



**Division of Criminal  
Justice Services**

# Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Strategic Plan

**CY 2022 – 2026**

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## Agency Overview

The Division of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS) is a multi-function criminal justice support agency that plays a pivotal role in ensuring criminal justice partners in New York State have the resources they need to effectively combat crime and improve public safety.

DCJS, as established by article 35 of the Executive law, is tasked with numerous duties and responsibilities including, but are not limited to: collection and analysis of state-wide crime data; maintenance of criminal history information and fingerprint; administration of federal and state grant funding; law enforcement training; administrative oversight of the state's DNA databank in partnership with the New York State Police; funding and oversight of probation and community correction programs; support of criminal justice-related agencies across the state; and administration of the state's Sex Offender Registry. DCJS also is tasked with administratively supporting various criminal justice related task forces, commissions, councils, as well as certifying victims of human trafficking. DCJS' key constituents include law enforcement professionals including police, prosecutors, probation officers, defense attorneys, victim advocates, alternatives to incarceration professionals and other community-based organizations who work throughout the state's criminal justice system

DCJS is comprised of 15 departments: Administration, Human Resources Management, Finance, Public Information, Criminal Justice Records; Forensic Services; Internal Audit and Compliance; Justice Research and Performance; Youth Justice; Legal Services; Probation and Correctional Alternatives; Program Development and Funding; Public Safety; Sex Offender Management; and the State Identification Bureau. Also, DCJS administratively hosts two agencies, State Commission on Corrections (SCOC) and the Office of Victim Services (OVS).

## DCJS Mission, Vision, and Core Values

DCJS operates with the highest standards and works daily to live our core values and mission.

<b>Mission</b>	DCJS enhances public safety by providing resources and services that inform decision-making and improve the quality of the criminal justice system.
<b>Vision</b>	With a fair and knowledge-driven criminal justice system, New York will become the national leader in effective criminal justice policy.
<b>Core Values</b>	Integrity, Teamwork, Excellence, Accountability, and Innovation. We are committed to building and strengthening a diverse workforce and culture of equity, inclusion, and belonging, where every individual is valued, mutually respected, empowered, supported, and can perform their best.

DCJS is guided by the State of New York's guiding principles of TRUST: Truth, Respect, Unity, Safety, and Tolerance, as set-forth by Governor Kathy Hochul. TRUST and our agency principles drive our mission and the positive impact of our work. Our commitment to these principles also shapes our relationships with employees, customers, law enforcement and criminal justice partners, grantees, the public and other community stakeholders.

DCJS operates by the following agency principles:

- Commitment to innovation, excellence, and reliability in programs and services
- Maintaining the highest ethical and professional standards
- Attracting, recruiting, developing, and retaining a talented workforce, and ensuring equality of opportunity
- Affirming the value and creative talents of our employees by providing opportunities for employee participation and development
- Engaging in teamwork to achieve our vision
- Providing leadership and fostering collaboration with other organizations in achieving our mission
- Involving customers in planning, delivering, and evaluating services
- Providing opportunities for meaningful and productive work for all employees

## Defining Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI)

DCJS has adopted New York State's definitions of diversity and inclusion. The state defines **Diversity** as a mixture of individuals with unique characteristics, whose combined contributions support agencies in meeting and exceeding their organizational goals. **Inclusion** is defined as a process that cultivates an environment valuing collaboration, flexibility, and equity.

DCJS believes diversity is about more than protected class representation; it is also about understanding, respecting, embracing, and celebrating individual differences. DCJS welcomes and appreciates differences in representation, experiences, backgrounds, voices, ideas, perspectives, and creativity, as our employees work together to pursue agency growth and mission.

While the state has no formal definition of **Equity**, DCJS believes equity is about consistent and fair treatment in access, opportunity, resources, and advancement in employment for all individuals. We are committed to eliminating systemic barriers and privilege that block access and full participation; leveraging customized strategies for the success; and advancing equity for all, including, but not limited to individuals who have been historically underrepresented, marginalized, and over-looked.

DCJS remains committed to **equality of opportunity** and advancement, where all individuals have fair and equal access in consideration for jobs, and terms and conditions of employment. DCJS prohibits workplace discrimination, harassment, and retaliation. It is our policy to ensure equal employment opportunity without discrimination, harassment, or retaliation on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, disability, marital status, national origin, genetic

information, or any other characteristic protected by law. We maintain a zero-tolerance policy for discrimination, workplace violence, harassment, sexual harassment, and retaliation.

DCJS is committed to creating a culture where employees are respected, empowered, valued, and supported. We want employees to thrive, feel safe, seen, understood, valued, and appreciated. We encourage all employees to share their diverse voices and opinions, to be their authentic selves at work, and to freely contribute their best ideas, perspectives, and talents to drive advancement, innovation, and success.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion are agency priorities. We will approach this mission critical work holistically and with urgency to build a diverse and highly skilled workforce; and a welcoming work environment where employees are valued and connected. By leveraging all aspects of equity, equality, diversity, and inclusion to advance employee contributions, individual and organizational excellence, we will see positive outcomes for our employees, agency, stakeholders, and communities.

## Goals and Objectives

The DEI plan includes and adopts the following state-wide objectives and goals: (1) Develop Strategic Leaders; (2) Recruit and Retain Talent; (3) Foster Inclusive Culture; and (4) Deliver Effective Programs and Services.

## Critical Success Factors and Focal Points

The plan also incorporates eight critical success factors: (1) Informed and Committed Leadership; (2) Clearly Articulated Roles and Responsibilities; (3) Continuous Policy Review and Development; (4) Dedicated Resources; (5) Collective Accountability; (6) Education and Training; (7) Program Plan Integration and (8) Performance Measures.

Thirteen focal points are interwoven throughout the plan: (1) Diversity and Inclusion/Equal Opportunity Policies; (2) Access to and analysis of workforce demographic data; (3) Outreach, recruitment and hiring; (4) Appointment process; (5) Specialized assignments; (6) Employee engagement and accountability; (7) Training and Development; (8) Qualitative trend analysis and meaning action; (9) Leadership involvement and accountability; (10) Disciplinary tracking; (11) Retention; (12) Data Tracking Systems; and (13) Customer service.

## The Strategic Plan

The following constitutes the DCJS Five Year Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Strategic Plan (Strategic Plan) for Calendar Years 2022-2026. The plan is a roadmap for DCJS' DEI journey. It is a living document, outlining our comprehensive and systemic approach to promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion at DCJS. It highlights our strategic DEI goals and objectives, tactical plans, and performance measures.

The plan is aligned with: (1) DCJS' organizational strategic plan; (2) business priorities that advance mission critical programs and services; (3) focused and sustained efforts to build capacity and capability

to achieve DEI and organizational goals; and (4) our ability to support each other, and our customers and communities.

DCJS will implement this plan in phases, with the early years focused on listening and learning from the voices of our employees and customers, creating infrastructures that support implementation; improving DEI-related communications; examining policies, procedures, and practices; managing collection and analysis of data; and providing DEI-focused education. This will support our immediate goal to diversify our workforce and create a culture that values DEI.

DCJS will monitor our progress against the plan, update it regularly, and launch a new plan every five years.

## Our Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Journey

A DEI Advisory Work Group (Work Group) comprised of senior leaders and employees representing a cross-segment of the agency will guide and facilitate the implementation of the Strategic Plan. The Work Group will promote DEI principles by providing oversight, direction, resource investment, and necessary approvals. It will also ensure that DEI efforts are integrated across the agency. In addition, the Work Group will ensure policies and practices are equitable and will ensure sustainable outcomes in our internal and external DEI work.

DCJS will also consider the creation of a DEI Council (Council). The Council will make recommendations to the Advisory Work Group with respect to execution of the Strategic Plan. The Council will work collaboratively throughout the agency and with stakeholders to develop and execute DEI initiatives, driving our short-and-long-term success. As staffing levels and interest grows, DCJS will consider forming issue specific subcommittees to support the work. The Council will advocate for system changes that support diversity, equity, and inclusion in the agency, with consideration of the broader social justice goal of eliminating racial and ethnic disparities in the criminal and juvenile justice systems.

Work Group and Council membership will include employees of different races and ethnicities, individuals with disabilities, when possible, diverse functions, and cross-levels in the agency. Members will be recruited based on a combination of recommendation, employee interest, skill, and expertise. DCJS' Employment Opportunity Specialist 2 (EOS2), who serves as the Agency's Diversity and Inclusion Officer and designee for reasonable accommodations, will help lead the Council.

DCJS, under the skillful leadership of Commissioner Rosado, will leverage its core values, and demonstrate proven DEI behaviors to embed DEI principals throughout the agency. This will result in more effective and impactful services for customers, stakeholders, and the public.

### Internal DEI

The Strategic Plan focuses heavily on strengthening our internal practice to improve processes, policies, and procedures that ensure effective operations and DEI initiatives. These improvements will build greater DEI competence and individual and cultural understanding. This will help DCJS enrich the workplace, diversify the agency, and move toward greater equity and inclusion and belonging.

### Building a Learning Environment

Building capacity and closing DEI skill gaps is an agency priority. We will provide DEI-focused education, training, and professional development to help managers, supervisors, and senior leaders develop the knowledge and foundational skills necessary to overcome structural barriers and resistance as we proceed along our DEI journey.

As a first step in building awareness and competency, DCJS' entire workforce of approximately 400 employees completed mandatory implicit bias training. We are now identifying how to move beyond awareness, to making behavioral changes that reduce biases that impede access for employees, including those from historically unrepresented groups. We will reduce bias by implementing policies and practices with increased transparency, consistent standards that guide behaviors, and accountability. We will provide corrective feedback or positive recognition in this area.

DCJS will provide the skills and educational resources to navigate difficult conversations related to race, inequity, and injustice. We will identify and implement best practices for those in leadership roles on how to have and facilitate these conversations, while listening for understanding.

We will also seek to mentor employees from underrepresented groups to engage, develop, and retain these employees. This will include assistance to underrepresented employees on how to identify and navigate pathways of progress, advance in the agency, and develop experience and skills for leadership roles. We will also provide guidance for all employees, especially managers and supervisors, as they navigate DEI implementation and culture changes in the agency.

### Data-Driven Decisions and Reporting

DCJS is committed to holding ourselves accountable for progress against this DEI plan. We will create and track metrics to gauge progress against our goals. The results will help DCJS develop insights and improve focus and informed decision-making. Performance measures will be further defined with input from the Work Group and Council.

We are in the beginning stages of an evidence-based analysis of demographics and trends to understand composition of the workforce, and address gaps within the agency. DCJS will use quantitative and qualitative measures to understand work experiences at DCJS. This learning will help focus and prioritize culture changes. We will consider the best way to listen to the voices of employees, customers, and stakeholders. This may include: a voluntary climate/DEI assessment survey, conversations with key stakeholders, listening sessions, town halls, and exit interviews. The findings will influence policy development and changes to ensure our process is fair, equitable and inclusive.

We recognize that employees are our partners and are key influencers of change in the agency. DCJS will focus on connecting with middle managers, as they drive day-to-day programs and operational changes. We will work towards building a culture that values DEI, where every individual and team knows their roles and responsibilities for implementing DEI in the agency.

We will leverage the expertise of our Lean/Performance team to identify how to best analyze and communicate data findings. DCJS will work with Civil Service to ensure we have updated classification of

the workforce, when appropriate. In the interim, DCJS will consider collecting voluntary self-identification information obtained during the survey process.

### Recruiting and Retaining a Diverse Workforce

#### Diversifying DCJS

Diversifying the agency and improving recruitment and retention of a diverse workforce is imperative. DCJS is committed to attracting, developing, and sustaining a talented workforce by providing quality customer service, delivering innovative programs and strategies, and creating a work environment that fosters communication and employee engagement in support of the agency mission.

We have begun making inroads in diversifying the agency, especially in leadership roles and ranks. In 2018, DCJS promoted an African American male to be the first African American to serve in the role of First Deputy Commissioner. More recently, two African American males were added to the agency in leadership roles - one Deputy Commissioner, Office of Youth Justice, and the other a Statewide Training Coordinator for the SNUG program<sup>1</sup>. In November 2021, Governor Kathy Hochul nominated Rossana Rosado to be the Commissioner of DCJS. Commissioner Rosado was confirmed by the Senate in January 2022 and serves as the agency's first Latina, second person of color, and the third woman Commissioner.

However, there is considerable work ahead to improve racial and ethnic representation at all levels and functions in the agency. As of January 2022, our workforce is 82% White, with underrepresentation of Black/African American and Hispanic/Latin X and Asian Pacific Islanders/Native American employees: with no people of color in some departments. We also aim to increase representation of LGBTQAI+ individuals, veterans and women, and people with disabilities, especially in key professions; for we recognize that without diversity, there is not true inclusion.

#### Building a Talent Pipeline

DCJS will work towards partnering with schools and organizations to advertise exam announcements and provide education about the civil service merit-based hiring system and preparing for exams. We will seek ways to promote careers in law enforcement and at DCJS by participation in career building events. By building a bridge early-on DCJS hopes to increase the likelihood of people of color and underrepresented groups being on eligible lists used to fill open competitive positions.

The Work Group and Council will identify areas to enhance our ability to attract and recruit more diverse candidates for employment, including messaging on our website and social media platforms (Facebook and Twitter) that reflect our commitment to diversity and inclusion. We will also share stories of diverse employees and that impact on DCJS and the criminal justice system.

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<sup>1</sup> SNUG is a community outreach program that aims to connect high-risk youth with programs and services and intervening in the aftermath of violence in high crime areas. Program services include, but are not limited to, training, conflict mediation, and violence prevention strategies and tactics that help enhance trust with law enforcement and within the many communities of color served.

To further build talent within the agency, DCJS will incorporate specialized work assignments/training into strategic planning to ensure candidates are trained to assume future positions. These assignments will help employees develop, grow, and build their careers. Employees can assume strategically important, high-visibility and challenging roles that advance key tasks and projects. DCJS will establish a formal recruitment policy or procedure with standard criteria to select special assignment candidates. This will increase transparency, access, fairness, equity, and accountability, and help reduce implicit and explicit bias throughout the selection process.

#### Fostering an Inclusive Culture

DCJS believes that our operating culture is vital in determining our success in advancing the values of diversity, equity, and inclusion. We will challenge and breakdown barriers of exclusion and privilege, and respond to harassment, discrimination, and other inequities to build a better, more inclusive and equitable organization. DCJS leadership will encourage continued learning about DEI and will have and encourage honest and open conversations throughout the agency, as we navigate changing the agency's culture.

Senior leaders will provide all managers with the tools, training, resources necessary to advance DEI, improve manager's/supervisors' ability to mitigate bias, respect differences, build empathetic relationships, foster allyship, manage conflict, and develop innovative solutions for stakeholders.

DCJS will honor and celebrate diversity and different cultures through education and celebration of events such as Black History Month, Women's History Month, LGBTQ+ Pride, Hispanic Heritage Month and other events identified by the Council. We will also continue to strengthen community engagement through participation and sponsorships of events like *Martin* Luther King Jr Annual Food Drive and the MLK Children's Book Drive. We will also identify new community support initiatives.

To foster a stronger agency culture, we will seek to diversify our mentoring program. This will enable us to grow and develop future leadership, support and empower employees as they navigate their careers and grow professional networks.

#### Employee Engagement and Affinity

DCJS will enhance its strong culture of engagement, by celebrating DEI practice by proposing the following steps:

- Review policies pertaining to employee and community engagement to ensure they reflect good DEI practice.
- Create and launch opportunities to recognize staff for their individual and team contributions supporting DEI efforts.
- Assess employee interest in establishing employee groups that might build community and promote culture change.
- Continue EAP Programming, DCJS' telecommuting policy, and allowing compressed work schedules, which allow DCJS to further support employee wellnesses and needs.

### Improving Accessibility

DCJS aims to ensure fairness, inclusivity, integration, and accessibility for individuals with disabilities. This includes, but is not limited to, those with physical, neurodiversity, mobility, intellectual, developmental, and psychiatric disabilities. We plan to actively pursue increasing representation in all areas of the diversity identity.

We will continue to manage the reasonable accommodations process for our employees and hosted agencies, SCOC and OVS. We will continue to ensure ADA compliance and equitable accommodation solutions based on individual needs in turn support an equitable and inclusive work environment. DCJS will also leverage learnings from New York State's Statewide DEI Council, NYS Chief Disability Officer's team, and ODIM and other agencies with this community expertise.

### External DEI

Our external programmatic work is based on excellence in programs and services to customers, clients, stakeholders, and the public. It reflects intentional decisions and actions based on social and racial equity, and fairness. We strive to eliminate racial and ethnic disparities and inequities in the criminal and juvenile justice systems. We use a racial equity centered approach to achieve outcomes, reduce crime and gun violence, and improve safety in communities.

In our field work, DCJS provides responsive, best practice, technical expertise, and assistance; develops curricula on Procedural Justice, Implicit Bias, Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Expression (SOGIE), and Trauma Informed Care; and provides direct training to law enforcement customers.

We also provide grant funding to criminal justice stakeholders (law enforcement, county probation departments and alternative incarceration program staff and other criminal justice professionals.) We will continue building on this DEI-related external practice and determine how to best leverage resources and expertise of field trainers, as we work toward achieving our internal DEI goals.

Through strategic partnerships, DCJS helped launch the first inaugural NYS Policy Equity Academy. The academy is administered by the Youth Justice Institute which is housed at the State University of New York at Albany. This Academy is designed to build the capacity and skills of local youth justice practitioners, so they can implement programs and policies to improve outcomes for youth of color in their communities.

DCJS will explore how to leverage relationships with our partners in and out of state government and create new networks and partnerships with stakeholders, especially in our internal DEI work to recruit and retain a diverse workforce and build a pipeline of diverse qualified candidates.

### **Obstacles to Success**

DCJS has identified the following areas as potential obstacles to successful implementation of the Strategic Plan:

- DCJS currently has one Equal Opportunity Specialist 2 (EOS2) who is responsible for DEI work and managing the reasonable accommodation work of DCJS and its hosted agencies. One staff member is inadequate to implement this plan.

Proposed Solution:

- We recognize that the plan cannot be adequately implemented and managed without additional staff and support. DCJS plans on transferring reasonable accommodations for DCJS and hosted agencies from the EOS2 to the proposed new EOS1 in the Office of Human Resources. DCJS also plans on hiring an EOS1 and/or Project Coordinator to support DEI efforts. These changes will enable the EOS2 to better focus on DEI planning, implementation, and coordination across the agency.
- The development and/or sourcing DEI training content, curriculum materials and other resources.

Proposed Solution:

- The Council will explore how to leverage the content and DEI expertise from other state agencies, and to our field trainers in a train- the- trainer in-house model, identify how the EOS 2 will develop subject matter expertise to facilitate this learning.
- Infrastructure and technological challenges could interfere with successful implementation. For example, available Demographic data may have limitations. Workforce Analytics, the system available to many state agencies, has many unknown categories and does not track sexual orientation, nonbinary categorization, and multi-racial identities.

Proposed Solutions:

- The Work Group and Council will work with our internal Lean/Performance group and the Office of Information Technology Services to identify how to utilize, manage and analyze, data sets on available platforms or identify where new technology might be needed.
- The Work Group and Council will also examine whether it is beneficial for departments to do their own tracking and reporting quarterly. This might include examining notices of discipline or grievances filed by department to find and correct negative trends.
- Limited pools of minority and underrepresented candidates.

Proposed Solutions:

- DCJS will expand its networks, create new partnerships, and focus on building a pipeline of diverse, qualified talent. This will be accomplished through community outreach and relationship building with multi-cultural organizations and schools seeking to connect underrepresented groups with employers.
- DCJS will seek to promote job openings at DCJS and explore ways to educate candidates on how to use the Civil Service Examination system<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> This may include outreach to representative organizations, such as, professional organizations servicing women, veterans, individuals with disabilities and LGQTQAI+ communities; education institutions, Historically Black Colleges, Hispanic Serving Institutions, Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander Serving Institutions, Social and Civil Organizations, school and organization affinity groups and alumni

- Ensuring hiring policies and procedures are fair and without bias.
  - Proposed Solutions:
    - Revamp the hiring and appointment process, to include the EOS2's in the process from planning through hiring approval stages.
    - Consider creating and training a team of monitors, who will attend interviews to ensure fairness and equity, and that there is no unlawful discrimination.
    - Consider creating a hiring/screening panel to review resumes of qualified candidates for interview consideration. Hiring panel monitors will be required to complete the most recent interviewer training, implicit bias training, microaggression training, and cultural interviewing to dismantle employment barriers.
    - Improve guidelines for resume reviews, screening candidates, and assembling the interview slate.
    - Consider appropriate standards for screening and interview procedures. For example, where possible have at least two candidates of color on the interview slate and at least one interviewer of an unrepresented minority groups.
    - Explore piloting a blind resume review process for a selected job opening.
- Recognizing that DEI principles do not end at hiring. DCJS must also address retention and advancement
  - Proposed Solutions:
    - Analyze exit interviews to understand reasons for separation and to identify how underrepresented groups are being adversely impacted.
    - Segment employee engagement survey results by minority groups for attrition trends; including examining variables, such as gender, ethnicity, tenure, age, and role in the agency.
    - Continue professional development of employees and identify or create new pathways of progress to help employees build skills to advance their careers.
    - Provide avenues for Senior leadership mentoring and sponsorship as well as peer-to-peer mentoring.

## Conclusion

DCJS is committed to doing the challenging and rewarding work necessary to become a more diverse, inclusive, and sustainable criminal justice support agency, where all employees are welcome and enjoy equitable opportunities to succeed.

We will achieve our DEI goals and objectives through decisive, inclusive leadership and action; strategic focus and investment; continuous education and learning; individual and shared responsibility and

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chapters, local churches, women and minority professional organizations, Associations of Black Women Attorneys, Minorities in Criminal Justice, National Association of Blacks in Criminal Justice, National Association of Hispanics in Criminal Justice, Associations, LGBT Bar Association of Greater NY, Adult Career and Continuing Education Services-Vocational Rehabilitation agencies.

accountability; fostering an inclusive culture where all are welcomed, valued, committed, and feel they belong. We will use data and analysis to learn and inform decision-making and to help shape priorities, consistent with the DEI plan and agency mission.

