

Mary Weaver

From: Farrell, Robert <rob.farrell@dof.virginia.gov> on behalf of Farrell, Robert
Sent: Monday, June 7, 2021 12:05 PM
To: DOF-ALL EMPLOYEES
Subject: The Branch
Attachments: 2021-06-07 Branch.pdf

Hello everyone,

The Commonwealth has launched the ONE Virginia Plan to cultivate and promote a culture of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) across state government so that everyone – our fellow employees, the communities we work with, and all residents - feel welcome and respected in any interactions with us. This initiative will involve all state agencies and addresses DEI in recruitment and employee development and retention; representation in management and agency decision making; training and education; policies and procedures; accessibility; outreach programs and services to communities.

Here at VDOF we are in the process of drafting a DEI strategic plan for the agency to describe all the steps we have already taken and what additional steps are needed to ensure that we are meeting the statewide expectations for inclusive government. Everyone in the agency will have a role and expectations in support of our DEI plans.

I am very proud of the DOF. I am immensely proud of the people that work here and the work that we all do. I have always described the DOF as a service organization and over the past fourteen months you have demonstrated the true heart of the DOF as public servants in the face of COVID. Our DEI efforts will help us ensure that we are serving the entire Commonwealth.

We are fortunate at DOF to have a relatively narrow focus on forestry and trees and natural resources. The downside is that we tend to have a fairly narrow perspective as an organization. I personally believe that we have made significant effort and had some progress in addressing DEI but that is from my biased perspective. We all see situations and interpret circumstances through our own unique lens of experience. To have a clear picture of DEI, we need to honestly examine our own perspectives and be open to the perspectives of others, and that can be challenging. That is the work that we have before us.

In order to be inclusive of others outside our agency we need to make sure that we are an inclusive and supportive workplace for each other. We are going to be sending out an anonymous survey to everyone in the agency to solicit your honest feedback on the current culture of our agency. We need your honest and candid feedback. We may need to have some uncomfortable conversations in order to help us be better as an organization and now is the time.

As always, if you have concerns or questions please raise them to your supervisor. You can also reach out directly to the HR team or to a member of the executive team.

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