

DEIB Commitment

At the Hamilton County Conservation District (HCCD), we are dedicated to fostering diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging to reflect and honor the vibrant communities we serve. We strive to ensure that all individuals, regardless of background, have access to our resources and services, enabling them to contribute to and benefit from our conservation efforts. We honor the diverse cultures and histories that shape our district as we develop programs and policies that promote environmental stewardship and protect and enhance our natural resources for present and future generations.

Definition of DEIB:

- **Diversity:** encompasses the presence of differences including race, ethnicity, gender, age, national origin, disability, sexual orientation, education, lifestyle, pregnancy & parenthood status, and religion, along with different perspectives, experiences, and backgrounds. Embracing diversity means valuing and respecting these differences.
- **Equity:** ensuring fair treatment, access, opportunity, and advancement for all individuals, identifying and eliminating barriers that have prevented full participation by some groups, and providing the support these groups may need to succeed.
- **Inclusion:** creating environments in which any individual or group is and feels welcomed, respected, supported, and valued. In an inclusive environment diverse individuals can fully participate in decision-making and development opportunities.
- **Belonging:** the emotional feeling of being accepted and part of a community. Individuals can be their authentic self.

Natural Resource Conservation & DEIB:

DEIB policies are especially important in the field of natural resource conservation because:

- **Representation & Engagement:** Natural resource conservation affects communities that have different interests and perspectives. DEIB principles ensure historically marginalized or underrepresented voices are heard. Engaging diverse stakeholders improves decision-making, enhances community support, and promotes sustainable practices that consider a comprehensive range of needs, concerns, and contributions.
- **Equitable Access & Benefits:** DEIB principles guide equitable access to and benefit from conservation resources and actions for all communities within Hamilton County, regardless of socioeconomic status, race, ethnicity, or other factors. This addresses historic disparities in which certain communities were disproportionately impacted by environmental degradation and the resulting health, safety, and financial hazards.
- **Innovation & Effectiveness:** Embracing diversity fosters creativity and innovation in problem-solving. Different perspectives and experiences lead to more comprehensive and effective conservation strategies. By incorporating diverse viewpoints, government entities can develop more robust policies and programs that better address environmental challenges and achieve long-term conservation goals.

- **Legal & Ethical Responsibilities:** Government entities have legal obligations to ensure equal treatment and opportunities for all individuals under anti-discrimination laws. DEIB initiatives help to fulfill these responsibilities by creating inclusive policies and practices that uphold fairness and respect for human rights.
- **Trust & Accountability:** Building trust with the public is essential for government entities involved in natural resource conservation. A DEIB policy enhances transparency, accountability, and credibility, and demonstrates a commitment to serving the public interest impartially.
- **Environmental Justice:** HCCD recognizes the impact of environmental racism, where marginalized communities disproportionately bear the burden of environmental hazards and is committed to addressing these inequalities and injustices through targeted programs and initiatives that promote environmental justice.

DEIB Values in Action:

HCCD seeks to ensure diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging encompass all aspects of our operations.

- HCCD is dedicated to serving the diverse communities within Hamilton County. Our programs, services, and outreach efforts are designed to be accessible and responsive to the unique needs of all community members.
- HCCD actively seeks to engage with and listen to underrepresented and marginalized groups to ensure their voices are included in our conservation efforts and decision-making processes.
- HCCD collaborates with a broad spectrum of partners and stakeholders to promote inclusive environmental stewardship and to address disparities in access to natural resources, and agricultural, educational, and conservation opportunities.
- HCCD provides DEIB training and education to District employees to facilitate successful implementation of this policy.
- HCCD highlights specific DEIB initiatives in its communications and annual report.

Land Acknowledgement:

We acknowledge that the Hamilton County Conservation District operates on the traditional, lands of the Shawnee, Delaware (Lenni Lenape), Potawatomi, Miami, Wyandot, Seneca, Chippewa (Ojibwe or Anishinaabeg), Ottawa, and the Wapakoneta, among many other Nations, who have been stewards of this land since time immemorial. We honor and respect Indigenous Knowledge and the Indigenous relationships with this territory, its forests, lands, and its waters. HCCD recognizes that today, this land continues to be home to diverse Indigenous peoples who contribute to our community's richness and vitality, environmental stewardship, conservation efforts, regenerative practices, and climate transformation. HCCD strives to learn from and collaborate with Indigenous communities with mutual respect, reciprocity, understanding, and partnership in our shared work towards environmental care and justice.

Adopted by the Hamilton County Conservation District's Board of Supervisors on 8/19/2025