



# OFFICE OF EQUITY & INCLUSION COMMUNIQUÉ

## Director’s Address—Past, Present, Future

The emphasis of the Office of Equity and Inclusion (OEI) is to ensure the Department’s compliance with the Governor’s Code of Fair Employment Practices and various federal and state laws and policies prohibiting discrimination, harassment, and retaliation in all aspects of employment.

The OEI, formerly the Office of Fair Practices, not only has a *new* name—it also has *new* leadership. Joined by recently appointed Deputy Director Atto Commey, we investigate equal employment opportunity (EEO) claims against protected classes with accountability, discretion, impartiality, and autonomy.

Understanding that every claim does not rise to the level of an EEO investigation, we now participate in the new employee orientation process to explain the OEI’s role and functions—from the mandated Sexual Harassment Prevention in the Workplace and EEO trainings—to providing feedback on interview questions and the hiring selection process for impartiality. We have also revised the EEO Policy Statement and Form 51 to better align with current EEO trends and protected classes. We are immersed in ensuring equal employment opportunities at the Maryland Department of State Police (MDSP).

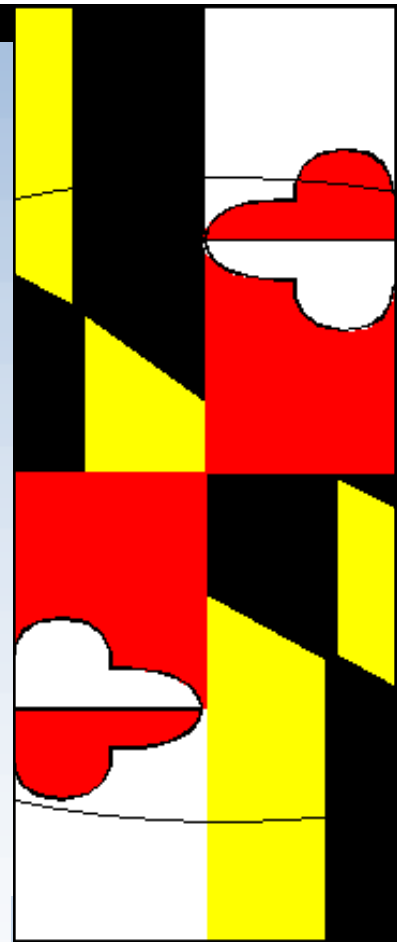
Further, the OEI consists of staff experienced in jurisprudence, education, mediation, research, and COMAR. We are looking to grow our civilian team with an Administrator and EEO Investigator. We are humbled by the invitations received throughout the Department to ‘Meet and Greet’ personally with staff and to shepherd our vision *moving forward*.

Our doctrine is to lead this office with professional standards and *equity* to ensure MDSP’s processes, hiring practices, and programs provide equal possible outcomes for all personnel while invoking the seven pillars of *inclusion*—choice, partnership, communication, policies, opportunity, access, and attitude. Lastly, the OEI stands ready to lean-in and to assist you in the important work we all do, in an atmosphere of belonging.

Let’s go inside...

Gail V. Tucker, MS|MBA|SHRM-CP  
Director

Atto Commey, J.D.  
Deputy Director



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# IMPLICIT BIAS



During the 2021 Maryland General Assembly Legislative Session, lawmakers required state agencies to develop testing and training for implicit bias.

*Implicit bias* is the unconscious biases that are created and reinforced by our environment, experiences, beliefs, and perception. Our minds constantly process information from a visual perspective without our conscious awareness.

Unconscious bias can effect the way we interact and treat people for hiring, promotions, scopes of work, and professional development, etc. *Implicit biases* can impact well-intentioned individuals outside of their conscious awareness.

**THE BEST WAY TO REDUCE UNCONSCIOUS BIASES IN THE WORKPLACE IS TO FIRST ACKNOWLEDGE THEIR EXISTENCE AND AVOID THEM**

*"Diversity is having a seat at the table, inclusion is having a voice, and belonging is having that voice be heard."* ~ Liz Fosslien

## COMMON IMPLICIT BIASES IN THE WORKPLACE

- 1. CONFORMITY BIAS**—pressure to agree with others
- 2. BEAUTY BIAS**—those who meet societal standards of beauty, includes height, weight, skin tone
- 3. AFFINITY BIAS**—forming a deeper connection with someone you share a connection or interest with
- 4. HALO EFFECT**—one outstanding quality or accomplishment takes precedence over any negative attributes the person may exhibit
- 5. HORNS EFFECT**—rather than acknowledging and focusing on a single positive attribute, you acknowledge and focus on a single negative characteristic
- 6. SIMILARITY BIAS**—feeling more comfortable around those who share a similarity; you are more likely to hire or promote if someone looks or act like you
- 7. CONTRAST BIAS**—comparing resumes or interviews with the others they experienced rather than comparing qualifications
- 8. AFFECT HEURISTICS**—making conclusions/decisions based on emotions, superficial or unimportant details rather than facts

## WAYS TO INCREASE INCLUSIVITY\*

- Avoid misgendering - use alternative pronouns (THEY, THEM, THEIRS).
- Offer training to employees on LGBTQIA+ and sex-based discrimination as it pertains to sexual orientation, gender identity, and expression.
- When uncertain of an individual's prefix—address them by their first and last name.
- Use general greetings—such as “Good Morning Everyone or All,” in lieu of “Good Morning Ladies and Gentlemen.”
- Use pronouns in your Email signature, Zoom, and Google Meet banners.
- Acknowledge holidays of all cultures.
- Encourage ongoing and candid feedback.
- Develop inclusion goals and measure progress.

\* **NOT MANDATORY**





## MARYLAND WHISTLEBLOWER LAW

Disclosure of information is protected. A supervisor, appointing authority, or the head of a principal unit may not take or refuse to take any personnel action as a reprisal against an employee who:

- 1) discloses information that the employee reasonably believes evidences an abuse of authority, gross mismanagement, a specific danger to public health or safety, or a violation of law;
- 2) Following a disclosure listed in #1, seeks a remedy provided under the Whistleblower Law or any other law or policy governing the employee's unit.

### DISCLOSING PROTECTED INFORMATION

Information protected under the Whistleblower Law may be reported to a supervisor, appointing authority, or the head of a principal unit who is in a position to correct the illegal wrongdoing. Also, a disclosure specifically prohibited by law may be reported to the Office of the Attorney General.

### APPLICABILITY

Maryland Whistleblower Law applies to all employees and State employees who are applicants for positions in the Executive Branch of State Government, including a unit with an independent personnel system.

### PERSONNEL ACTIONS

State Personnel and Pensions Article Title 5, subtitle 3, prohibits an employer from retaliating against an employee with respect to the employee's compensation and terms, conditions, or privileges of employment, on the basis of the employee's protected disclosure. Retaliation includes harassment and unjustified negative evaluations.

### PROHIBITED ACTIONS

Denial of Benefits

Demotion

Transfer

Loss of Opportunity for Overtime/Promotion

Reduction of Pay/Hours

Disciplinary Action

### SAFE & CONFIDENTIAL

All investigations into complaints are strictly confidential. Information is only discussed with individuals relevant to the investigation and resolution.

### CLICK BELOW FOR VIDEO ON RETALIATION

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sveD0ZFla2Y>



## MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF STATE POLICE Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Research Project / Workforce Assessment

During the 2021 session, the Maryland General Assembly articulated concerns with the allegations of racial insensitivity and lack of diversity among the Maryland Department of State Police (MDSP) workforce. This language directed MDSP to convene a diversity study group to develop an action plan to address these concerns and produce findings.

The MDSP recognizes that its credibility and trustworthiness is directly linked to the diversity of its workforce and the integrity, diligence, and transparency of its hiring and personnel practices. Further, it is a desired goal of the MDSP to take all necessary actions to pursue diversity within its sworn and civilian ranks.

In May 2022, the Office of Equity and Inclusion (OEI) entered into an agreement, titled Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Research Project/Workforce Assessment, with Morgan State University (MSU) to conduct moderated 'in-person' focus groups of both internal MDSP employees (sworn and civilian) and external community stakeholders.

Internal focus groups are being formed to gather a better understanding of employees' feelings, perceptions, opinions, and beliefs related to their sense of belonging, inclusion, opportunities, and value, as it relates to diversity, equity, and inclusion within the MDSP. The focus groups will assist MDSP to better understand and consider the actions, behaviors and policies that are counterproductive to its vision and future regarding DEI. The focus groups' findings will be used to make recommendations, analyze data, review workplace culture, and make adjustments to MDSP policies, procedures, and operational practices, as applicable.

The focus groups, comprised of 8-to-10 participants, are being held throughout the State of Maryland in four regions:

**Central/Northern Region** - Central and Northern to include the following counties: Howard, Carroll, Baltimore, Harford, and Cecil.

**Southern Region** - Southern and Washington Metro to include the following counties: Montgomery, Prince George's, Anne Arundel, Charles, Calvert, and St. Mary's.

**Eastern Region** - Eastern to include the following counties: Wicomico, Caroline, Dorchester, Talbot, Kent, Queen Anne's, Worcester, and Somerset.

**Western Region** - Western to include the following counties: Frederick, Washington, Allegany, and Garrett.

Participation in the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Research Project/Workforce Assessment is strictly confidential and voluntary. Any information shared with the MSU research team will be kept private and will not be shared with the MDSP, to include the OEI.

This is your opportunity to make a difference by participating in this crucial initiative. Thank you.

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# 2022 LEGISLATIVE UPDATES

## HB13 [Chapter 159]



**HB13—Procurement Discriminatory Hiring Practices** establishes that a person may be barred from entering into a contract with the State if a certain finding is made that a person or certain related individuals have violated provisions of law prohibiting discrimination in employment or been debarred from federal contracts under a certain federal executive.

## HB78 [Chapter 325]



**HB78—Discrimination in Employment-Reasonable Accommodations for Applicants with Disabilities** prohibits an employer from failing or refusing to make a certain accommodation for the known disability of an applicant for employment; and establishing that an employer is not required to accommodate an applicant for employment's disability if the accommodation would cause an undue hardship on the conduct of the employer's business.

## SB151 | HB645 [Chapter 167]



**SB151—Hate Crimes-False Statement to a Law Enforcement Office** clarifying that the making of a certain false statement, report, or complaint that a person knows to be a false as a whole or in material part to a law enforcement officer of the State, of a county, municipal corporation, or other subdivision of the State, or of the Maryland National Capitol Park & Planning Police may form the basis for a certain hate crime.

## SB450 | HB1393 [Chapter 657]



### SGA, §20-601(k)—Sexual Harassment

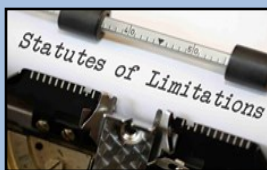
(K) "Sexual Harassment" includes conduct, which need not be severe or pervasive, that consists of unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or other conduct of a sexual nature when:

- (1) Submission to the conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of employment of an individual;
- (2) Submission to or rejection of the conduct is used as a basis for employment decisions affecting the individual; or
- (3) Based on the totality of the circumstances, the conduct unreasonably creates a working environment that a reasonable person would perceive to be abusive or hostile.

### State Personnel & Pension Article, §2-203.1(a)(3)(iii)

(3) "Sexual Harassment" has the meaning stated in §20-601 of the State Government Article.

## SB451 [Chapter 660]



### SB451—Unlawful Employment Practices-Statute of Limitations-Tolling: State Government Article, §20-1013(a)(2)

(a)(1) A complainant may bring a civil action against the respondent alleging an unlawful employment practice, if:

I-The complainant initially filed a timely administrative charge or a complaint under federal, state, or local law alleging an unlawful employment practice by the respondent;

II-At least 180-D have elapsed since the filing of the administrative charge or complaint; and

III-1. Subject to Item 2 of this Item, the civil action is filed w/in 2 years after the alleged unlawful employment practice occurred; or

2. If the complaint is alleging harassment, the civil action is filed w/in 3 years after the alleged harassment occurred.

### SB451—Unlawful Employment Practices-Statute of Limitations-Tolling: State Government Article, §20-1013(a)(2)

(2) The time limitations under paragraph (1)(III) of this subsection shall be tolled while an administrative charge or complaint filed by the complainant under paragraph (1)(II) is pending.

# NEW AMENDMENTS

## STATE GOVERNMENT ARTICLES

§§ 20-101(f)-(g) | 20-601(c)(ii) | 20-601(d)(i)2B | 20-601(h) | 20-611 | 20-1004(c)(2) | 20-1013(3)(ii)

### SGA §20-101(f)-(g); Chapter 474

The Crown Act—Definition of Race—Hair Texture & Hairstyles

“Race” - includes traits associated with race, including hair texture, afro hairstyles, and protective hairstyles

“Protective Hairstyle” - includes braids, twists, and locks

### SGA §20-601(c)(ii)

Workplace Harassment—prohibitions, liability, enforcement, and prevention training

Definition of “Employee” - includes an individual working as an independent contractor for an employer.

Adds an individual chosen by an elected officer to be on the officer’s personal staff as a protected employee by deleting SGA, §20-601(c)(2)(ii)

Defines an employer for purposes of “harassment” claims ONLY as having one or more employees for each working day in each of 20 or more weeks

### SGA §20-611

Workplace Harassment—prohibitions, liability, enforcement, and prevention training

Expands the definition for “Supervisor”

Employer is liable for:

Acts or omissions toward an employee or applicant committed by and individual who...

- Undertakes or recommends “tangible employment actions”...including hiring, firing, promoting, demoting and reassigning; or
- Directs, supervises, or evaluates the work activities of the employee; or
- If the negligence of the employer led to the harassment or continuation of harassment

### SGA §§20-1004; 20-1013

Statute of Limitation changed SGA §§20-1004(c)(2)(i); 20-1013(3)(ii)

Maryland Commission on Civil Rights Harassment Complaint filing changed from six months to two years *after* the date on which the alleged harassment occurred.

Harassment Civil Action (court) filing changed from two years to three years *after* the alleged harassment occurred.

# DIVERSITY TRAINING IN THE WORKPLACE

Diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) can appear to overlap and lose distinction. Here are five key facets for effective diversity training in the workplace.

Core competencies of diversity and inclusion training *may* involve the following:

## **Workplace Diversity Training**

Equity is the guarantee of fair treatment, access, opportunity, and investment for all. When you strive to make everything equitable, you aim to identify and eliminate the barriers that have prevented the full participation of all groups, while acknowledging the historically underserved and underrepresented.

Inclusion seeks to bring traditionally excluded individuals and/or groups into processes, activities and decision-making in a way that shares power and equal access to opportunities and resources.

## **Managing Unconscious Bias**

Another form of diversity training is implicit bias. This is a pre-reflective attribution based on social stereotypes. Some people are not aware they have biases, and use them unconsciously to make snap judgments about other people. Unconscious bias can create great harm, especially in the workplace. To help eliminate them, seek unconscious bias training to help people recognize their biases and avoid them.

## **Microaggressions**

Other types of diversity training in the workplace include microaggressions. These are subtle slights, snubs and insults. They can convey hostile, derogatory or negative messages about another person's race, gender, age, sexual orientation, etc. They often come from unconscious bias. And albeit they aren't always intentional; they are hurtful nonetheless. Microaggressions training provides the skills to avoid such biases, and more importantly, to respond effectively when on the receiving end.

## **Cultural Competency Training**

Creating a workplace culture that's informed by diversity, equity, and inclusion may seem unsettling. However, building an inclusive environment allows diverse employees to interact more comfortably, regardless of race, gender, socioeconomic status, sexuality, religion, etc. As a department, the goal should always be to enhance collaboration and remove barriers to inclusive teamwork.

## **Religious Sensitivity Training**

We reside in a diverse world of many faiths. Many avoid discussions on politics or religion. It is essential to provide information on these sensitive topics.

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We invite you to view the **Diversity** Calendar [p 12] and **'SPOTLIGHT!'** [pp 16-17] to learn about two MDSP divisions that are making a difference in DEI.

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

### FREE WORKSHOP on 'Religious Accommodations During the Jewish Holiday Season'

Hosted by: MCCR & Guest Speaker Baltimore Jewish Council Executive Director Howard Libit

Date: **Thursday, September 29, 2022 at 12:00-2:00PM EDT**

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/religious-accommodations-during-the-jewish-holiday-season-tickets-419695619897>

### 29th ANNUAL MID-ATLANTIC CONFERENCE ON THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT

Hosted by: Mid-Atlantic ADA

Date: **Wednesday, October 12, 2022 and Thursday, October 13, 2022**

Location: Hilton Mark Center, Alexandria, Virginia

Visit the [Mid-Atlantic ADA Conference event site](#) for full details and registration.

## RESOURCES

### 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>

### MARYLAND COMMISSION ON CIVIL RIGHTS (MCCR)

<http://mccr.maryland.gov/>

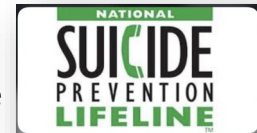
### MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF DISABILITIES

<http://mdod.maryland.gov/Pages/Home.aspx>

### OUT & EQUAL WORKPLACE ADVOCATES

<https://outandequal.org/>

**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**. Effective July 16, 2022, this shortened dialing code became available to everyone across the U.S. seeking support for suicidal, mental health, and substance use crisis—call or text any time of day.



### U.S. EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY COMMISSION (EEOC)

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

### CONSIDERING A CAREER AS A MD STATE TROOPER | AVIATION COMMAND | CADET PROGRAM?

<https://mdsp.maryland.gov/careers/pages/statetrooper.aspx>

### MDSP's Fair Practices Officer | EEO Officer | ADA Coordinator:

**Gail V. Tucker**  
Fair Practices Officer  
410-653-4299

**Atto Commey, J.D.**  
EEO Officer  
410-653-4312

**Denise Wallace**  
ADA Coordinator  
410-653-4296



## In Case You Missed It!

### EEOC Adds “X” Gender Marker to Voluntary Questions During Charge Intake Process

The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) announced today full implementation of the opportunity to select a nonbinary “X” gender marker during the intake process for filing a charge of discrimination.

“By adding a nonbinary gender marker option to the EEOC’s charge intake process, the EEOC is delivering on its public commitment made on Transgender Day of Visibility (March 31) and promoting greater inclusion for members of the LGBTQI+ community.

Consistent with the growing recognition that presenting only “male” and “female” options does not reflect the full range of gender identities, the EEOC has added an option to select a nonbinary “X” gender marker during two critical stages of the intake and charge filing process:

- The EEOC has updated the voluntary demographic questions relating to gender in the online public portal that members of the public use to submit inquiries about filing a charge of discrimination sometimes used in lieu of the portal.
- The EEOC has also modified its charge of discrimination form to include “Mx.” in the list of prefix options.

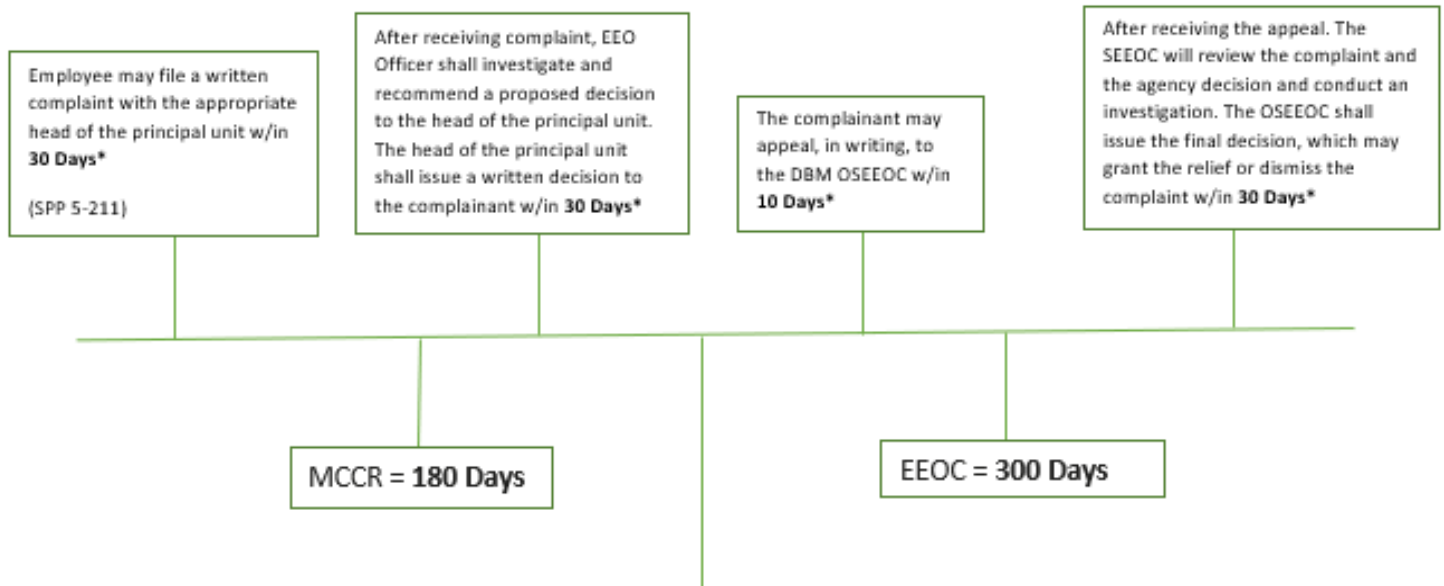
Full implementation of these changes comes during Pride Month, as the EEOC works to celebrate the LGBTQI+ community.

**Read the Full Article Here:**

<https://www.eeoc.gov/newsroom/eeoc-adds-x-gender-marker-voluntary-questions-during-charge-intake-process>

# EEO COMPLAINT PROCESS

Timeline.



**NOTE:** If you are outside of MDSP's 30-Day timeframe, you may still be within the filing timeframe with the two external entities. Days\* refer to calendar days.

The 180-calendar-day filing deadline is extended to 300 calendar days if a state or local agency enforces a state or local law that prohibits employment discrimination on the same basis.

The rules are slightly different for age discrimination charges—the filing deadline is only extended to 300 days IF there is a state law prohibiting age discrimination in employment and a state agency or authority enforcing that law.

## In EEO News

### SKILS'KIN TO PAY \$100,000 TO SETTLE EEOC RACE DISCRIMINATION AND RETALIATION CASE – 09/12/2022

*Employer Racially Harassed Black Employee and Retaliated Against Him for Complaining, Federal Agency Charged*

CHEYENNE, Wyo.— Skills'kin, a non-profit focused on disabilities and employment that operates in Washington, Montana, Oklahoma, and Wyoming, will pay \$100,000 and provide other relief to settle a race discrimination lawsuit brought by the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), the federal agency announced today.

According to the EEOC, the only Black employee on the Skills'kin grounds crew working at Warren Air Force Base in Cheyenne, Wyoming was called various racial slurs by other Skills'kin employees. When the employee complained about the racially offensive statements, Skills'kin assigned him to work directly with the coworker and supervisor who were harassing him. Skills'kin continued to ignore the employee's complaints and then fired him, despite his multiple years of service, while retaining a white employee hired only three months earlier.

Such alleged behavior violates Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which protects employees from race discrimination, including race harassment and retaliation in the workplace. The EEOC filed suit in the U.S. District Court for the District of Wyoming (*Equal Employment Opportunity Commission v. Skills'kin*, Civil Action No. 2:21-CV-185-NDF).

The consent decree settling the suit requires Skills'kin to review and update its race discrimination and non-retaliation policies, as well as post an anti-discrimination notice. The company will also provide trainings on Title VII as well as unlawful race discrimination, race harassment, and retaliation.

In addition, Skills'kin must provide reports to the EEOC detailing its compliance with the terms of the decree and its receipt of any complaints of race discrimination. The decree also requires Skills'kin pay \$100,000 to the employee. The court will retain authority to enforce the terms of the decree for its two-year duration.

"Title VII protects employees from race discrimination and guarantees them the right to work in an environment that is free from racial harassment," said Mary Jo O'Neill, regional attorney of the EEOC's Phoenix District. "It is the unfortunate reality that race discrimination still plagues many workplaces, including in Wyoming."

"Retaliation is the most alleged discrimination complaint filed with the EEOC," said Amy Burkholder, the field director of the EEOC's Denver Field Office. "Employees have the right to complain about race discrimination and race harassment in the workplace. And employers have a legal obligation to ensure those employees are not retaliated against for complaining."

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<https://www.eeoc.gov/newsroom/skilskin-pay-100000-settle-eeoc-race-discrimination-and-retaliation-case>

### ● September Diversity Events Calendar

**9/15-10/15** – National Hispanic Heritage Month: This month honors the culture and contributions of both Hispanic and Latino Americans

**National Recovery Month:** This month helps to educate all Americans on treatment and mental health services for those with substance use disorder

**9/20** – HeForShe (Women): initiated by the UN to promote gender equality

**9/22** – Autumnal Equinox: As summer moves into fall, the autumnal equinox is a time for various religious observances worldwide. Fall is now upon us! The autumnal equinox may seem like a simple shift of seasons, but around the world, it's the time for various religious observances worldwide

**9/25 – 9/27** – Rosh Hashanah (Jewish): the Jewish New Year, a time for reflection in the faith

### ● October Equality and Diversity Calendar

**Global Diversity Awareness Month**—aims to promote knowledge and respect for various cultures

**National Disability Employment Awareness Month**—advocates for people with disabilities, and their inclusion in the workforce

**Breast Cancer Awareness Month**—aims to increase awareness of the disease, one of the leading causes of death in women

**10/10** – World Mental Health Day (People with Disabilities)—promotes mental health awareness and education, and advocates against social stigma relating to mental health

**10/10** – Indigenous Peoples' Day (United States)—formerly called Columbus Day, honors the indigenous people of North America

**10/14** – Defender of Ukraine Day—honors all who have fought for the sovereignty of Ukraine

**10/21** – Spirit Day (LGBTQ+)—wear purple on this day to support LGBTQ+ youth and speak out against bullying

**10/24** – Diwali (Hindu)—significant celebration in the Hindu faith in which they praise diverse deities

### ● November Multicultural Calendar

**Native American Heritage Month** – celebrates the culture and heritage of individuals who deeply enrich the United States

**November** – month-long fundraiser for men's issues, including prostate cancer, testicular cancer, and men's suicide

**11/16** – International Day for Tolerance (United Nations)—founded by the UN to promote respect for various religions, languages, ethnicities, and cultures

**11/20** – Transgender Day of Remembrance (LGBTQ+)—seeks to remember those murdered due to transphobia

### ● December Diversity Calendar

**12/01** – World AIDS Day—helps raise awareness of HIV/AIDs and funding to cure it

**12/03** – International Day of Persons with Disabilities (United Nations)—raises awareness for the rights and well-being of those with disabilities

**12/10** – International Human Rights Day (United Nations)—adopted by the UN in 1948, celebrates the day it the Universal Declaration of Human Rights

**12/18-12/26** – Hanukkah (Jewish)—celebrates the Jews triumphing over the Syrian Greeks for their independence

**12/21** – Winter Solstice/Yule—the winter sabbat according to the Pagan and Wiccan faiths

**12/25** – Christmas (Christian)—holiday celebrating the birth of Jesus Christ

**12/26** – Kwanzaa (Black)—8-day holiday inspired by African harvest celebrations

## DEI Glossary of Terms

**Ableism** — Discrimination and prejudice against people with disabilities. Ableism in the workplace can show up in the use of harmful language surrounding disabilities, discriminatory practices or lack of accommodations for employees with disabilities.

**ADA** — Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. This law prohibits discrimination against people with disabilities. Under Title I of the ADA, employers are prohibited from discriminating against individuals with disabilities in the job application, hiring or job training process. The EEOC enforces Title I.

**Ageism** — Prejudice or stereotyping of individuals based on their age. Ageism in the workplace occurs when employees are treated differently because of their age. That might involve discriminatory hiring practices toward older workers, or prejudiced comments against recent graduates.

**Allyship** — Actively supporting people of marginalized identities against acts of oppression, even if you are not a part of the group itself. Allyship applied in the workplace, for example, would be White employees supporting Black employees amid protests that call for justice.

**Anti-racism** — Actively opposing discrimination and prejudice based on race by advocating for changes in political, economic and social life. Antiracism at work involves identifying and championing for change when discrimination arises. Anti-racism can also involve re-evaluating your biases and learning more about the challenges that marginalized groups face — both at work and outside of the office.

**Belonging** — The feeling of security, acceptance and support that an individual feels at their company. Belonging in the workplace is achieved when people with underrepresented identities feel like they are accepted and supported in their organization. An employee's racial background, sexuality or disability are a part of who they are. Belonging means your employee feels accepted as a whole person — not in spite of their identities

**Bias** — A prejudice toward an idea, person or group. Bias in the workplace often involves favoring one group or people over others. Bias can often be unconscious. For example, a board may lack diversity when a founder subconsciously brings on advisors from the same background as themselves.

**BIPOC** — An acronym for Black, Indigenous, people of color. BIPOC is used to acknowledge that not all people of color face the same types of barriers. Often Black and Indigenous people are impacted particularly severely by systemic racism.

**Boardroom diversity** — Having a range of different voices and identities on the executive board of an organization. Research shows having a diverse board (executive/interview) has its benefits.

**Cisgender** — Gender identity, expression or behavior that aligns with a person's assigned sex at birth. For example, someone who was born biologically female and identifies as a woman would be cisgendered. A person who identifies as a gender different than their sex at birth would be transgender.

**Classism** — Discriminatory treatment of individuals because of their socioeconomic background. Workplace classism can show up when employees from wealthy families bond over expensive luxuries that employees from underserved communities did not have access to. This includes recruiting employees only from certain schools, without building a pipeline for candidates from community colleges, public universities, or other educational backgrounds.



## DEI Glossary of Terms

**Corporate culture** — The behaviors, beliefs and expectations that comprise a company’s workplace atmosphere. Corporate culture is embedded in a company’s dress code, work hours, events, diversity, office structure, leadership involvement, external communications, etc.

**Cultural sensitivity training** — This training seeks to help employees understand and appreciate differences between cultures. There are nuances in communication styles, how actions are interpreted, etiquette and values based on culture. Cultural sensitivity training can enrich interactions with your co-workers from different backgrounds and business on a global scale.

**Diverse candidate pipeline** — This refers to the number of candidates from underrepresented groups that are in the running for an open role. This includes the process for recruiting, interviewing and hiring candidates of different identities. Agencies can help create a diverse hiring pipeline through recruiting efforts at historically Black colleges, apprenticeship and trade programs in low-income areas, recruiting at community colleges, career day at high schools, etc.

**Diversity** — The variety of differences in gender, race, religion, ethnicity, sexual orientation and other characteristics. Diversity in the workplace (or workplace diversity) involves people from multiple backgrounds and identities working together at the same company. Diversity is often described as a mosaic – each employee and all of their identities create one integral part of the overall artwork.

**Diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI or DE&I)** — A set of policies, practices and initiatives intended to create a more diverse, equitable and inclusive workplace. This is sometimes referred to as diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging (DEIB or DEI&B).

**Diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) audit** — An examination of an organization’s processes, workforce, operations and policies to determine where an organization stands in terms of diversity, equity and inclusion. Supplier diversity, number of incident reports, workforce diversity and other elements are often part of an audit.

**Diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) benchmarks** — Standard points of reference and data markers for organizations to compare themselves against.

**Diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) scorecard** — An evaluative tool that allows organizations to track progress toward goals around diversity, equity and inclusion. Such tools often include metrics like workforce diversity, retention of people of color and leadership diversity and promotion.

**Diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) training** — A syllabus of DEI workshops and guided, candid, conversations that should educate and motivate employees.

**EEOC**— Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. A U.S. federal agency that administers and enforces civil rights laws in the workplace. The EEOC investigates discrimination complaints.

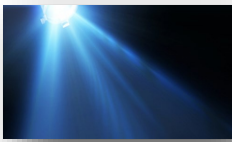
**Employee engagement** — How much an employee voluntarily participates in an activity. Strong employee engagement is crucial to a DEI initiative’s success.

**Employee resource group (ERG)** — Employer-sponsored groups that allow employees with common characteristics (race, gender, sexuality, etc.) to connect. Employees can use such groups to embrace their identities, share resources and pursue professional development opportunities. ERGs are also commonly known as affinity groups.

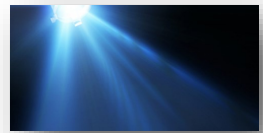
**Equity** — Fairness in the access to resources and opportunities. Equity in the workplace ensures a level playing field for all employees. For example, equity might involve companies providing accommodations to disabled employees or mentorship to underrepresented racial groups, so they can have the same access to promotions.







# SPOTLIGHT!



The MDSP **FORENSIC SCIENCE DIVISION**'s (FSD) 'Diversity, Equity, Inclusion' journey began in Spring 2021 when eight members of the Division attended a virtual workshop titled "Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in Chemistry and Chemical Engineering: A Workshop of the Chemical Sciences Roundtable."

Based on the positive feedback that FSD management received from the participants of that workshop, FSD formally established its own DEI Committee in July of that year.

While exploring the challenges that FSD employees face regarding vicarious trauma, stress, and burnout, along with preventative and responsive measures that could be implemented for the Division's benefit, it became clear that the concept of DEI needed to be included in their discussions about wellness. FSD realizes that it's only when all groups are represented and are given the same opportunities that our organization can reach its full potential.

The FSD DEI Committee members include:

- Jenn Jeudy
- Jeanine Hotchkin
- Whitley Mayo
- Amber Burns
- Angie Spessard



*"Good leadership requires you to surround yourself with people of diverse perspectives who can disagree with you without fear of retaliation." ~ Doris Kearns Goodwin*

The DEI Committee generally has the freedom to address topics that they feel warrant consideration and provide guidance to FSD management. During its first year, the Committee has been focusing on team building and addressing the wellness of its members in a 'put on your own oxygen mask first' approach. Members have completed a guided mind/body wellness program where they had the opportunity to explore a variety of techniques for mitigating stress and building resilience.

In July 2022, the Committee surveyed FSD staff to gain a better understanding of the needs of the employees. The Committee is also asked to explore topics of interest to FSD management, such as FSD's internship and tour/outreach programs. The goal of focusing on these programs is to ensure they are reaching groups that are typically underrepresented in STEM education and careers.

Regarding wellness in general, in addition to having representation on the Department's Health and Wellness Committee, FSD established its own Wellness Program in 2021, with the goal of addressing unique challenges the forensic practitioner faces with wellness and mental health in the workplace. Primary factors include trauma/vicarious trauma associated with performing the work, stress associated with systemic pressures of the job, and burnout specific to the individual's own personal experiences and perceptions.

Striving for wellness is a continuous process, and FSD is still in the early stages. FSD management intends to grow and develop the program to meet the needs of all staff.

**FSD is in the SPOTLIGHT!**



# SPOTLIGHT!

In February 2021, under the leadership of State Fire Marshal Brian S. Geraci, **Hero Dog (HD) Sandy** came to MDSP, as part of the Office of State Fire Marshall's (OSFM) Health and Safety Program. Sandy comes from Hero Dogs, Inc., a foundation that provides service dogs to disabled veterans and first responders. After being Sandy's puppy raisers, she went back to Hero Dogs for advanced training. While there, Sandy received intense daily training from professional staff. Sandy showed characteristics better suited to become a "facility dog"—*service dog for many*. Hero Dogs approached the OSFM about finding a place for Sandy to serve. Knowing facility dogs in public safety were new and very successful and MDSP was implementing programs for employees' mental wellness—the proposal of starting a Facility Dog Program came to fruition and SFM Geraci approved its start .

The OSFM began the Facility Dog Training Program and graduated in June 2022. HD Sandy works with victims of crimes who are suffering from the effects of traumatic incidents, and with children who have been victims of fire, arson, and explosive incidents. HD Sandy has been used at many police and fire funerals providing comfort to families, and she also assists other allied agencies who require her services as a comfort canine. She is present during CISM and Peer Support for first responders. HD Sandy visits 911 centers, and provided comfort to MDSP crime scene techs after the tragic incident involving the murder of a child on the Appalachian Trail. HD Sandy has visited vaccine clinics where she sits with children to provide a nice distraction while getting their immunizations. HD Sandy frequently visits the USO at BWI Airport providing comfort and stress relief to traveling service personnel and their families. HD Sandy attends the Annual MSP Fallen Heroes Ceremony.

HD Sandy was recently awarded a citation by the Frederick County Fire Chief for the work she did after the line of duty death of a firefighter last year. HD Sandy holds certifications as a Facility Dog from Hero Dogs, Inc., accredited by Assistance Dogs International, AKC Canine Good Citizen, and she is approved for use in courtrooms. HD Sandy is fully trained as a service dog and knows approximately 60 commands.

**HD Sandy is named in honor of Deputy Chief State Fire Marshal Sander Benjamin Cohen who was killed in the line of duty on Dec. 8, 2017.**

Any state agency or MDSP unit that would like to request HD Sandy's services should contact Senior Deputy State FM/Bomb Tech Mike Redding at 240-385-6626.

**OSFM is in the [SPOTLIGHT!](#)**



**Have you implemented diversity-equity-inclusion-emotional support-wellness initiatives for the betterment of MDSP? Let us [SPOTLIGHT](#) you in an upcoming Issue of **OEI COMMUNIQUÉ****

### History & Mission of the MDSP

The Maryland Department of State Police (MDSP) was organized in 1921 and charged with reducing crime and highway tragedies through statewide patrol and enforcement of criminal laws and traffic laws.

Our mission is to be a statewide force for a safer



Maryland—our Troopers and civilian support staff are dedicated to fulfilling that mission while upholding our core values of integrity, fairness, and service.

We are proud of our tradition of excellence in serving and protecting the citizens of Maryland.

## EEO Benefits the MDSP and the STATE

### HERE'S HOW—

- Decreases interpersonal conflict among employees
- Improves customer service and public perception
- Increases productivity
- Increases creativity
- Improves organizational culture
- Improves employee morale
- Improves retention of employees
- Enhances recruitment of employees
- Decreases complaints

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Governor

OUR NEXT COMMUNIQUÉ ISSUE – JANUARY 2023