



# FREDERICK COUNTY GOVERNMENT

## EQUITY & INCLUSION OFFICE

Jessica Fitzwater  
County Executive

Michael W. Hughes, Chief Equity & Inclusion Officer

March 2023

To the Frederick County Government workforce,

While Frederick County does indeed have a “Rich History,” it has taken hundreds of years to truly begin to cultivate a “Bright Future” for all residents. Historically, America hasn’t lived up to its promises of liberty or equality. Yet, we press forward to leverage recent shifts in increased public awareness to eliminate disparities experienced by historically oppressed populations to create a more just and equitable society. We recognize that a large part of this movement is giving a voice to those who have been marginalized, while including and inviting everyone to engage about ideals and the reality of our challenges—and to move forward together.

The move toward this level of inclusion could be labeled a “heavy lift” for Frederick County, where we have 270,000 residents and 2,200 government employees. However, an investment in diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging (DEIB) will pay off not only for individual residents, but for the County as a whole. Too often cultures, perspectives, and histories have been missing from the conversation. In seeking to attain equity, we help position ourselves to serve the public in a culturally competent and responsive way.

Today, our country is once again provided with the opportunity to do what is right, just, and fair. The leadership of Frederick County Government has expressed its commitment to achieving equitable outcomes for all residents and employees. Examining our policies, procedures, and practices through an equity lens is good for business, legally necessary, and, most importantly, the ethical and moral way to conduct ourselves and operate as an institution.

When Frederick County Government invests in DEIB:

- 1) We communicate that County employees are valued and promote mutual respect
- 2) County employees are positioned to advance their careers
- 3) County employees can be more effective in serving a population to whom they are accountable
- 4) The County expresses respect for and acknowledges the humanity of our residents
- 5) We communicate that County residents are respected and valued
- 6) Communities are better positioned to be unified and made stronger
- 7) Investment in the community is encouraged
- 8) The County flourishes and businesses are provided with increased capacity for growth

While these outcomes are hugely important, we must also admit to ourselves that in the face of historical oppression and subsequent marginalization, prioritizing DEIB is ultimately the right thing to do. Removing barriers of oppression involves lifting structurally marginalized voices and seeking historical justice. Oppression and divisiveness negatively affect all of us; overcoming them means we win—together.

*Frederick County: Rich History, Bright Future*

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*County Executive*

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The County is responsible for leading change and our senior leadership is committed to this vision of Frederick County's future. We have created the following plan to strategically guide us forward with the intention to avoid wasted resources, unintended consequences, and disparate outcomes. I deeply desire for us to recognize our shared humanity, as we learn from our past and work collectively to ensure that those who have been historically oppressed are provided with opportunities for success and positioned to maintain their dignity and self-respect without opposition.

Michael Hughes  
Frederick County Chief Equity and Inclusion Office



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