

ADDENDUM: MARYLAND SEA GRANT STRATEGIC PLAN 2018 – 2023 2022 – 2023 UPDATE

Introduction

Maryland Sea Grant's (MDSG) 2018 – 2021 strategic plan serves as a guiding document for our organization. It lays out our mission, vision, values, and strategic focus areas, informing our programmatic priorities, requests for proposals, omnibus and supplemental proposals, and performance targets. The plan is consistent with the National Sea Grant College Program 2018-2021 Strategic Plan (draft) and numerous local and state plans. It provides for flexibility and adaptability as local and national priorities evolve; yet it continues to remain highly relevant to our program and stakeholder needs in 2020.

Since FY2018, Maryland Sea Grant has benefitted from increased Congressional funding and collaboration with NOAA's National Sea Grant Office (NSGO) to undertake visioning exercises, expand our efforts in aquaculture, and begin to implement Site Review Team (SRT) suggestions for program advancement. These efforts have been critical to identifying where we can adapt our programming. With the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic and its economic repercussions as well as increasing social unrest over systemic racism and bigotry, Maryland Sea Grant has looked critically at our organization to understand how we should move forward to help all of our constituents respond to COVID and more effectively and equitably serve Maryland's underrepresented and underserved populations.

In compliance with recent guidance from the NOAA/NSGO, Maryland Sea Grant is updating its 2018 – 2021 strategic plan to extend it through 2023. This is an excellent opportunity to reflect on our current strategic plan, recent expansions of our program, and changing local and national priorities. The purpose of this document is to highlight key updates and modifications to our strategic plan and thus envision ways that we may better serve our stakeholders into 2023. This update will also inform our research competitions for 2022-2023. Adjustments to our national performance measures and anticipated targets have been submitted separately to the NSGO.

Modifications to Extend Maryland Sea Grant's 2018 – 2021 Strategic Plan through 2023

Much of our plan remains relevant and unchanged, including our vision and mission, our four focus areas (which align with national focus areas), and our state goals and outcomes. The plan remains flexible and adaptive to maximize the program's capacity to adjust our planning and implementation in response to shifts in state and federal executive and legislative branch priorities. Below, we identify specific sections in our 2018 – 2021 strategic plan we chose to update to reflect ongoing changes to the program and stakeholder needs. With this addendum, our updated plan will be identified as the "Maryland Sea Grant Strategic Plan 2018 – 2023."

Core Values and Operational Principles

Core Values

The events of the last six months highlighting systemic racism in America have deeply touched our program and further strengthened our resolve to seek ways in which we can further our efforts in diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI). We have formed a MDSG DEI committee (which complements our participation on the University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science's recently formed DEI Collaborative) that is developing recommendations for our organization, including proposing a new diversity statement for the MDSG website, revising our hiring practices, and updating the core values of our strategic plan. We have strengthened two core values to read:

- ***Develop broadly collaborative relationships.*** We commit to inclusive relationship building with *people from all backgrounds and experiences and to work with all who are dedicated to restoring and sustaining the Chesapeake and coastal bays and their watersheds.*
- ***Deliver innovative and integrative education and outreach.*** We will strive to promote *inclusive programs and integrate education and awareness regarding social justice, equity, and inclusion in our core areas of research, education, and extension. We will create opportunities and deliver programs and products that integrate research with outreach and education, empowering scientists, policymakers, managers, teachers, students, communities, and committed citizens as they collectively work to understand issues and exercise their responsibility as stewards of the Chesapeake and coastal bays and their watersheds.*

Our diversity statement is strengthened to read:

Diversity

Maryland Sea Grant reaffirms our commitment to justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion through collaboration with all communities. We commit to doing more to connect with and support Black, Indigenous, and people of color. We commit to work with people from all backgrounds and experiences so we can become a more educated, understanding, and compassionate community. We commit to expanding our thinking, our workforce, and our actions towards creating a more equal and just society. We understand all perspectives are needed to address the complex environmental, economic, and social problems facing Marylanders who live around the Chesapeake and coastal bays and in their watersheds. Building diversity in our workforce and partnering with diverse communities brings the greatest breadth of ideas, cultures, experiences, and backgrounds into play to build a more sustainable environment. Diversity in our activities through expanded partnerships and leveraging of resources strengthens our program's and Maryland communities' resilience.

Organizational Excellence

In response to recommendations from our SRT evaluation and with new resources, Maryland Sea Grant has expanded our organization. In particular, we are enhancing our capacity for

research, education, and outreach in shellfish and finfish aquaculture, building legal capacity, and meeting our communications team staffing goals. These efforts are allowing us to implement innovative programming for improved information delivery and communication with our stakeholders during the COVID-19 pandemic and into 2023. Additionally, we are working to improve hiring practices and organizational culture through our DEI initiatives.

We have modified our ‘Organizational Excellence’ strategic plan to read as follows:

We view ourselves as a service organization whose strengths in administration, communication, extension, education, and research unite to advance our mission. Achieving organizational excellence requires a commitment to a just, equitable, diverse, and inclusive organizational culture. We further commit to these values in efforts by extension, research, communications, and administrative teams to meet program goals and achieve programmatic success. In addition, we must reach the diverse talent of Maryland’s academic and scientific communities and link this expertise to diverse constituencies. Our organization achieves excellence when we can successfully engage all our audiences in issues critical to community resilience and the ecological health of our watersheds, coastal, and marine systems.

Key Influences on our 2018-2023 Strategic Plan

Strategic Plan Alignment

Our effectiveness as a program depends on understanding the priorities and strengths outlined in strategic plans of those organizations that fund, oversee, and collaborate with our program. Since the development of our current strategic plan, several relevant plans have been completed or revised. In addition, there have been changes in University System of Maryland (USM) leadership (new USM Chancellor, new University of Maryland College Park (UMD) President, new Maryland Sea Grant Extension Program leader). Further, we anticipate new strategic plans to come from both USM and UMD during our extended strategic plan cycle.

Since 2018, two important collaborators have updated their strategic plans. We add them to this strategic plan extension:

- [*The USM Through 2020: A Renewed Vision for Powering Maryland Forward*](#). This plan revises several goals from an earlier strategic plan including new initiatives in equity, diversity, inclusion, civic engagement, workforce development, and innovation in research and education.
- [*UMCES Strategic Initiatives 2019: Environmental intelligence for resilient environments and communities*](#). This plan highlights priorities in coastal resilience, water quality, climate change, urban waterfronts, and ecological health. It also commits UMCES to build a more diverse workforce and a culture of inclusion. As the administrative home of MDSG, both UMCES and the MDSG’s strategic goals, strategies and outcomes remain closely aligned.

Strategic Plan 2018 – 2023

The Maryland Sea Grant Strategic Plan 2018 – 2023 focus areas and goals are unchanged and remain aligned with the National Sea Grant College Program. Our state plan outcomes and strategies (Appendix I) are also unchanged.

Program Adjustments for Strategic Plan 2018 - 2023 Implementation

Driven in part by SRT recommendations, visioning activities, and funding changes, we have expanded our programming and, in response, adjusted our national performance measure targets in a few key areas of our strategic plan 2018 - 2023.

We highlight some of these changes in capacity and programming below. The strategic plan goals they affect are noted in parentheses.

- We fully integrated the activities of the Chesapeake Bay Sentinel Site Cooperative into Sea Grant as suggested by our SRT with funding from the NSGO's Resilience Coordinator initiative (Goals 1.2 and 3.1)
- We expanded aquaculture extension capacity and coordination with new funding as recommended by the SRT (Goals 2.1 and 2.2)
- We have increased our engagement with HBCUs through new aquaculture and education partnerships consistent with our new diversity statement (Goals 2.1 and 4.2)
- We organized a law workshop, established new collaborations, and developed a pilot legal fellowship program, providing new coastal policy legal expertise (Goals 2.1, 3.1 and 4.1).
- We developed a Community-Engaged Undergraduate Internship through the visioning initiative and recently supported a communications intern to advance understanding of water quality and quantity demands in the Chesapeake Bay (Goals 3.2 and 4.2)
- We are developing cross disciplinary, multi-institution partnerships in landscape architecture, climate, and eco-design (Goals 3.1 and 4.2)
- We are enhancing online learning tools for teachers and students and investigating expansion of our Aquaculture-in-Action middle and high school program within Maryland and into other Sea Grant programs.