



**NOAA
FISHERIES**

**NOAA FISHERIES DIVERSITY
& INCLUSION PLAN
2016 - 2021**

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NOAA FISHERIES DIVERSITY & INCLUSION PLAN 2016 - 2021

“Strength lies in differences, not in similarities” ~ Steven Covey

NOAA FISHERIES DIVERSITY CHAMPION

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**NOAA
FISHERIES**

MESSAGE FROM THE ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR FOR FISHERIES

On November 6, 2015, Dr. Kathryn Sullivan, Under Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere, issued a NOAA Diversity and Inclusion policy statement accompanied by an “All Hands” video message. She reminded each of us of our responsibility to proactively engage with one another in a way that “contributes to a safe, welcoming, nurturing, and professionally challenging work environment for each and every member of our collective team.”

To achieve this goal, I believe we must first be intentional about making a change in the way we do business. To guide our efforts, we have developed a NOAA Fisheries Diversity and Inclusion Plan that we hope will serve as a roadmap to guide our efforts.

I believe in order to cultivate an organization that is both diverse and inclusive, we must work together to ensure that we foster an environment where differences are welcome and new ideas can take root and grow. Every effort must be made to find new ways to remove artificial barriers to success, provide practical training, and integrate diversity and inclusion throughout all levels of our organization. This will positively enhance our work environment as well as allow us to experience a more energized workforce that is determined to continue NOAA Fisheries’ success toward its goal of being a premier place to work.

Next, we must make every effort to maximize individual and collective productivity while at the same time strengthen the infrastructure needed to support our overall workforce. On-the-job training and coaching, along with developmental assignments, are useful tools when looking to retain top talent. These tools add flexibility and efficiency as well as promote job satisfaction while allowing our employees to learn new skills to prepare them for future assignments and opportunities. To ensure success, it will take each of us, working together to identify the types of programs or special assignments needed to ensure access and opportunity are available for all.

Finally, as we go about the business of attracting and retaining the best and the brightest, it is crucial that we do ensure a healthy and safe work environment for everyone—whether they are a federal employee or contract worker in headquarters or in one of the many facilities around the country or aboard one of our research vessels. To make this happen, we must first build a climate of trust, respect, and understanding so that every employee feels free to share their ideas and know that they will be heard. Next, we all need to demonstrate positive workplace behaviors at all times. Doing so will not only have the greatest impact on the work environment, but will have a huge impact on employee morale and organizational performance.

As we move forward, it is my hope that each employee will not only become familiar with the goals and vision of this plan, but will commit to doing their part to fulfill our mission statement on diversity and inclusion: “Create an organization where fairness, diversity, and inclusion are valued and where every employee has the opportunity to reach their fullest potential.” A successful diversity strategy begins with all of us. I need your help to make it a reality.





UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
The Under Secretary of Commerce
for Oceans and Atmosphere
Washington, D.C. 20230

November 6, 2015

NOAA DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION POLICY STATEMENT

I am issuing this policy statement so that all employees of our National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) team clearly understand my expectations for what every individual of the team must do to contribute to a safe, welcoming, nurturing, and professionally challenging work environment for each and every member of our collective team.

Workforce diversity is defined as a collection of individual attributes that together help agencies pursue organizational objectives efficiently and effectively. Inclusion is defined as a culture that connects each employee to the organization.

Together, we can make NOAA the best place to work in the federal government. Given the motivating nature of our work and the positive spirit of our people, we should consistently top the charts with employee satisfaction in the Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey. To make this vision a reality, each of us must contribute to a sustained and vibrant climate and culture in which every employee at every level of the agency genuinely feels they are professionally valued and that their contributions make a positive difference.

Leaders and supervisors have a special responsibility to help build and preserve this climate and culture. As public servants, we fully embrace the mantra of "*Mission First, People Always.*" Mission requirements all too often consume the precious moments of a leader's day, leaving responsibilities such as evaluations, awards, and teambuilding events deferred or unfulfilled. Leaders must proactively LEAD through this challenge by taking more of a "People First, Mission Always" attitude and making people a routine part of your daily to annual work plans. Our organizational performance, our reputation, and even our future from a recruiting perspective, all rely on enhancing our people-based skills in concert with the skills we need as a science-based services agency.

We must relentlessly uphold a workplace that is brimming with respect and free of discrimination for all employees. Because we have valued members on our team in numbers that are significantly underrepresented (e.g. women, racial/ethnic minorities, and people with disabilities), leaders and supervisors must be attuned to those team and interpersonal dynamics that could negatively impact members of underrepresented groups. We must systematically pursue outreach and recruiting strategies to address significant demographic imbalances in our workforce. We must promote appreciation, teambuilding, and diversity awareness through cultural celebrations. And we must proactively fulfill our organizational commitments under the Department of Commerce Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan.

Kathryn D. Sullivan, Ph.D.
Under Secretary of Commerce for
Oceans and Atmosphere

THE ADMINISTRATOR



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NOAA FISHERIES MISSION STATEMENT ON DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

“To create an organization where fairness, diversity and inclusion are valued and where every employee has the opportunity to reach their fullest potential.”

INTRODUCTION

On August 18, 2011, President Obama issued Executive Order 13583—Establishing a Coordinated Government-wide Initiative to Promote Diversity and Inclusion (D&I) in the Federal Workforce— which calls for all federal agencies to develop and implement a strategic plan for diversity and inclusion. In the Executive Order, the President underscores his commitment to promoting our Federal workplace as a model of equal opportunity, diversity and inclusion. Specifically, he states *“Our Nation derives strength from the diversity of its population and from its commitment to equal opportunity for all. We are at our best when we draw on the talents of all parts of our society, and our greatest accomplishments are achieved when diverse perspectives are brought to bear to overcome our greatest challenges.”*

As a follow-up to this Executive Order, Dr. Kathryn Sullivan, the Under Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere, has directed the NOAA team to do everything within its power to make NOAA the best place to work in the federal government. NOAA Fisheries accepts this challenge and is committed to creating a strategy that will ensure an engaged and empowered workforce.

DEFINING DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) has defined “diversity” as a collection of individual attributes that together help agencies pursue organizational objectives efficiently and effectively. These include, but are not limited to, characteristics such as national origin, language, race, color, disability, ethnicity, gender, age, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, socioeconomic status, veteran status, and family structures. The concept also encompasses differences among people concerning where they are from and where they have lived, as well as differences of thought and life experiences.

Inclusion, as defined by OPM, is a culture that connects each employee to the organization; encourages collaboration, flexibility, and fairness; and leverages diversity throughout the organization so that all individuals are able to participate and contribute to their full potential.

OVERARCHING GOALS

1. To be a vibrant and productive workforce –and contribute to making NOAA Fisheries the best place to work;
2. To move the organizational culture to an inclusive environment where all employees are connected and respected and have the opportunity to reach their greatest potential; and
3. To ensure managers and supervisors foster employee engagement and promote diversity and inclusion in our workplace.

STRATEGY FOR IMPLEMENTATION

NOAA Fisheries is a multi-mission, geographically dispersed agency and our approach centers on each of our units in the field as well as their local responsiveness, engagement, and empowerment to their employees. Understanding this, we will use the collective experience of the headquarters and field offices to create not only a productive workforce, but one that is a leader in creating and sustaining a diverse and inclusive workplace.

We will work to implement strategies that will (1) strengthen and enhance our outreach and recruitment efforts; (2) cultivate a culture that encourages collaboration, flexibility, and fairness; and (3) ensure structures and strategies for sustainability. In addition we will make every effort to enhance and promote practices that encourage employee engagement and empowerment as well as factor diversity into recruitment and succession planning, increase work-life balance and developmental opportunities and ensure performance management and other policies and systems are aligned with NOAA Fisheries' vision of diversity and inclusion.

With the challenges that come with the organizational make-up of our headquarters and field offices (i.e., varying locations, sizes and structures), program office directorates will be expected to report annually on (1) specific issues that negatively impact our commitment to diversity and inclusion, (2) the actions taken to address and/or resolve these issues, and (3) a strategic plan of action for moving forward.

NOAA FISHERIES DIVERSITY & INCLUSION ACTION PLAN

GOALS, STRATEGIES, AND ACTION ITEMS

GOAL 1: Outreach and Recruitment – Recruit from a diverse, qualified group of potential applicants to secure a high-performing workforce that is representative of our nation’s diversity.

***STRATEGY:** Develop and implement strategies to diversify applicant pools for a range of agency positions (e.g., science, management, policy and administrative), using a variety of outreach and recruitment methods.*

FOCUS: OUTREACH

Action Items:

- Promote awareness and use of existing scholarships, internships, and fellowships available throughout NOAA for both undergraduates and graduates in Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics (STEAM). Programs would include, but are not limited to, NOAA’s Dr. Nancy Foster Scholarship Program, Educational Partnership Program, Undergraduate Scholarship Program, Living Marine Resources Cooperative Science Center, Population Dynamics and Marine Resources Economics Graduate Fellowship Program, Ernest F. Hollings Undergraduate Scholarship Program, and Woods Hole Partnership Education Program.
- Increase partnerships, participation and funding of NOAA/Fisheries associated programs, including the John A. Knauss Marine Policy Fellowship, National Research Council Postdoctoral Program, and the National Science Foundation’s Graduate Research Internship Program, among others.
- Support training opportunities for agency employees who will serve as mentors for students from underrepresented and underserved communities.
- Investigate the potential for new hiring strategies, such as Pathways and Special Hiring Authorities to help diversify applicant pools.

- Continue building and expanding strategic relationships with internal and external stakeholders at Minority Serving Institutions, STEAM programs, and affinity organizations (e.g., Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities, Society for Advancement of Chicanos/Hispanics and Native Americans in Science, and the Organization of Chinese Americans).
- Attend networking and recruitment events at local schools (K-12), colleges and universities— including Minority Serving Institutions, Hispanic Serving Institutions, and Tribal Colleges and Universities—to assist in NOAA Fisheries’ diversity efforts in recruitment, hiring, and retention.

FOCUS: RECRUITMENT

Action Items:

- Investigate the potential for new hiring strategies, such as Pathways and Special Hiring Authorities to help diversify applicant pools.
 - The NOAA Fisheries’ Human Capital Management Office (HCMO) will collaborate with NOAA’s Workforce Management Office (WFMO) to develop a “recruitment basics” informational sheet for graduates and undergraduates interested in applying for federal positions within NOAA Fisheries or elsewhere in the federal government.
 - Agency staff will “customize” these materials for use at professional society meetings relevant to the potential hiring pool (e.g., American Fisheries Society and Society for Marine Mammalogy).
 - Fisheries HCMO will collaborate with NOAA WFMO to develop and implement a training program that will help agency managers understand the basics of the recruitment and hiring process needed to fill vacant positions.
 - Fisheries HCMO will collaborate with WFMO to identify and train hiring managers on special hiring authorities, internship programs and recruitment strategies to actively build a diverse applicant pool.
 - HCMO will collaborate with the NOAA Fisheries Program Office for EEO and Diversity, the WFMO, the regional offices and science centers to ensure recruitment actions are effectively reaching different segments of society, including professional organizations, Minority Serving Institutions, veterans and persons with disabilities.
 - HCMO will collaborate with WFMO to develop and implement a training program/tool for current agency employees who are interested in applying for federal positions and/or changing career paths within NOAA Fisheries.

GOAL 2: Workplace Inclusion – Federal agencies shall cultivate a culture that encourages collaboration, flexibility, and fairness to enable individuals to contribute to their full potential and further retention.

***STRATEGY:** Fisheries will encourage a more supportive, inclusive and fair work environment through increased leadership development, employee engagement and empowerment. This will require every Fisheries headquarters and regional office and science centers to utilize fair and effective management practices.*

FOCUS: WORKPLACE ENVIRONMENT

Action Items:

- Using the insights gained from the results of the annual Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey agency leadership will work to improve employee engagement and empowerment at both the local and organizational levels.
- Require training for managers and supervisors in the concepts and values of diversity and inclusion, through such topics as Understanding and/or Managing Diversity, Generational Differences, and Unconscious Biases.
- Utilize a variety of open and inclusive forums between management and non-management, (e.g., brown bags, group discussions, and one-on-one meetings) to understand the issues and concerns of all employees while identifying action items to address thereby creating a high-performing, more informed and inclusive environment.
- Expand opportunities for growth and development within the agency through training and developmental opportunities, (e.g., rotational assignments, in-house shadow assignments, and details, which will add flexibility and efficiency, promote job satisfaction, and increase opportunity for future opportunities and growth.
- Support and expand use of incentive and honorary rewards and recognition, i.e., Special Act, Time-off, Employee and Team Member of the Month, to identify and promote excellence at all levels of the organization.

FOCUS: WORKLIFE INITIATIVES

Action items:

- Collaborate with HCMO to educate and encourage use of workplace flexibilities, (e.g., Employee Assistance Program, telework, and Alternate Work Schedules) to promote worklife balances.

GOAL 3: Sustainability – Federal agencies shall develop structures and strategies to equip leaders with the ability to manage diversity, be accountable, measure results, refine approaches on the bases of such data, and engender a culture of inclusion.

***STRATEGY:** Fisheries recognizes the importance of accountability for sustainable growth and development as an organization. Toward this end the agency must embed diversity and inclusion principles into its everyday work and should integrate and align diversity and inclusion into all supervisor/performance plans. By focusing on employee engagement and embedding diversity into the culture, Fisheries will be able to help sustain changes being initiated to build a more diverse and inclusive workplace.*

FOCUS: ACCOUNTABILITY

Action Items:

- Establish a Fisheries-wide Diversity and Inclusion Tiger Team/Committee responsible for the development and monitoring of an agency-wide Diversity and Inclusion Plan of Action.
- Educate top management on support and accountability for Diversity and Inclusion critical elements in performance plans.

FOCUS: SUSTAINABILITY

Action Items:

- Establish Fisheries-wide methodology for measuring diversity and inclusion achievements.
 - Fisheries Diversity Tiger Team, along with agency supervisors and managers, will conduct focus groups at Fisheries locations to collect feedback on issues regarding workplace diversity and inclusion.
 - Fisheries Diversity Tiger Team will develop and widely distribute a set of diversity and inclusion measures to track agency-wide efforts and provide mechanism for refining plans.

RESOURCES

DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION INFORMATION

EXECUTIVE ORDER 13583

Establishing a Coordinated Government-wide Initiative to Promote Diversity and Inclusion in the Federal Workforce

www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2011/08/18/executive-order-13583-establishing-coordinated-government-wide-initiati

Government-Wide Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan

www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/diversity-and-inclusion/reports/governmentwidedistrategic-plan.pdf

EDUCATIONAL INFORMATION

Dr. Nancy Foster Scholarship Program

www.fosterscholars.noaa.gov/

NOAA Educational Partnership Program Undergraduate Scholarship Program

www.epp.noaa.gov/ssp_undergrad_page.html

NOAA Graduate Research & Training Scholarship Program (GRTSP)

www.epp.noaa.gov/csc/csc_docs/EPPMSI_GRTSP.pdf

NOAA EPP/MSI Undergraduate Scholarship Program (USP)

www.epp.noaa.gov/ssp_undergrad_page.html

John A. Knauss Marine Policy Fellowship

www.seagrant.noaa.gov/fundingfellowships/knaussfellowship.aspx

NMFS Population Dynamics Fellowship

www.seagrant.noaa.gov/FundingFellowships/NMFSSGFellowship.aspx

NRC Postdoctoral Program

www.sites.nationalacademies.org/pga/rap/

NSF Graduate Research Internship Program

www.nsf.gov/funding/pgm_summ.jsp?pims_id=505127

Ernest S. Hollings Scholarship Program

www.oesd.noaa.gov/scholarships/hollings.html#page=program

SPECIAL HIRING PROGRAMS

Disability Employment – Office of Personnel Management

www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/disability-employment/hiring/

Recruitment of Veterans

www.wfm.noaa.gov/veterans_recruitment.html

FAMILY FRIENDLY INITIATIVES

NOAA WORKLIFE FOR YOU

www.wfm.noaa.gov/workplace/worklife_resource_center.html

Telework

www.secure.wfm.noaa.gov/noaa_only/policy/2015_NOAATeleworkImplementationPlan.pdf



U.S. Secretary of Commerce
Penny Pritzker

Under Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere
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June 2016

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