



Centering Equity in Community Led Coastal Adaptation in Maryland

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Maryland Adaptation and Resilience Workgroup Meeting

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Agenda Overview

- Barriers to Climate Adaptation
- Creating Equitable Access to Climate Funding
- Policy Development Areas
- Chesapeake Bay Trust - Philanthropic strategies to address barriers
- What Can State Agencies Do?





BARRIERS TO CLIMATE ADAPTATION





Resource Allocation is Inherently Inequitable

Environmental Justice is frequently acknowledged as an important consideration for allocation of climate adaptation resources, but equity-based criteria are inconsistently applied across government and non-profit grant programs. These program often do not meet the unique needs of coastal communities facing the first and most extreme impacts of climate change.

Climate Adaptation Funding System

Within the climate adaptation funding system, a wide range of barriers prevent funds from reaching historically underserved and overburdened communities.

Some barriers are deep and systemic while others are superficial and technical; some may have emerged recently while others have developed over hundreds of years.



Key Barriers Preventing Communities from Accessing Climate Funding

Lack of trusting relationships among historically underserved and overburdened communities and funders.

Trusting relationships make systems function more efficiently and effectively. The absence of trust slows a system down—potentially even bringing it to a halt. A higher level of trust within the climate adaptation funding system will benefit all involved.

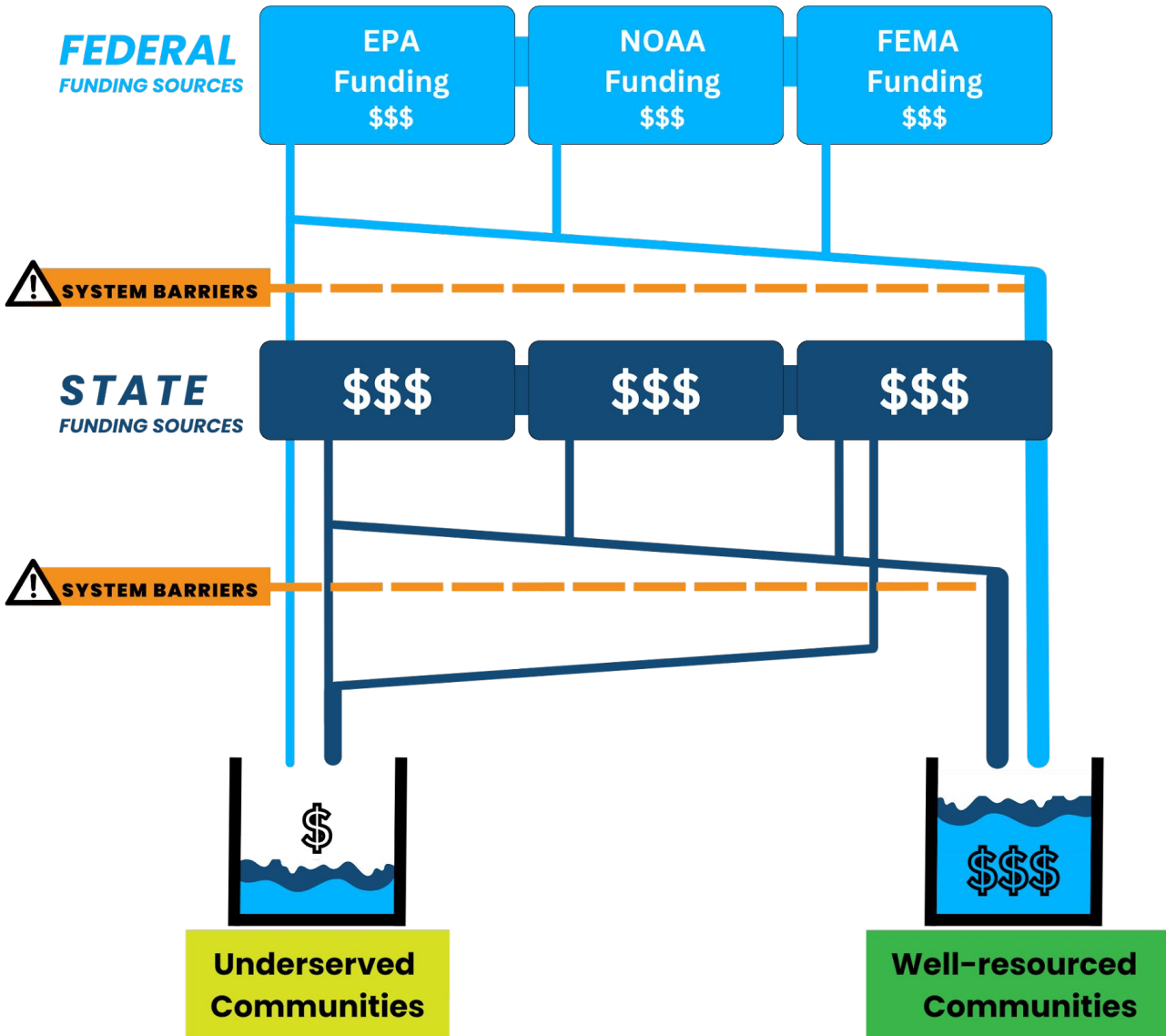
Funding programs are not designed with the needs of historically underserved and overburdened communities front and center.

Climate adaptation programs can fail historically underserved and overburdened communities strategically (what is getting funded?) and tactically (how is funding being deployed procedurally?). Both failures occur when the needs of historically underserved and overburdened communities are not placed at the forefront.

Funding policies, procedures, and processes do not serve historically underserved and overburdened communities well enough. Even if climate adaptation funds are available, current funding policies, procedures, and processes keep those funds from being deployed to historically underserved and overburdened communities. The current system rewards established priorities while limiting the space available for planning stages and emerging needs.

All parties involved in climate adaptation funding lack sufficient capacity and need technical assistance. There is a need for additional capacity across all levels of the funding system. Federal and State Agencies must get funds out the door, and the process is often so fast it doesn't leave enough time for meaningful cross-agency collaborations to tackle multi-faceted climate change issues.

CURRENT FUNDING SYSTEM



In our **current funding system** for climate adaptation, systemic barriers such as complicated legislative frameworks, complex and alienating solicitation language, restrictive funding criteria, capacity limitations within agencies and local governments, matching fund requirements, lack of authentic public engagement (among others) all keep underserved and overburdened communities from accessing the funds they need to successfully adapt to climate change.

These barriers manifest at both the state and federal levels, **resulting in new climate funding flowing towards already well-resourced communities.**



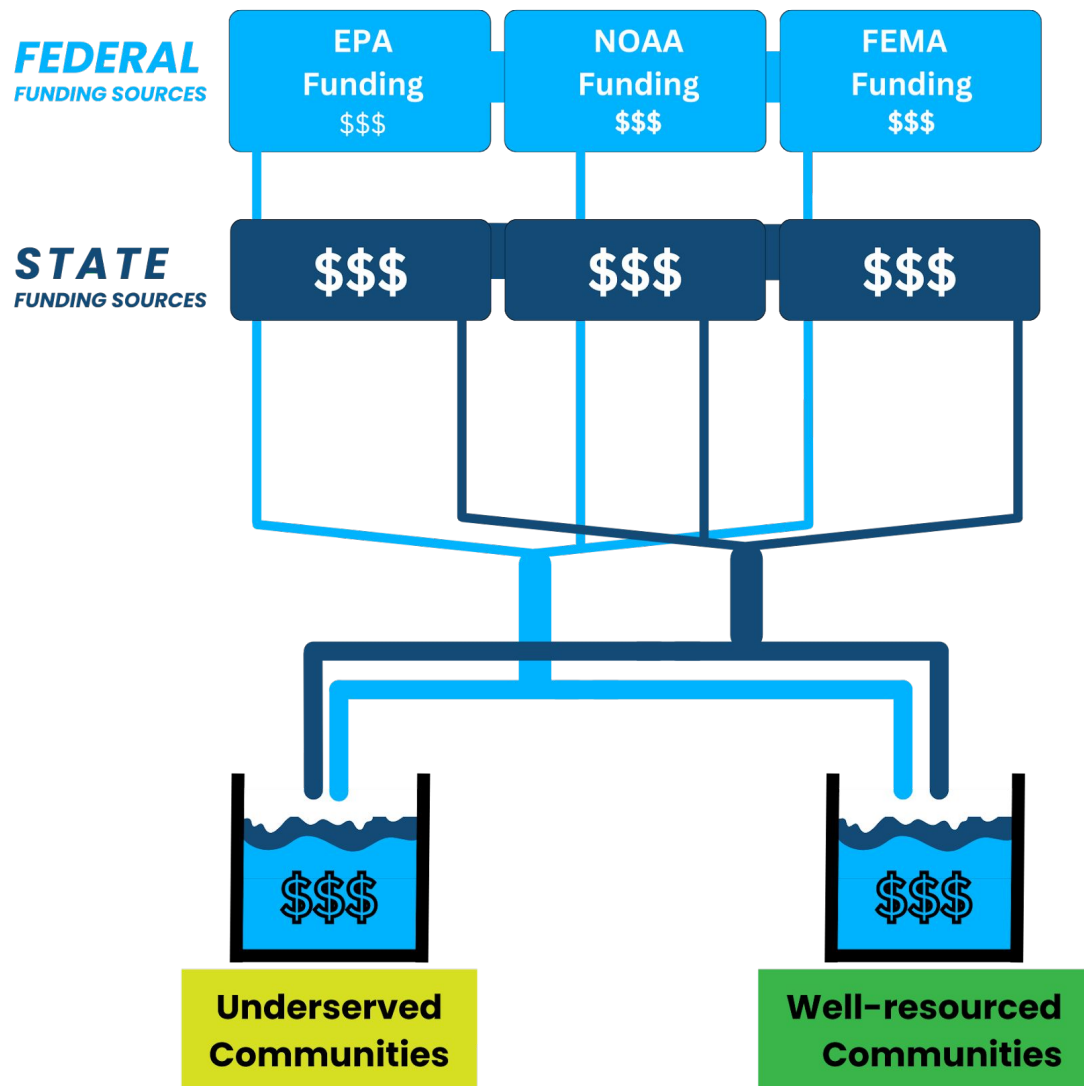
An **improved funding system** would find ways to eliminate the systemic barriers that currently exist and take into consideration the unique needs of historically underserved and overburdened communities.

With the Justice40 Initiative at the federal level, we have an opportunity to tackle funding barriers across all level of the government (including state and local).

An improved funding system would have equity principles at its core to ensure legislative language, proposal review criteria, technical knowledge, and capacity improvements are centering the needs of communities facing the first and worst impacts of climate change.

This would result in an equitable distribution of funds to underserved communities.

IMPROVED FUNDING SYSTEM





Creating Equitable Access to Climate Funding



SEAFARE

Equity Principles

1

Understand the historical and present, social and political conditions and decision-making processes that have contributed to community injustices.

2

Build community trust and relationships.

3

Leverage community knowledge and experience in solution finding.

4

Strive for coalition work and consensus in strategy and action creation to foster reciprocity and co-creation across communities.

5

Contextualize decisions and strategies through the lens of local histories and cultures.

6

Emphasize the transformation of communities, and avoid transactional projects.

7

Understand the power dynamics within partner communities.



SEAFARE

Recommendations for Decision-Makers

1 START WITH BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS OF TRUST

Establish a trusting foundation and continuously build on it.

2 EMBRACE A SHARED ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE VISION FOR MARYLAND

Join an existing environmental justice vision, or if more appropriate, co-create a new one.

3 ALIGN EFFECTIVE FUNDING STRATEGIES & PLANS TO THE VISION

Ensure that funding goes first to historically underserved and overburdened communities that are bearing the brunt of climate change.

4 EXECUTE IN WAYS THAT SERVE

Adopt policies, procedures, and processes designed first to serve the interests of historically underserved and overburdened communities.

5 GROW, LEARN & ADAPT

Take an approach of continuous learning, improvement, and systems change.



POLICY DEVELOPMENT AREAS

New Report

Launched in November 2023 to foster relationships, share expertise, and develop policy solutions that prioritize coastal communities' needs.

Over several months, participants identified common challenges such as flooding, infrastructure needs, public health impacts, and lack of resources.

Recognizing the complexity of these issues, members developed near and long-term solutions grounded in equity and justice.

TOWARD A RESILIENT COASTLINE IN MARYLAND

Equitable Climate Adaptation Vision and Policy Recommendations

Prepared by | The Nature Conservancy Maryland/DC and Equival Partners
August 2024



Interconnected Themes

Climate Change Issue Areas

- Flood Mitigation and Response
- Infrastructure Maintenance and Resilience

Cross Cutting Themes

- Public and community engagement
- Capacity, Technical Assistance, & Data
- Access to and availability of Funding
- Relationship to Public and Community Health



Resource Ecosystem

Communities possess the inherent knowledge of what needs to be done; however, they require **support partnerships and resources** to effectively implement these initiatives.

The accompanying graphic illustrates the diverse array of support partnerships and resources necessary for communities to establish a comprehensive “Resource Ecosystem” to foster sustainable, long-term success.

Note: Resources and Support Partnerships listed are examples and not an exhaustive list.

Graphic developed by Equival Partners



Chesapeake Bay Trust



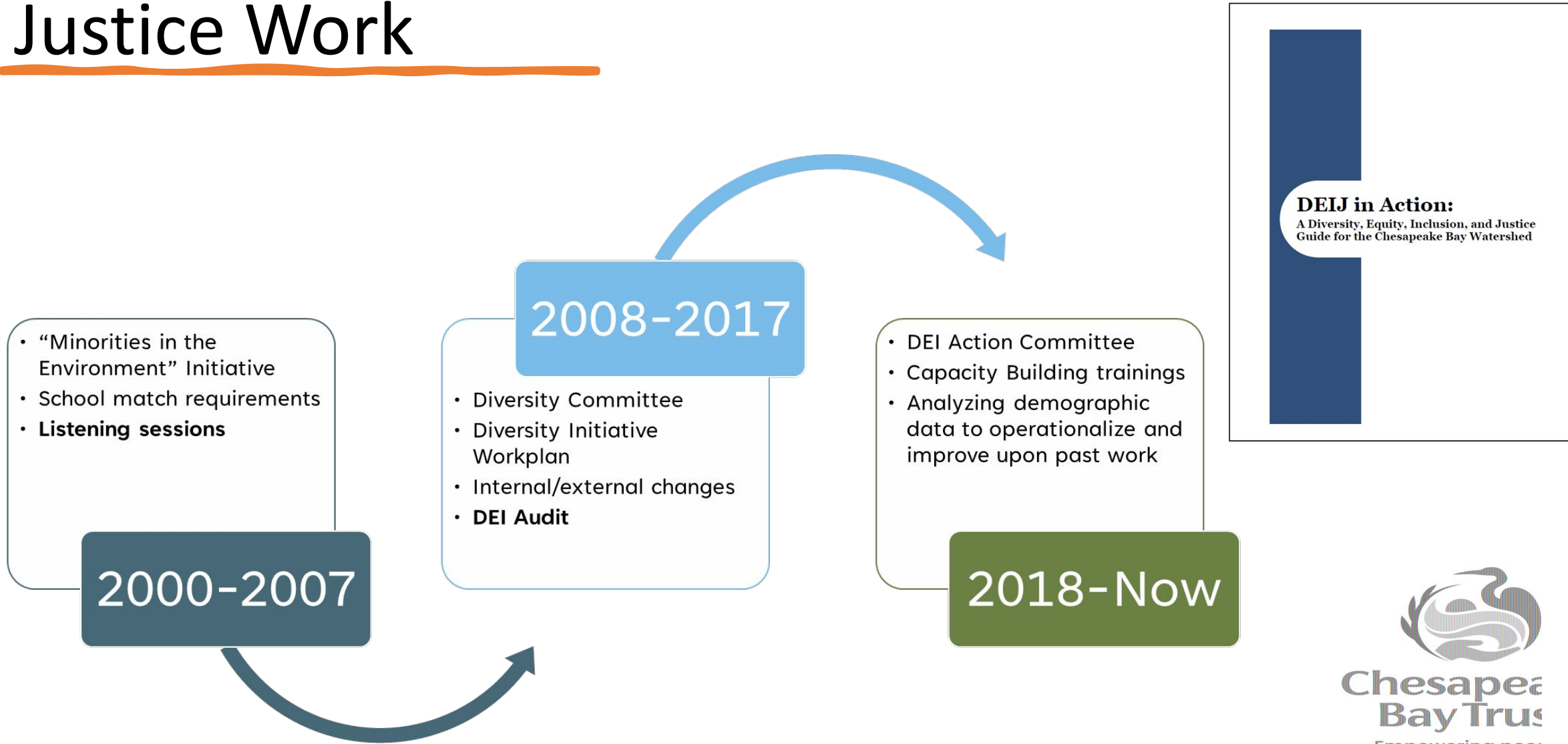
Chesapeake
Bay Trust
Empowering people. Res

The Chesapeake Bay Trust is a nonprofit grant-making organization (and quasi state agency) created in 1985 by the Maryland General Assembly.

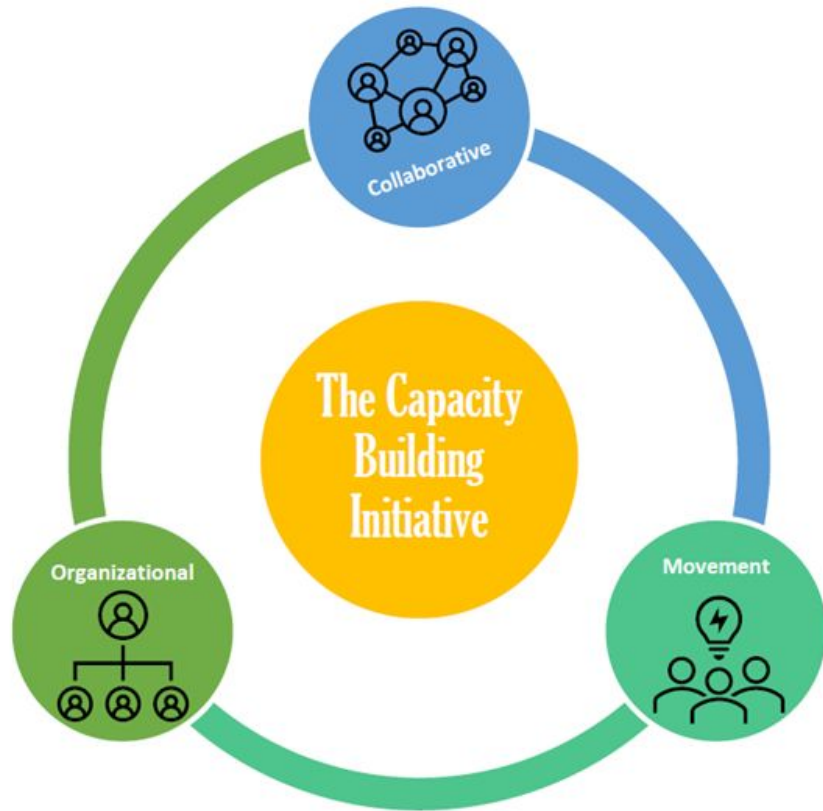
To engage and empower a diversity of groups to take actions that enrich natural resources and improve local communities' health in the Chesapeake Bay region.



History of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Justice Work



Ongoing Work - Capacity Building and Networks



Ongoing Work to address barriers

- Technical Assistance Example: Community Based Organization Capacity Building Initiative - Partnership with MD DNR and Maryland Department of the Environment
 - Connector Groups (Community based organizations)
 - Technical Assistance providers (Engineers and grant-writers on contract)
- The Mid-Atlantic Environmental Justice Fund - a participatory fund
- Implicit bias training for reviewers



What Can State Agencies Do?

- Coordinate with other State Agencies
- Identify Opportunities for Pooled Resources and Streamlining Expertise
- Provide Technical Assistance, Guidance, Education, Expertise, and Consistent Funding
- Legislation, Policy, Regulation
- Continued Outreach and Identifying Barriers



DNR's Work-to-Date

- Tool/Resource Development (Park Equity Mapping Tool)
- Interpreting Difficult Histories (Segregated Beaches)
- Increase Resources (Greenspace Equity Program, Whole Watershed Act and Fund, Community Forestry Catalyst Fund)
- Increase Equitable Access (Outdoor Equity Grants)
- Culturally Important Programming (Freedman State Park, Es Mi Parque)



DNR's Upcoming Work

- Recently Adopted a Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Justice, and Access Statement
- Establishing Metrics and Defining EJ
- Adopting and Implementing an Environmental Justice Policy
- Implementing a DEI Action Plan
- Identify Policy Gaps
- Increasing Equity within Funding Assess



Questions?

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