



A Summary of Progress Made Towards CRWD's Diversity and Inclusion Goals

Our Residents

Capitol Region Watershed District (CRWD) serves a highly diverse population of residents that continues to grow more racially and ethnically diverse. Between 2000 and 2015, the percentage of people of color in the City of Saint Paul, which comprises 85% of the District, increased from 36% to 46%. Across Ramsey County, this percentage increased from 13% in 2000 to 30% in 2014. These trends are expected to continue through 2040.

Historically, some areas and communities within the watershed have been underserved due to prior District work focused on high-impact projects located in limited areas (e.g., Como Lake and Lake McCarrons subwatersheds). In 2018, with the help a Minnesota GreenCorps Member, the District analyzed hundreds of grant-funded projects and found significantly less program participation in the central and eastern portions of the District (Trout Brook, Saint Anthony Hill and Phalen Creek subwatersheds). These subwatersheds correspond to areas of racially concentrated poverty (ACP50) defined by Metropolitan Council as 40% or more of the residents live with incomes below 185% of the federal poverty threshold and 50% or more of the residents are people of color.

CRWD is committed to community equity and engaging underrepresented groups. Developing a Diversity Plan was the District's first step towards formalizing goals and actions related to diversity and inclusion. CRWD believes we can achieve cleaner waters through engagement across all communities.

Our Diversity and Inclusion Journey

CRWD's Board of Managers formalized a diversity and inclusion statement in 2010, *"The Capitol Region Watershed District embraces and values diversity and seeks to recruit, promote and retain employees that reflect the community we serve. We believe that a diverse mix of employees enrich the workplace and enhance the quality of our service. The Capitol Region Watershed District encourages all qualified to apply for open positions."*

The Board directed staff to develop a Diversity Plan with support from a consultant in 2016. A Committee comprised of two Board Managers, a Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC) member and staff was created to interview and hire a firm to develop the Plan. The consultant began by interviewing Board, CAC and staff members to learn more about the District's cultural competency, mission, vision and values, and how they related to diversity and inclusion. A Diversity Strategic Plan was developed and approved in 2018.

CRWD began implementing its Diversity Strategic Plan by reviewing its hiring practices to ensure an inclusive process. With guidance from Ramsey County, staff began reviewing and refining position descriptions, announcements, and methods of promotion. An implicit bias training was held for staff participating on interview committees. External colleagues were also invited to attend the training and participate on interview committees. Interview questions were adapted to include topics such as



ethics, values and a demonstrated understanding of and commitment to diversity and inclusion. Applicants received questions in advance of the interview and all personal information was redacted prior to staff review to reduce bias.

CRWD has been working to identify ways to reduce barriers to participation in CRWD's grant programs, public meetings and other engagement opportunities. Outreach to communities in the central and eastern portions of the District has been increased to foster collaboration, encourage participation and answer questions. Accessibility is a focus of planning public meetings and events. Considerations include access to public transit, translating materials, providing childcare and offering food provided by local, Disadvantaged Business Enterprises (DBEs).

CRWD is working to increase the number of Women-Owned (WBE) and Minority-Owned (MBE) businesses we contract with each year. The District distributed the 2019-2020 Request for Qualifications for general water resource professional services to 95 Minnesota businesses that meet WBE and MBE certifications through MNUCP (Federal/State database) and/or CERT (Metro database administered by St. Paul). Thirteen new firms were added to the pool with six of them representing DBEs, bringing the total number of DBEs to seven. Going forward, staff will request proposals or qualifications for projects from the pool within a respective service area.

Relationship building is the corner stone of establishing trust and making real progress when it comes to diversity and inclusion work. CRWD staff began developing and/or deepening relationships with community groups serving areas of the district where engagement has been low. Staff has presented at community meetings, attended many new events, elevated storytelling about diverse community members doing great work and created a new display with a local artist to better engage residents at community and cultural events.

Staff began meeting over lunch in 2018 to discuss a wide range of diversity and inclusion topics. These meetings have been focused on reading or watching memoirs, blogs, and videos as well as a role play activity depicting a local environmental justice case. The group has covered topics such as racism, gender equality, environmental justice, sexual identity/orientation, mental health, indigenous history, personality type. The intention of this informal staff group is to build a more inclusive team internally and to make connections to our work that reach outside our organization.

CRWD has folded its Diversity Strategic Plan goals and implementation activities into its updated 10-year watershed management plan, which will be adopted in fall 2020. The plan also includes nine themes that reflect high level topics and District values that will be considered and weaved into every aspect of the District's work over the next 10 years. Community equity and engaging underrepresented groups is one of the nine themes. We recognize that we can achieve cleaner waters through engagement across the District's diverse communities.

Value: Capitol Region Watershed District values diversity and inclusion and can achieve cleaner waters through engagement across communities.

Commitments				
	Innovation We will be innovative in our approaches to communities who truly represent our district.	Collaboration We will continue to collaborate across differences.	Open We will be open to the challenges our community presents as it relates to diversity and inclusion.	Passion We will approach our efforts of inclusion with the same level of passion as water resource protection.
Goals/Priorities	Action Steps	Indicators of Progress	Timeline	
1. Expand CRWD’s internal awareness of the opportunities and challenges related to creating a more diverse and inclusive environment.	Action 1. a) Create safe spaces and opportunities to explore and understand unconscious bias and increase cultural competency.	Indicator 1. a) Attend 1-2 workshops or cultural experiences annually.	2018-2020, ongoing	
	Action 1. b) Formalize regular reviews of progress made implementing the Diversity Strategic Plan and share with CRWD’s staff, Board and CAC.	Indicator 1. b) Provide quarterly Diversity Strategic Plan updates at CAC, Board and staff meetings.	2018-2020, semi-annual	
2. Deepen relationships with many communities in CRWD by increasing outreach.	Action 2. a) Use local data to learn more about the audiences CRWD serves.	Indicator 2. a) Meet with diverse groups, community leaders and partner organizations to identify three underserved ¹ communities to focus engagement and communications work.	2018-2019	
	Action 2. b) Create an outreach plan which includes community engagement focused on building long-term, sustainable relationships.	Indicator 2. b) Implement an outreach plan for two underserved communities with guidance from members of the community.	2019-2020, ongoing	
	Action 2. c) Create a communications plan which includes materials that are culturally appropriate.	Indicator 2. c) Implement a communications plan for the same two underserved communities (identified in 2. b) with guidance from members of the community.	2019-2020, ongoing	
3. Increase organizational diversity and inclusion efforts by increasing recruitment of candidates who truly represent our district for staff, CAC and service providers.	Action 3. a) Identify organizations, schools and student groups working with people of color and underserved communities to encourage them to enter the environmental field.	Indicator 3. a) Engage 3-5 organizations and schools working with people of color and underserved communities.	2019	
	Action 3. b) Formalize best practices in hiring staff are used to ensure an inclusive process and to provide diverse pool of candidates.	Indicator 3. b) Research and ensure best practices in hiring are used.	2018, ongoing	
	Action 3. c) Outline recruitment efforts for the CAC in communities of color.	Indicator 3. c) Engage community leaders and organizations to invite participation on the CAC.	2018-2020, ongoing	
	Action 3. d) Develop and implement best practices to increase contracting with Targeted Group/Economically Disadvantaged/Veteran Owned Small Businesses ² .	Indicator 3. d) Increase the number of contracts and vendors from the certified Targeted Group/Economically Disadvantaged/Veteran-Owned Small Businesses.	2018-2020, ongoing	
4. Be a Leader in Diversity and Inclusion.	Action 4. a) Develop and maintain a list of diversity and inclusion partners.	Indicator 4. a) Invite our partners to explore and implement diversity and inclusion efforts.	2018, ongoing	
	Action 4. b) Create a leadership forum focused on sharing diversity and inclusion work with other watershed districts and partners.	Indicator 4. b) Host semi-annual diversity and inclusion workshops for watershed districts, conservation agencies and environmental non-profit organizations.	2019-2020, ongoing	
	Action 4. c) Advocate for diversity and inclusion.	Indicator 4. c) Promote CRWD’s approach and efforts at a variety of forums.	2018-2020, ongoing	

¹ Underserved is defined as communities where Capitol Region Watershed District has less presence.

² The MN Office of State Procurement’s Targeted Group/Economically Disadvantaged/Veteran-Owned Small Business Procurement Program supports small businesses owned by a woman, racial minority or person with a substantial physical disability and certified as Economically Disadvantaged or Veteran-Owned.