



## TALBOT COUNTY, MARYLAND

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### **DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION**

#### **OBJECTIVE**

By adopting this Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Statement, Talbot County, Maryland (the "County") strives to foster an environment that welcomes and accepts diversity within County government. The County is committed to: (1) maintaining an inclusive, productive, supportive, open, innovative, and equitable workplace environment in which every individual is valued for his or her unique characteristics; (2) fostering respect, understanding, and acceptance of differences; and (3) enabling employees to reach their full potential, thus enhancing the relationships among ourselves and optimizing the quality of services to our residents and our fellow employees.

#### **WHAT IS DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION?**

Diversity can be defined as an infinite variety of possible characteristics that can be used to describe or distinguish individuals. The similarities and differences between employees account for all aspects of one's personality and individual identity. Some dimensions of diversity are age, color, disability, family status, gender identity, language, physical characteristics, race and sexual orientation.

Equity can be defined as decisions and actions of individuals that are considered to be fair, reasonable and gives equal treatment to everyone. Equitable treatment does not necessarily mean treating everyone the same. Individuals are treated fairly and respectfully, and have equal access to opportunities and resources.

Inclusion can be defined as the extent to which the County employees feel welcomed, respected, supported, and valued as team members and where all employees believe they belong and can contribute fully to the County's success.

#### **WHY HAVE A DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION STATEMENT?**

The population of Talbot County is diverse. With an increasingly diverse workforce and community, the County must assess its workplace culture and identify policies and practices

that both help and hinder the inclusion of a wide range of employees and the culturally sensitive provision of services to the community. The County must move further toward a culture of diversity, equity, and inclusion, thereby increasing the consciousness and appreciation of differences associated with the heritage, characteristics and values of many different groups, as well as increasing the respect for the uniqueness of each individual.

### **DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION STATEMENT - OUR APPROACH**

We recognize that diversity, equity, and inclusion are prominent factors that can maximize the success of our workplace by bringing in different experience levels and perspectives. The foundation of our diversity, equity, and inclusion philosophies are to clearly articulate to both our employees and the general public our intention to create a work culture that enhances our ability to hire, retain, develop, manage and promote a diverse, engaged workforce. The County's expectations for employees and the focus on ongoing development of a work environment that values differences requires: respectful communication and cooperation between all employees; listening with the intent to learn and understand; teamwork and employee participation, permitting and encouraging the representation of all groups and employees perspectives; creating and maintaining effective and productive diverse teams; and, creating a positive community presence through outreach and effective service delivery that reaches and represents diverse populations. Talbot County expects employees to treat others with dignity and respect at all times. All employees are expected to exhibit conduct that reflects inclusion during work, at work functions on or off the work site, and at all County-sponsored events.

The expectations set forth in this statement includes all Board, Commission and Committee members, as well.

### **EMPLOYEE CONCERNS**

Employees who believe they have been subjected to any kind of discrimination that conflicts with the County's diversity, equity, and inclusion statement, or other applicable laws or regulations, or have observed it in the workplace, should follow the complaint procedure outlined in the Talbot County Employee Handbook.

Employees must report all types of harassment or discrimination so the County may take appropriate action. Every complaint of harassment or discrimination will be thoroughly investigated without bias or premature judgment. If an employee believes that he or she has been discriminated against or harassed in violation of the County's policies or any applicable laws, or if an employee believes he or she has witnessed discrimination or harassment, the employee must promptly report the violation to either his or her immediate supervisor or the Director of Administrative Services. If the employee for any reason does not want to approach his or her supervisor, and the Director of Administrative Services is not available, then the employee must promptly report the complaint to the County Manager. The employee should be prepared to specify when and where the discrimination or harassment occurred and identify all parties involved in the incidents, whether such individuals are victims, perpetrators, or witnesses.