



OFFICE OF DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION COMMUNIQUE



Director's Address—Gains & Goals

January 2024
Volume III, Issue 1

Happy New Year! I am pleased to share another issue of **ODEI COMMUNIQUE**.

No new year's resolutions – I am 'locked in' with good intentions and great expectations for this vital work. This year brings new benchmarks; new legislation; new alliances; new initiatives, and new professional development prospects.

In CY 2023, the ODEI produced a comprehensive EEO Plan and an RFP for Phase II of the DEI Workforce Assessment; designed a logo that embodies our core principles of autonomy, confidentiality, and fair practices; facilitated alliance between MSP and HBCUs in support of minority recruitment; and aligned EEO standards with other state and federal agencies. Boots on the ground—the ODEI visited 24 installations to improve communication and strengthen outreach, and met with professional organizations to address past workplace culture and perceptions, and to affirm its fair practices advocacy. Pursuant to House Bill 1423, ODEI trained employees on Sexual Harassment Prevention in the Workplace (SHPT). As of December 2023, more than 2,000 sworn and civilian employees are SHPT compliant. Also, the ODEI has directed confidential mediation services, in lieu of costly litigation and charges being brought against the Department.

While we delight in these significant gains, we also recognize the need for continued due diligence and the commitment of our team to uphold and defend civil rights protections for all personnel. Our society will soon explore the impact of artificial intelligence (AI) as it relates to civil rights and civil liberties, hiring, law enforcement, and other spectrums. Notwithstanding, the ODEI remains steadfast on supporting anti-discrimination laws and working to apply objectivity, transparency, justness, equal opportunities, civility, and enhancing morale in our work environment to overshadow the polarizing realities that we are every so often faced with.

In February, we will celebrate **Black History Month** and laud the achievements, contributions, and sacrifices of African Americans who personify service. Last April, Colonel Roland L. Butler, Jr. was sworn in as our 21st Superintendent – becoming the first African American to lead the agency in its 103-year history. Throughout March, **Women's History Month** is celebrated to commemorate the significant roles and fortitude of women in American history; and of course, **Maryland Day** is on March 25.

Thank you to those who reached out to ODEI to break the cycle and build a bridge, shared their raw but civil remarks, perspectives, but more importantly, offered useful information and recommendations to improve our workplace for the betterment of us all and those we serve. We may come from diverse backgrounds, but we share a commonality for things that are just and fair. Let's go inside...

Yours in Public Service,

Gail V. Tucker

Director, Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Training Spotlight.....	2
ODEI Services	3
D&I Calendar	4
Resources & Training	5
CCF (225) Highlights	6
Standards of Operation.....	7

MENTOR/MENTEE PROGRAM IS BACK!

The purpose behind the redevelopment of the mentorship program is to establish updated parameters and procedures for a voluntary Mentorship Program that will now be open to **all** MDSP employees. The goal is to provide encouragement, motivation, and support to employees so as to help them succeed in their positions and accomplish their career goals.

MDSP will support employees in understanding the Agency's mission, vision, values, and goals.

Learn more and sign up via
PowerDMS.

TRAINING SPOTLIGHT WITH THE U.S. EEOC

In case you missed it... in November 2023, the ODEI coordinated with the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission to bring their "Leading for Respect and Overview of Federal and State EEO Laws" training to MDSP. Senior leadership completed this training that focused on preventing discrimination, harassment, and retaliation in the workplace as part of the Department's commitment to its values of integrity, fairness, and service.

This 4-hour training, facilitated by U.S. EEOC Outreach and Education Coordinator, Terrence Carr, included best practices for effective organizational leadership, norms for workplace behaviors, role playing, as well as a Coaching Model. The ODEI and MDSP looks forward to welcoming Mr. Carr back in February 2024 to deliver two more energetic EEO trainings to lieutenants, captains, and directors.



ODEI TRAININGS AVAILABLE

Did you know that the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (ODEI) offers a variety of trainings? While you may be most familiar with our state-mandated **Sexual Harassment Prevention in the Workplace** training (SHPT), our team also offers **Cultural Sensitivity and Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO)** trainings. In early 2024, we are welcoming an Outreach Coordinator to our team who will help facilitate each of these presentations to MDSP employees.

Are you SHPT compliant? Per House Bill 1423, all state employees must complete SHPT within the first six months of their employment, and every two years thereafter. In 2024, we will offer monthly virtual sessions. Please check PowerDMS regularly for upcoming training dates and registration information.

IMPLICIT BIAS

Implicit bias is an automatic reaction we have towards other people. These attitudes and stereotypes can negatively impact our understanding, actions, and decision-making. The idea that we can hold prejudices we don't want or believe was quite radical when it was first introduced, and the fact that people may discriminate unintentionally continues to have implications for understanding disparities in so many aspects of society, including but not limited to, healthcare and education, as well as workplace policies, like hiring and promotion. Test your implicit bias, privately, included in our **Cultural Sensitivity** training.

Whether positive or negative, everyone has biases — unconscious, implicit, or explicit — it's how the human brain operates. Unconscious biases are attitudes and social stereotypes that people have but aren't consciously aware of. If not recognized and managed, unconscious bias can lead to discrimination, claims, and behaviors that harm employees, and diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives.

ODEI SERVICES TO THE MDSP COMMUNITY

2023 RECAP

56 TOTAL CASES

285 MSP 225s PROCESSED

50 TRAININGS CONDUCTED

126 HIRING PACKETS REVIEWED

24 SITE VISITS COMPLETED

WHAT DOES ODEI DO?

- Investigate complaints of discrimination/harassment.
- Facilitate Sexual Harassment Prevention, EEO, and Cultural Sensitivity trainings.
- Review personnel actions and civilian hiring practices.
- Process commendations and complaints received from the MSP 225 Form.
- Manage the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) referral process.
- Conduct mediation services.
- Ensure the Department's compliance with the Governor's Code of Fair Employment Practices and various Federal and State laws and policies.

FAIR PRACTICES IS OUR CORE MANDATE

A main function of ODEI is investigating unlawful discrimination and harassment complaints based on a protected class in accordance with the various Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) laws listed below.

- *Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964*
- *Civil Rights Act of 1991*
- *American With Disabilities Act of 1990*
- *Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967*
- *Equal Pay Act of 1963*
- *State Personnel and Pensions Article of the Annotated Code of MD, §2-302 and Title 5, Subtitle 2*
- *Executive Order 01.01.2007.16 Code of Fair Employment Practices*
- *State Government Article Title 20*
- *Pregnant Workers Fairness Act (PWFA) effective June 27, 2023*

An investigation with our office begins with the filing of an MSP 051 Form, which is available to view and download on PowerDMS, and on the EEO board outside of our office. At the top of the MSP 051 Form, a complainant must indicate the basis of the discrimination/harassment they are experiencing, otherwise known as a protected class. Examples of a protected class include, but are not limited to, race, age, religion, sex/gender, disability, marital status, retaliation, and more. ODEI only investigates discrimination/harassment complaints when they are on the basis of a protected class. However, when you contact our office, if we cannot take the complaint forward, our team will discuss other filing options with you (IAD, Prosecutor's Office, grievance process, etc.) and help you find a resolution.

When filing a complaint with ODEI, you are not required to notify your command staff or supervisor. Additionally, ODEI does not contact command staff or supervisors unless they are named in the complaint. Completed MSP 051 Forms, narratives, and additional documentation can be sent to mzp.odei@maryland.gov.

Not sure if the issue(s) you are experiencing should be handled by ODEI or if you want to file an MSP 051 Form? Inquire with our office via email or phone (410-653-4379) so our dedicated team can assist you. Inquiries and cases are confidentially handled by our team members, who signed a confidentiality agreement as part of their ODEI onboarding process. Our team is here to help YOU!



DIVERSITY & INCLUSION CALENDAR

The Diversity & Inclusion Calendar aims to highlight various celebrations and national monthly recognitions. ODEI makes every effort to include all holidays, and recommends visiting the resources listed below for additional recognitions, information, monthly interfaith calendars, and more.

IANUARY

- 1/1 – Emancipation Proclamation: President Lincoln declared all individuals held in slavery free on this day in 1863
- 1/4 – World Braille Day
- 1/6 – Feast of the Epiphany (Christian)
- 1/15 – Makar Sankranti (Hindu)
- 1/15 – Martin Luther King Jr. Day
- 1/21 – World Religion Day (Bahá'í)
- 1/27 – International Day of Commemoration in Memory of Victims of the Holocaust

FEBRUARY

- **Black History Month**
- 2/1 – Imbolc
- 2/2 – Candlemas
- 2/8 – Lailat al Miraj
- 2/10 – Chinese New Year
- 2/14 – Ash Wednesday
- 2/15 – Nirvana Day (Buddhist): also known as Parinirvana
- 2/26-2/29 – Intercalary / Ayyam-i-ha (Bahá'í)

MARCH

- **Women's History Month**
- 3/8 – International Women's Day
- 3/11 – Ramadan begins
- 3/17 – St. Patrick's Day (Irish)
- 3/21 – Nowruz (Persian & Bahá'í New Year)
- 3/24 – Palm Sunday
- 3/25 – Maryland Day
- 3/29 – Good Friday
- 3/31 – Easter (Christian)
- 3/31 – International Transgender Day of Visibility

APRIL

- **Celebrate Diversity Month**
- 4/2 – World Autism Awareness Day
- 4/6 – Laylat al-Qadr
- 4/9 – Eid al-Fitr
- 4/22 – Earth Day (International)
- 4/22-4/30 – Passover (Jewish)



RESOURCES

[Department of Budget and Management Diversity Calendar](#)
[Diversity Resources Calendar](#)

RESOURCES & TRAINING

DISCRIMINATION COVERED UNDER TITLE VII OF THE CIVIL RIGHTS ACT OF 1964: <https://www.eeoc.gov/discrimination-type>

EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (EAP): <http://www.dbm.maryland.gov/employees/Pages/EAP.aspx>

JOB ACCOMMODATION NETWORK (JAN): <https://askjan.org/ADA-Library.cfm>

A source of expert and confidential guidance on job accommodations and disability employment issues. JAN provides free practical guidance and technical assistance on job accommodation solutions, including Title I of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and related legislation.

MARYLAND COMMISSION ON CIVIL RIGHTS (MCCR): <http://mccr.maryland.gov/>

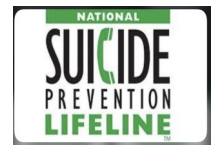
MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF DISABILITIES: <http://mdod.maryland.gov/Pages/Home.aspx>



CREATING SAFE SPACES—BEING AN LGBTQIA ALLY: <https://safespacetraining.org/>

Safe Spaces workshops are designed to help people reduce the often hostile environments in which the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Questioning, Intersex, and Asexual (LGBTQIA) community navigate in their daily lives. During training, participants develop a set of strategies for creating more welcoming environments. Attendees learn solutions for promoting Safe Spaces of respect, acceptance, and support for all.

SUICIDE & CRISIS LIFELINE—Lifeline 9-8-8 has been designated as the *new* three-digit dialing code that will route callers to the **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline**. Everyone in the U.S. seeking support for suicidal, mental health, and substance use crisis can call or text any time of day.



U.S. EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY COMMISSION (EEOC)

<http://www.eeoc.gov/>

MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES FOR A HAPPY NEW YEAR



Get the New Year started off right by taking care of your mental health. The Employee Assistance Program (EAP) and MyMDCARES are two confidential resources available to you as a state employee. Participation in either program is voluntary. The EAP allows supervisors or employees to make a referral which is processed by ODEI. Supervisors are encouraged to refer employees when an employee's personal matters may negatively impact work performance. For more information, [click here](#). Completed referrals can be emailed to Gail V. Tucker, gailv.tucker1@maryland.gov.

MyMDCARES is a free external service available 24/7 to all employees who need help with either personal or professional issues. Common reasons to use MyMDCARES include relationship issues (family, friends, work relationships), life changes (illness, divorce, retirement), emotional well-being risks (burnout, depression, anxiety), and everyday life challenges (daily responsibilities, parenting, financial, legal). Learn more by [clicking here](#). Call 844-405-8200, or text either **#bebetter** or **#worklife** to 800-327-2251 in order to get started.

CITIZEN COMMENT FORM (225) HIGHLIGHTS

ODEI received 285 Citizen Comment Forms during CY 2023. Our office is looking forward to receiving mailings from citizens throughout 2024, as the feedback remains overwhelmingly positive. Below we have highlighted some recent commendations from citizens and what they wrote about their interaction with an MSP Trooper.




“Please be sure to express my commendation regarding this very professional and courteous state trooper. He does our state very proud and we are lucky to have him in our service.”
- TPR Dylan R. Miller

“He was very nice and polite and identified himself very well. Awesome during this traffic stop.”
- TPR Ronald W. Schrock

“Officer Rubino was professional, friendly and articulate. I felt very safe and confident in his presence. Thank you for having such an incredible Officer on your police force.”
- S/TPR Joseph Rubino

“Throughout she was thoroughly professional, clear in her explanations and directions, and a credit to the Maryland State Police.”
- TPR Brooke A. Cosgrove

“I wish to express my gratitude for my experience with TFC R. Sosnak. I was very impressed with his professionalism and integrity. He was extremely polite, cordial and respectful.”
- TFC Ryan M. Sosnak



“Trooper Haller was beyond patient and kind with me and very polite. I cannot say enough good things about my encounter with Trooper Haller and appreciate being able to commend him.”
- TFC Ryan C. Haller



“Trooper Brittingham was very professional and pleasant. I appreciate her looking out for our safety. She has a great attitude and I wish her and everyone in law enforcement the best. Thank you for your service.”
- TPR Logan T. Brittingham

OFFICE OF DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION

OUR DOCTRINE

Diversity-Equity-Inclusion (DEI) is an ethos that recognizes the value of mixed voices and considers fairness and opportunity as vital facets of its success. The ODEI is unified in shepherding this philosophy for the betterment of us all and those we serve.

IMPROVING DEI

Realize that everyone plays a part. Think strategically about your own role and where you fit in the DEI conversation. Words on paper cannot address DEI—it takes action.

Be open to a DEI conversation. The planning should involve all levels of leadership and staff with actionable steps planned.

Broaden your understanding. Learn about the levels of diversity and how you can positively contribute. Consider lunching or working with a team of multicultural and diverse professionals who have the perspectives and experience to help you build on your knowledge.

Assess the workplace culture. Culture is more than the clothes/uniforms people wear. It is the thread that weaves through the Department to make it stronger. State agencies that see the value of diverse threads will begin to create a competitive advantage that is both attractive and resilient.

Culture is an organic element that includes the rules of how to get things done, how people are treated, and their behaviors. Serving both diverse talent and an increasingly diverse public is paramount to our growth. When we commit to doing the work and push through potentially uncomfortable conversations, we will achieve progress. We will be stronger and better able to represent a diverse outlook, have influence and a standing, and make an impact in our communities.

The ODEI looks forward to deploying Phase II of the DEI Workforce Assessment by collecting data from employees via the use of virtual surveys with efforts to address employees' concerns and more importantly, develop a blueprint to improve and maintain an equitable and inclusive workplace culture.

Colonel Roland L. Butler, Jr.
Superintendent



Wes Moore
Governor

Aruna Miller
Lt. Governor

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NEXT ISSUE - APRIL 2024