



DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION INITIATIVE HIGHLIGHTS

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While we've reported on the VBA's diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) journey in past issues of *Virginia Banking Annual*, I think it is important to look back at where we started to understand where we are and where we want to go. As I recently heard Virginia Housing's IDEA Leader Adrienne Whitaker say on this topic, "The way we get through the journey is through each little step." Each step matters, and it's crucial that we keep taking them.

Our concerted effort on DEI initiatives began with our 2019-2021 VBA Strategic Plan, when the VBA created the goal of developing resources to assist banks in building a more diverse future leadership. We formed the VBA DEI Council that year to help guide us in the creation of our DEI initiatives and programming for banks. This group was a key driver of our early DEI efforts.

In our most recent 2022-2024 Strategic Plan, we included a priority item that focused on sustaining momentum and enthusiasm around DEI and further exploring how VBA can help member banks continue their efforts.

While exploring how to achieve this goal, it became clear to us that a wider network was needed to continue the DEI Council's work and to open the conversation and connect more individuals. We created our new DEI Peer Connections group, which will meet virtually twice per year and be driven by Candace Davenport, VP, IDEA officer at First Bank, Virginia, who is serving as my co-facilitator. This group will be driven by the involvement of all participants with the goal of establishing a place for open communication, relationship-building, and creating a sense of community around DEI. Any Virginia banker can share perspectives, questions, and ideas on how we can build a more inclusive banking industry together.

While we are proud of the work we've done so far, we recognize creating effective change in this area is an ongoing process - not a checklist item - and we are excited to see how we can keep injecting energy into this space. As we rev up our support of member banks in their DEI efforts while staying focused on DEI initiatives and programming, we encourage you to contact us anytime with your thoughts and ideas. We hope you will join us on each step of the journey.

Women's Mentorship PROGRAM



The 2022-2023 cohort of the Women's Mentorship Program launched in September 2022 with 55 participants. In this program, mentor/mentee pairs participate in a 10-month experience involving one-on-one interaction and discussion combined with training and regional networking opportunities.

Women in Banking CONFERENCE



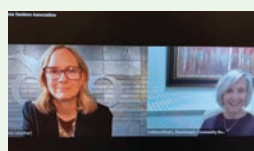
In December 2022, nearly 100 bankers and industry partners joined us for the tenth annual Women in Banking Conference at the Hermitage Country Club in Manakin-Sabot. Sessions at the event included:



- **Unconscious Bias: Elevated and Rechecked**
- **Utilize Your Time to Leverage Leadership Opportunities**
- **Dealing with Difficult Situations**
- **Women Leaders in Banking Panel: Telling Their Stories**
- **Embracing Meaningful Influence: The Building of Dynamic Leadership**



International WOMEN'S DAY

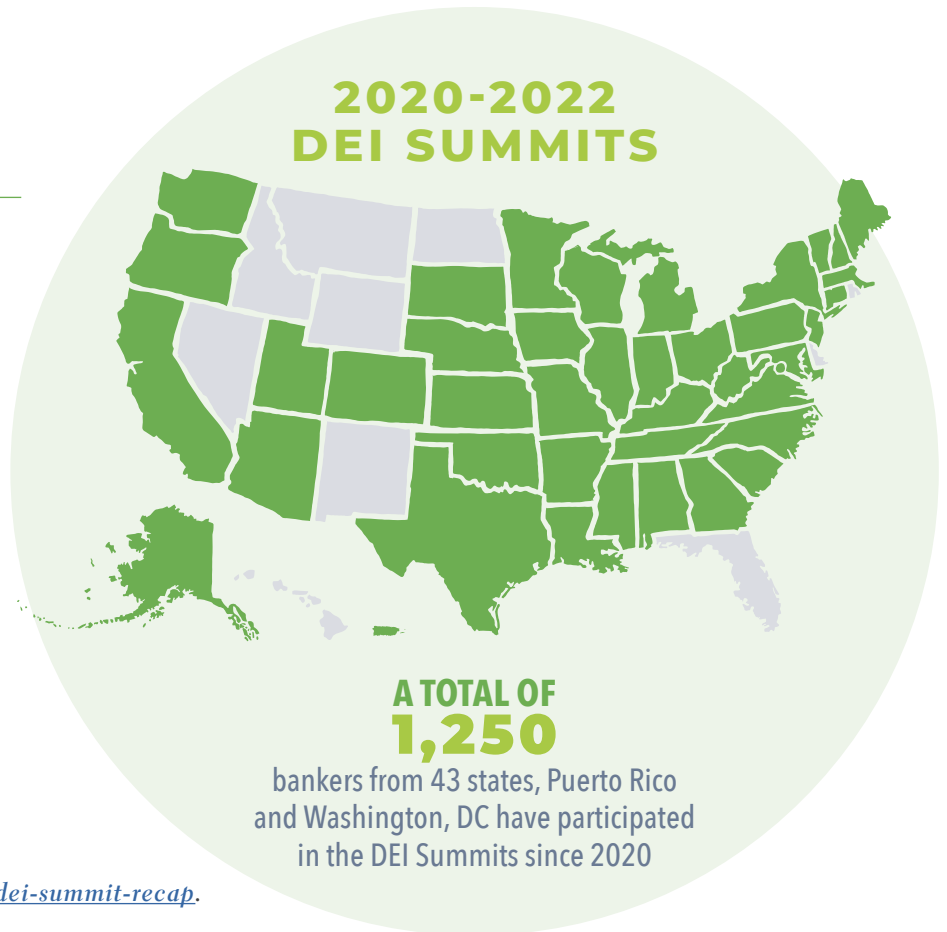


In partnership with the VBA Executive Women in Banking Peer Group, the VBA hosted an International Women's Day fireside chat on March 8, 2023 with Cathy Nestruck, American Bankers Association, and LeAnne Emert, Benchmark Community Bank and a member of the VBA Executive Women in Banking Peer Group. More than 300 bankers and 18 watch parties gathered for the fireside chat.

2022 ABA/VBA/MBA DEI SUMMIT

The VBA, ABA and the Maryland Bankers Association (MBA) came together to host the third-annual virtual DEI Summit for bankers on September 15, 2022. Five hundred seventy-five people attended nationwide from 41 states, Puerto Rico and Washington, DC. The event provided education to attendees on recruitment strategies, attracting and retaining second career workers, essential components of DEI frameworks, making your bank matter to multicultural consumers, leading a diverse workforce, why conscious inclusion matters and more. The afternoon closed with an outstanding closing keynote on Beyond the Image of Diversity: How to Create a Culture of Inclusion by Dima Ghawi, keynote speaker, executive coach and author.

To view a full event recap, please visit www.vabankers.org/post/2022-abavbamba-dei-summit-recap.



DEI Peer CONNECTIONS

The first DEI Peer Connections meeting was held on May 23, 2023. Former DEI Council members were invited to stay engaged in our efforts through active participation in DEI Peer Connections and an opt-in form was created so any banker can choose to receive communications and updates on future DEI Peer Connections and other DEI events and information from the VBA.



Candace Davenport, IDEA Officer at First Bank, Virginia, is serving as co-facilitator of the VBA DEI Peer Connections group with Chandler Owdom, VBA.

You can learn more about Candace by visiting www.vabankers.org/internal-links/5-minutes-candace-davenport.

DEI PEER CONNECTIONS MEETING RECAP:



31 people registered

DEI Updates from Partner Organizations:

- Leslie Frazier, Senior Vice President of Community and Industry Relations, Virginia Association of REALTORS®
- Naomi Mercer, SVP, DEI, and Cathy Nestrick, VP, Women's Leadership and DEI, American Bankers Association
- Adrienne Whitaker, Inclusion, Diversity, Equity & Access (IDEA) Leader, Director, Virginia Housing



Peer roundtable discussion on topics such as Juneteenth efforts and activities.

You can learn more about the VBA DEI Efforts and join the VBA DEI Peer Connections group by visiting www.vabankers.org/vba-diversity-equity-inclusion-efforts.