



# Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion at VHB

VHB has always been about people. Since our founding, we have intentionally fostered a culture of diversity, equity, and inclusion—supported by deep-rooted core values, one of which is diversity. We have sought to create an environment where people of all identities, backgrounds, and perspectives feel welcome and have the opportunity to grow, both personally and professionally.

“Research tells us that diverse organizations with inclusive cultures are more likely to attract and retain bold, bright, passionate professionals; be high performing, innovative, and agile; and meet or exceed financial targets. As important as these outcomes are, however, they are not the end game. At VHB we are committed to sustaining a diverse, equitable, and inclusive organization because only in such an environment can each of us become our best self, growing and evolving through a dialog of many voices—and elevating our humanity in the process.”

— *Mike Carragher, President & CEO*



## DEI Steering Committee

VHB's DEI Steering Committee (DEISC) was established to further advance VHB's strategic focus on DEI, both internally and externally. The 12-member committee is chaired by Mike Carragher, President & CEO, and is comprised of executive, regional, and office leadership, as well as representatives from employee resource groups. The DEISC is responsible for helping to establish VHB's long-term DEI vision, goals, and annual initiatives; reviewing and providing input on actionable DEI plans; and measuring progress on annual goals.

## Initiatives to Diversify Hiring and Expand VHB's Candidate Pipeline

- **College Ambassador Program.** Focus on building long-term relationships and connections with a diverse set of colleges and universities to attract more diverse candidates into our talent acquisition pipeline.
- **HBCU Connect Partnership.** VHB partners with HBCU Connect to post job opportunities on their website, increasing visibility with students and alumni from historically Black colleges and universities. Additionally, we're collaborating on new strategies to build relationships and attract talent from HBCUs, including hosting diversity recruitment events in partnership with HBCU Connect.

- **Circa (Formerly America’s Job Exchange).** VHB invests in this service, which helps employers recruit a diverse pool of applicants and comply with federal laws and regulations requiring nondiscrimination.
- **Diversity-Focused AEC Recruiters.** VHB has strategic partnerships with specialty recruiters so that we’re casting a wider net in the recruitment process for mid-to-senior level positions.



- **CREST** (Commercial Real Estate Success Training). A 10-week paid internship program that provides opportunities for women and people of color to learn about the commercial real estate industry.
- **LIFT2 Externship.** A project of the non-profit [Teachers21.org](https://www.teachers21.org), which places committed teachers into paid externships with companies in STEM fields so they can experience first-hand what careers might look like for their students and help enliven their STEM teaching.

## Supplier Diversity

VHB embraces opportunities to partner with small and diverse businesses in both the public and private sectors on all of our projects. VHB’s supplier registration portal, powered by minority-owned business [Supplier Gateway](#), helps to identify new diverse suppliers as well as track and report data.

VHB strives to meet or exceed the Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) goals established by our clients on all contracts and has strong relationships with many certified DBEs. We also seek to grow our network of DBE partners through community outreach and networking events.

## Equity

VHB is committed to providing fair treatment, access, opportunity, and advancement for all, while striving to identify and eliminate barriers that historically have prevented full participation of some groups. VHB conducts extensive annual internal salary audits and benchmarking to ensure equitable pay across our footprint. VHB was also one of the first companies to sign the Boston Women’s Workforce Council’s 100% Talent Compact. In an effort to eliminate the gender wage gap, VHB reports companywide employee demographic and salary data anonymously to BWCC every two years.

## Inclusion

VHB is committed to fostering an inclusive work environment and culture that allows all employees to bring their authentic selves to work, feel a sense of belonging, and find opportunities to realize their full potential. Below are some of the ways VHB is advancing a more inclusive culture.

- **Unconscious Bias Awareness Program.** VHB developed an unconscious bias awareness workshop to increase employee awareness of bias, demonstrate how pervasive bias is, help us recognize when we are (or might be) biased, and learn how to prevent that bias from affecting decision making. All employees are encouraged to participate in the program.
- **Community Conversations.** Community Conversations offer a safe space that is open to all employees to listen, learn, and connect with the intent of building a stronger, more inclusive VHB community.

- **VHB IDEAL: Inclusion, Diversity, and Equity Alliance.** VHB IDEAL, an employee resource group, engages VHBers on shared concerns and interests and promotes awareness, inclusiveness, openness, and diversity across the company. The group’s mission is to model and promote a culture of diversity and inclusion at VHB through continual learning, advancing VHB’s core value of diversity, and strategic imperatives around DEI.

## Advancing the Industry

VHB has taken a leadership stance in advancing DEI in the AEC industry. President & CEO Mike Carragher and CPO Keri Kocur are members of the ACEC Design Professionals Coalition (DPC) D&I Working Group (DIWG). DPC is a national organization that harnesses the combined resources and capabilities of leading firms (56 of the ENR Top 100) to address critical political and public policy issues.

In 2018, VHB co-sponsored with DPC the first D&I-focused survey conducted in the AEC

industry, which established a baseline for benchmarking D&I program development. The DIWG used the survey results and collected examples and insights on best practices for furthering DEI initiatives at our firms so that we can advance the entire industry together. Results were published in a March 2020 report, *Diversity & Inclusion, Keys to Success & Lessons Learned*.

Mike Carragher regularly presents on the topic of DEI for industry organizations, including ACEC, WTS, and EFCG.



## Thought Leadership

### 2021 WTS INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

*How to Commit to Being an Active DE&I Partner*

Moderator: Mike Carragher, VHB CEO & President

### 2021 EFCG EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

*Beyond Doing Well, Doing Good*

Panelist: Mike Carragher, VHB CEO & President

### WHITEPAPER

*Building a Sustainable, Equitable, and Resilient Future*

### ENGINEERING INC. MAGAZINE, SPRING 2020

*“Expanding the Conversation: Twenty-two engineering firms lead an effort to promote industrywide progress on diversity and inclusion.”*

### ARTICLE

*VHB Bike-Ped Panel Addresses Barriers Faced by People of Color*

### ZWEIG LETTER

*“The Time is Now”*

by Chief People Officer, Keri Kocur

## DEI Awards

### 2021 | WTS BOSTON

*Honorable Ray LaHood Award*

Mike Carragher, VHB CEO & President

### 2020 | WTS-NC

*Rosa Parks Diversity Leadership Award*

### 2020 | NAIOF-MA

*Impact Awards, Diversity, Equity & Inclusion category*

### 2018 | WTS

*International Employer of the Year*