relating to racial inequality, discrimination, and harassment.	The number different mechanism to obtain feedback and the frequency of their use	USEC/DUSO

Achieving Results

Effectively implementing this Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan will be critical to NOAA's success. OICR will lead the overall implementation, with oversight from the NEC and full support from senior leadership. Line and Staff Office executives will maintain accountability for each plan objective, working with their colleagues, teams, and Agency Councils as appropriate to advance these objectives and support tactics. Together, leadership and OICR will engage NOAA's workforce in all Offices to achieve results. OICR will share guidance to implement and assess our progress toward achieving these goals and objectives. NOAA is aware that many factors (such as changing demographics of the labor force) may influence and challenge the execution of this plan over the next few years. OICR and NEC will continually monitor our tactics and progress toward our objectives to update implementation efforts as appropriate. NOAA team members can expect to receive periodic information and reports regarding progress toward the goals outlined in this plan.



Appendix A: Roles and Responsibilities

NOAA team members at all levels play a critical role in building a diverse and inclusive NOAA. Key roles and responsibilities are summarized below.

ROLES	RESPONSIBILITIES
Senior Leadership (including the NOAA Executive Panel and Council)	Champion diversity and inclusion (D&I) across NOAA, working in conjunction with the DIMAC to ensure that organizational systems, policies, and practices support NOAA's diversity and inclusion vision and are integrated into Agency operations.
Office of Inclusion and Civil Rights (OICR)	Develop NOAA's D&I Strategic Plan, and oversee D&I annual report and performance measurement. Advise NOAA leadership and provide line and staff offices direction to achieve these Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan goals. Establish policies and procedures that directly support plan objectives and ensure compliance with Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) laws and Federal reporting requirements.
Office of Human Capital Services	Provide direction and support in achieving D&I Strategic Plan goals, to include: leading workforce planning and analysis; hiring; talent management (e.g., training and onboarding); recognition and awards; communication planning; metrics programs; processes; and policies.
Line Office EEO and Diversity Managers	Provide support in achieving NOAA D&I Strategic Plan Goals through training, outreach and recruitment efforts; promotion of diversity and inclusion practices; serve as a resource to their respective Line Office leaders to ensure priorities and progress are communicated to the workforce.
All Selection Officials, Hiring Managers, HR Staff, and Recruiters	Comply with diversity hiring and selection principles, and select the best-qualified applicant for the job regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, age, color, disability, religion, sexual orientation, or any other non-merit factor.
Employee Resource Groups (ERGs)	Voluntary, employee-led groups that serve as a resource for its members, constituency, OICR, and the Agency's leadership. They assist in fostering a diverse, inclusive workplace aligned with the organizational mission, values, goals, business practices, and objectives. ERGs assist with supporting professional development activities and can be a pipeline of future NOAA leaders. The groups offer an excellent networking platform and a significant opportunity to increase employee engagement and assist the Agency in developing strategies to expand diversity outreach initiatives.
Every NOAA Team Member	Individually help advance NOAA's diversity and inclusion goals by cultivating a culture of belonging, celebrating the value of diverse backgrounds and perspectives, and recognizing and mitigating implicit biases.



U.S. Secretary of Commerce
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