



Title: Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion (DEI) Engagement

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Purpose:

At the November 12, 2025, Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) meeting, staff will provide an update on progress with the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Workplan, sharing a brief update on the Equity Lens, and seeking CAC feedback on the DEI Engagement Framework.

Background:

In 2023, the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District (MCWD or District) Board of Managers adopted the [Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion \(DEI\) Framework](#), informed by a staff-led discovery process to assess plans and frameworks of other similar organizations and build organizational understanding of DEI topics, priorities, and potential recommendations relevant to MCWD's mission and operations. The DEI Framework identifies action steps and opportunities for both MCWD's internal operational processes, as well as its external, community-facing mission-driven work. To support both directions, the DEI Framework identifies three areas of focus: Operations, Projects and Policies, and Outreach and Engagement, and outlines action steps and deliverables under each focus area.

Since adoption in 2023, staff have made progress on:

1. Exploring policies and procedures for more inclusive recruitment and onboarding processes.
2. Developing an Equity Lens to inform the District's projects and policies.
3. Assembling data and resources to inform the scope and structure of an Inclusive Engagement Framework.

At the [March 19, 2025, CAC meeting](#), staff provided an update on this work, focusing on the progress of the Equity Lens. Staff sought CAC input on the scope and structure of the lens to integrate the feedback into a refined version to be piloted by 2026.

Inclusive Engagement Framework

The development of the Engagement Framework was identified as a near-term action in the DEI Workplan to serve as a guidance document grounded in industry best practices that enhance equitable and inclusive engagement. The Engagement Framework will be complementary to the Equity Lens, leveraging the community compositional data to support targeted engagement practices.

To support the development of the Engagement Framework, staff have been conducting an external discovery process to gather insights and common practices from the broader engagement industry. As Outreach staff wrap up that research, they have also begun facilitating internal conversations with the broader MCWD staff team to gather insights from past MCWD or partner engagement processes and identify actionable steps to support a more inclusive engagement approach for the District's mission-driven work.

November 12, 2025, CAC Meeting:

At the November 12, 2025, CAC meeting, staff will conduct a similar process by providing a brief review of the DEI Workplan and updates on near-term action steps and facilitating a discussion with the CAC on inclusive engagement strategies to inform the Inclusive Engagement Framework.