



February 12, 2021

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL for a Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Justice (DEIJ) consultant for the [Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay \(Alliance\)](#) to deliver an Organizational Equity Assessment and DEIJ related trainings for Alliance staff and Board of Directors.

Introduction:

The Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay brings together communities, companies, and conservationists to improve our lands and waters. Our vision is clean streams and rivers flowing through resilient landscapes, cared for by the 18 million+ people who live, work, and play in the Chesapeake Bay watershed. [We value collaboration, inclusivity, and driving with results for collective, equitable, and measurable impacts.](#) The Alliance has offices in Annapolis, MD; Richmond, VA; Washington, D.C.; and Lancaster, PA. For 50 years the organization has focused on encouraging the health and quality of the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries through on-the-ground restoration efforts, and just as our name suggests, we build relationships with organizations and communities throughout the Bay Watershed. Our initiatives fall under four main programmatic areas: Agriculture, Forestry, Green Infrastructure, and Stewardship and Engagement.

The Alliance is committed to being inclusive and equitable within our practices and in program delivery. The organization has instilled six years of internal DEIJ education, support, and guidance to its professional staff largely spearheaded by the staff level *DEI Team*. While this approach has been effective in providing education, resources, guidance, and assistance to staff, the expertise of a DEIJ professional consulting firm is sought to elevate internal processes and provide continued training catered specifically to the Alliance staff and its Board of Directors.

Background:

The Alliance began formally engaging in DEIJ organizational change in 2015 with voluntary initiatives and activities at our annual conference. A year later the Staff and Board drafted a [Board Resolution for Building a Culture of Diversity and Inclusion](#) to formalize its DEIJ commitment at the Board level. Soon after adopting this resolution in January 2017, the organization held its first all-staff half-day DEIJ training on Cultural Competency, Diversity, and Inclusion. In 2018, the Alliance formed its staff-led *DEI Team* that continues to meet monthly. The *DEI Team* coordinates organization events and documents such as informal staff DEIJ workshops, optional topical discussions (via email and video chat), procedural adjustment suggestions to leadership, educational materials, and external learning opportunities. In 2020 the Alliance's Board created a Board *DEI Committee* to engage the full Board of Directors and collaborate with the staff *DEI Team*. The staff *DEI Team* is currently implementing its 2019-2021 workplan in order to fulfill organizational commitments, internal DEIJ goals, and ongoing efforts. The Alliance recommitted itself to becoming an anti-racist organization and providing guidance in establishing a safe and inclusive work space for a diverse array of current and future employees in 2020 by increasing dedicated organizational funding to this initiative, with the expectation that on-going efforts of the *DEI Team* and *DEI Committee* are further institutionalized. A demographic survey of the staff and Board was conducted in July 2020 and will be shared with the successful consultant.

The information collected from the Equity Assessment and Trainings completed through the below Scope of Work will inform the Alliance *DEI Team's* 2022-2024 workplan.

Project Description/Scope of Work:

The Alliance seeks the services of a DEIJ consultant to successfully complete three activities: (1) coordinate an Equity Assessment of system structure, procedures, and program delivery of the organization (both staff and Board level); (2) an interactive DEIJ training for the Alliance Staff (approximately 42 members); and (3) an interactive DEIJ training for members of the Alliance's Board of Directors (approximately 21 members). Applicants must have the capability to deliver all three activities.

Activity 1) Perform an Equity Assessment

The purpose of the Equity Assessment is to identify opportunities, within our organizational structure, policies, and program delivery, where the Alliance can better integrate DEIJ practices into our Board, office, and programmatic work. The Assessment will provide specific, achievable, and measurable action items for staff of varying roles and the Board of Directors. These action items are intended to continue the progress of building a Race Equity Culture within the Alliance. Action items will be created to achieve both near-term action and in a long-term change management strategy for the organization.

This Assessment will review and incorporate efforts of the staff *DEI Team* and Board *DEI Committee*.

The consultant will review and provide best practices around communications, hiring processes, personnel policies (incorporated in the personnel manual), performance review processes, promotion processes, and Board recruitment. It may be further informed by interviews with staff and Board leadership. The consultant will work closely with the staff *DEI Team* to facilitate the Assessment. It is expected that the Assessment will largely inform Activities 2 and 3 of this RFP.

Expected outcomes of the Equity Assessment include

- Specific, achievable, and measurable action items for Staff of varying roles and the Board of Directors to implement inclusive and equitable practices as an anti-racist organization.
- Staff *DEI Team* and Board *DEI Committee* will have a better understanding of the next steps and actions for near-term and long-term growth.
- The consultant will have a better understanding of the needs, topics, or other aspects of DEIJ for Activities 2 and 3 in the RFP.

Deliverables for the Equity Assessment

- A report of the organization's practices from an equity lens.
- Actionable items (as referenced above) for Alliance leadership and Board consideration related to procedural and operational changes.
- Additional resources to help enforce a Race Equity Culture and support proposed action items related to both the staff and Board of Directors.

Activity 2) Staff DEIJ Training

Organize and implement virtual training(s) for the Alliance staff. The training may include topics such as: a foundational understanding and terminology of racism and DEIJ issues (institutional bias/ systematic oppression); a basic understanding of how the health, social and economic impacts of environmental injustice; techniques on how to be allies; and specific examples relevant to our region with specific environmental-related examples from our four main states/regions; and skills needed to incorporate inclusiveness in project planning and engagement. While the Alliance anticipates the aforementioned topics may be covered in the DEIJ Staff Training, this Activity will be influenced by the findings of Activity 1. The duration and number of training should be identified by the consultant through the RFP and be able to accomplish the following outcomes.

Expected outcomes of the DEIJ Staff Training will be for Staff to:

- Understand the Equity Assessment process, findings, and associated action items relevant to Staff as identified through Activity 1.
- Understand how DEIJ concepts can inform and enhance internal practices.
- Understand the foundation of racism and DEIJ issues (Institutional bias/ systematic oppression and environmental justice), specific examples of how this relates to the environmental sector and society.
- Transfer the tools and skills in order to examine the staff's own projects and main Alliance program areas with these DEIJ concepts.

Deliverables associated with the Anti-Racism Staff Training

- A pre- and post-training survey to gauge what the Staff learned, the value of the training, and any additional topics they would like to learn about (which may, in part, coincide with Activity 1).
- An “evergreen” resource (such as a video, presentation recording, or pamphlet) so new Alliance hires can receive similar training.
- An assessment of survey information and a written reflection/summary of the trainer's perspective on the effectiveness of the training(s) and topics of potential future training(s) for Alliance staff.

Activity 3) Board DEIJ Training

Organize and implement virtual training(s) for the Alliance Board of Directors. Topics for the training could cover: a foundational understanding of (including terminology of) racism and DEIJ issues (Institutional bias/ systematic oppression); a basic understanding of the health, social and economic impacts of environmental injustice; techniques on how to be allies; and skills to incorporate inclusiveness in board planning and engagement. While the Alliance anticipates the aforementioned topics may be covered in the DEIJ Board Training, this Activity will be influenced by the findings of Activity 1. The duration and number of trainings should be identified by the consultant through the RFP and be able to accomplish the following outcomes.

Expected outcomes of the DEIJ Board training will be for the Board of Directors to:

- Understand the Equity Assessment process, findings, and associated action items relevant to the Board as identified through Activity 1.
- Understand DEIJ concepts and how they can inform and enhance internal practices.
- Understand the foundation of racism and DEIJ issues (Institutional bias/ systematic oppression and environmental justice), specific examples of how this relates to the environmental sector and society.
- Transfer the tools and skills in order to examine the Board's own practices.

Deliverables associated with the Board DEIJ Training

- A pre- and post-training survey to gauge what the Board learned, the value of the training, and any additional topics Board members would like to learn about (which may, in part, coincide with Activity 1).
- An “evergreen” resource (such as a video, presentation recording, or pamphlet) so new Board members can receive similar training.
- An assessment of survey information and a written reflection/summary of the trainer's perspective on the effectiveness of the training(s) and topics for potential future training(s) for the Alliance Board of Directors.

Timeline for Selection Process:

Activity	Date
RFP Release	Feb 12th, 2021
Proposals Due	March 12, 2021
Interviews	March 22nd - April 5th, 2021
Consultant Selected	On or around April 5th

Estimated Time Period & Term:

The proposed scope of work is tentatively scheduled to begin spring 2021 and to end based on mutual agreement. The Alliance expects the Equity Assessment to take place first and be complete by mid-late 2021 and the separate staff and board training to be completed by end of February 2022. Activity deadlines will be negotiated with the successful applicant as of final contracting.

Budget: The budget for all tasks shall not exceed \$40,000.

Qualifications, Proposal Format, & Submission Instructions:

Applicants are encouraged to follow the guidelines of proposal and will be considered according to qualifying attributes and submissions.

Successful proposals will demonstrate subject matter expertise and experience of:

- Conducting Equity Assessments or similar reports of small to medium sized organizations.
- Conducting nonprofit DEI/J staff training, especially in a virtual setting.
- Working with volunteer Boards of Directors any other similar groups of advisers.
- Working with environmental organizations to integrate and advance DEI/J and environmental justice through programs, departments, projects or initiatives.

If you meet more than 75% of the qualifications of this description, we encourage you to submit an application.

Interested parties should submit the following for project proposals:

1. Cover letter
2. Contact information
3. Organization Background and short biographies for all participating team members
4. Outline of proposed timeline including planning, implementation, and deliverables (reflective of the Scope of Work identified within this RFP) with key milestones/targets and dates.
5. Detailed budget to coincide with item #4.
6. Brief description of proposed Equity Assessment approach. Discuss approach based on past examples.
7. Examples of past training sessions. If applicable, please indicate if any examples were conducted virtually.
8. Include client contact information to serve as scope of work relevant references for the Equity Assessment and training session examples.

Please note that qualifying applicants must be based in and conduct business out of the United States.

Deadline for Submission:

March 12th, 2021 to rfp@allianceforthebay.org Attn DEIJ Consultant. Finalists will be contacted to schedule an interview with a small group of Alliance staff.

No telephone inquiries, please.