
SOCIAL CONTRIBUTION

The **Burns & McDonnell Foundation** for inspiring young students to explore STEM professions. Burns & McDonnell employee-owners rely on STEM skills, passion and lifelong curiosity in their work, and the Foundation aims to ignite that spark in students. Burns & McDonnell partners with Science City, a science museum in Kansas City, Mo., to provide engaging, interactive STEM learning opportunities. Since 2008, this partnership has helped reimagine Science City as Kansas City's world-class Science Center and influence STEM curriculum for area schools. The annual Burns & McDonnell Battle of the Brains competition allows schools to earn grants totaling more than \$155,000 for STEM education by dreaming up an interactive museum exhibit. The winning team works with Burns & McDonnell professionals in an immersive STEM mentorship process to bring the idea to life as a \$1 million exhibit at Science City. Since 2011, more than 30,000 students in 55 school districts have benefited from this educational opportunity, and Burns & McDonnell has distributed nearly \$1 million in grants to schools. In September 2023, nearly 40 students and their teachers from schools in a highly diverse district in Raytown, Mo., helped unveil their newest exhibit.

DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

Terracon for grounding diversity and inclusion in the company's guiding behaviors: "We treat everyone fairly and respectfully; We commit to inclusion; and We speak up for ourselves and others." Terracon's Employee Resource Groups (ERGs) have grown from three ERGs to six in 2023, with over 500 employee-owners engaged in one or more ERGs. Terracon's ERGs include:

- iWIL (Increasing Women in Leadership).
- The HIVE – provides employee-owners passionate about sustainability the chance to engage, connect, share, and lead.

- VetNet – fosters appreciation of the value and skills offered by military veterans and strives to increase the number of veterans working at Terracon.

- SPHERE – promotes a safe and inviting environment for inclusion, cultural celebration, and belonging.

- LEAP – creates opportunities for developing staff/field team members through mentoring and peer networks.

- Prism – fosters community among LGBTQIA+ employees and their allies.

DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

Tetra Tech, Inc. for its Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Council and eight global Employee Resource Groups (ERGs) that support company-wide goals of increasing employee diversity, fostering inclusivity, and supporting professional and leadership development of employees from historically marginalized groups. Tetra Tech's ERGs work with executive leadership to shape global DEI programming, training, recruitment, and retention. In 2023, employee engagement with ERGs increased by a further 10%, boosted by the newly launched disability (TetrAbility) and emerging professionals (LEADR) groups. During 2023, the focus was on collaboration and supporting intersectionality. The firm's BELIEVE, Professional Women's Network, and TetrAbility groups co-hosted Pride month events with Tetra Pride; and ERGs built an award-winning collaboration with Tetra Tech's Health & Safety Council to embed inclusion and diversity throughout its safety program.

DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

CHA Consulting, Inc. for building an organic, employee-driven culture of behavior, actions, and dialogue that filters DEI&B principles into every aspect of the company. In 2020, CHA initially formed a Diversity Equity Inclusion & Belonging (DEI&B) Council comprised of members from all age groups and career levels. One example of the Council's work is an ongoing facilitated discussion series, "Do you

have a minute to CHAt?" to help focus attention on specific phrases in the workplace and outside the office, the definition and background of which may not be clear. Sessions included:

- What do microaggressions and percepts have in common?
- Walk in my shoes: Navigating the path of multicultural competency.
- Not just a number: Embracing age diversity at work.

Bi-monthly sessions engage and advance employees in intimate conversations in a safe space where honest, frank conversation flows. Outcomes from the efforts of CHA's DEI&B Council show up in thoughtful and targeted ways – in communications, resources, training opportunities, and additions to daily workflows.

DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

Corvias Infrastructure Solutions LLC (CIS) for mentoring over 60 minority and small businesses across the nation. Established in 2013, CIS originated from a pioneering partnership with Prince George's County in Maryland, evolving into one of the nation's foremost community-based public-private partnerships (CBP3s). This initiative has been recognized as a national exemplar for harmonizing environmental, economic, and societal objectives. Over the past decade, CIS has managed numerous projects totaling more than \$450 million over 50 municipalities spanning the Mid-Atlantic, Great Lakes, and West Coast regions. Endeavors include executing extensive urban greening initiatives nationwide and facilitating access for local, small, and disadvantaged businesses while fostering environmental awareness within communities. Central to these CBP3 programs, CIS has mentored more than 60 small and minority business enterprises, augmenting their bidding capabilities and providing back-office support through contractor supportive services. Embracing diversity and inclusivity, CIS leads by example with approximately one-third of its leadership comprising Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) and nearly

CHA REBRANDS DEI&B COUNCIL AND OFFERS PROGRAMS TO ENHANCE PROJECT MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP SKILLS

CHA Consulting, Inc. (Albany, N.Y.) is a full-service international engineering, design, consulting, and program management firm that provides services to public, private, and institutional clients. The firm is focused on delivering sustainable, integrated solutions to challenging infrastructure projects across utilities, transportation, water, and other critical commercial and industrial end-markets. CHA Consulting was ranked the 69th largest engineering firm in the United States in 2023 by ENR, with approximately 1,800 employees and more than 50 offices throughout the United States and Canada. In January 2024, CHA announced that H.I.G. Capital had acquired the firm from First Reserve, which acquired CHA in 2018; during First Reserve's tenure CHA doubled its employee base and revenues and acquired nine firms to expand its geographic footprint in the Southeastern United States.

CHA Consulting was honored in the Diversity & Inclusion category for building an employee-driven culture that filters Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging (DEI&B) principles into every aspect of the company (see page 14 for award details).

EBJ: How would you describe the core values that define CHA's culture?

CHA: As an organization, CHA upholds the principles of inclusion, diversity, equality, and the active engagement of all individuals, constituting fundamental tenets at the core of our firm's identity. Our commitment to enhancing the world responsibly extends beyond mere aspiration, permeating every facet of our business and personal endeavors. Our firm consistently embraces and celebrates the diverse perspectives our employees, clients, partners, and communities contribute.

EBJ: What role do senior leaders play in fostering an inclusive and equitable workplace?

CHA: Our Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging (DEI&B) Council was launched in 2020 through a charge from our CEO Jim Stephenson to promote thought leadership, social responsibility, and diversity in all that we do in our business and in our personal lives. He said, "Those ideas – for new ways to interact, to learn from each other, and to improve our world – are what will ultimately propel us forward as a company that is progressive, inclusive, respectful and forward leaning. we can say without hesitation that we as an

organization are committed to the values that we are better together and that we are stronger when all voices are heard."

In addition, CHA's senior leaders foster an inclusive and equitable workplace by their active participation in DEI&B efforts. For example, one of CHA's sector presidents co-led one of the recent facilitated discussions in our "Do you have a minute to CHAt?" series, demonstrating how leadership values these efforts.

EBJ: What motivated the company to prioritize DEI&B within its culture and values?

CHA: While the values of inclusion and diversity have been formative principles at CHA for decades, our DEI&B Council was founded (originally as the Inclusion & Diversity Council) in 2020 with a charge from our CEO Jim Stephenson. Made up of four work groups that focus on recruiting, training, community engagement, and benchmarking, the council's work does not function as "an HR program" nor is it governed by a figurehead but rather is organic and employee-driven. Our council members come from all across the company and from all age groups and career levels.

EBJ: How do you measure and track progress in DEI&B cultural integration?

CHA: Our recently rebranded DEI&B Council has been working hard on initiatives that support continued progress at CHA. Most notably, in 2023 we launched our Internal Hiring Guidelines, intended to promote the transparency of leadership and promotional opportunities which will lead to more diverse candidate pools and greater opportunity for existing employees. Externally our talent acquisition team and hiring managers are working hard to identify candidates of diverse ethnic background, gender, and more, with the goal of finding the best candidate for each role. The more diverse the team members who join CHA, the more opportunities that will exist for diversity in current and future leadership and management roles.

Related to measuring our progress, in 2022, the percentage of total CHA hires in a protected category was 51.8%. By 2023, we have raised that percentage to over 60%. We are proud that in an industry that is traditionally not diverse in these categories, CHA has achieved a diverse makeup in our staff of more than 25% female, 22% who identify as a minority, 3.5% veteran status, and 6% who identify as disabled.

In addition, our summer internship program has been named a Top 100 program nationally with a significant part of our program focused on inclusion and diversity, including taking part in unconscious bias training. Our 2023 intern class included 75 individuals – nearly 50% female and 41% minority. Given the AEC sector currently sees 3% of women engineers; 20% disabled; 19% underrepresented minorities; and only 2% women of color, we are proud of the diversity of our internship program and our work to welcome everyone to our industry early in their career.

EBJ: How do you address unconscious bias and create a more inclusive decision-making process?

CHA: In 2022, CHA created a formal unconscious bias training, "Unintentional Still Hurts," which was introduced by our I&D Council and made available to all

CHA employees. Offered in person and virtually, this facilitated discussion fosters a dialogue around the topic of unconscious bias, allowing us to hear from others their experience and share our own. Following this companywide and well attended roll out, the module was added to our new employee orientation, so every incoming CHA employee takes part. Individual and team discussions are also offered.

EBJ: How is the company's approach to DEI&B reflected in its recruitment and retention strategies?

CHA: In cultivating diverse teams and workforce, we employ recruiting methodologies that pinpoint and present the most qualified and varied candidates for employment – including a focus on internal recruitment, promotion, and succession planning. In 2022, we redrafted an evolved Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) statement to better represent our approach to recruitment and hiring. It reads:

"At CHA, we are helping to build a world where thought leadership, social responsibility, and diversity thrive, and we are committed to recruiting, developing, and retaining a highly talented and diverse team of individuals to help us do it. Our aspiration to responsibly improve the world we live in – combined with hiring practices, training opportunities, and engagement with our communities – reflect a company culture that is progressive and forward leaning."

We as an organization celebrate the values of inclusion and equality and advocate for the full participation of all people in an environment free of discrimination. To support these values, we invite all qualified applicants to be considered for employment regardless of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, citizenship, age, disability, protected veteran status, or any other characteristic protected by law.

EBJ: What practices do you have in place to encourage innovation and creativity within teams?

CHA: Innovation and creativity are the basis for everything we do. We are in the business of creating solutions, helping

people and improving our world by asking questions, pushing the limits of what is possible, and looking for the next sustainable solution.

EBJ: How do you encourage leaders within your organization to develop and mentor their teams?

CHA: A special focus on communicating with managers and providing tailored resources to guide their success is a long-standing tenet of CHA's philosophy to build strong teams. In 2023, we introduced an email series for managers called "Managing for the big picture: A Tiny Talk series" that covers topics around building strong teams. This series offers a platform for leaders around the organization to share their best practices and ideas in brief, monthly emails. The series has been very well received and continues into 2024.

Also in 2023, we introduced the First CHApter program for managers, a new leadership development program designed to offer diverse opportunities for leaders to explore personal excellence, interpersonal relationships, and strengthen leadership capabilities. The inaugural class of 25 First CHApter participants graduated in February 2024 and the second group is poised to launch in the next few weeks.

EBJ: What training programs do you have in place to enhance leadership skills?

CHA: Project management is essential to our designs and to our clients. Creating inspiring solutions begins with great design but becomes reality through collaboration and skillful project management. Despite having some of the most experienced and skilled project managers across our sectors, CHA's Project Management Office (PMO) has developed a robust certification program that continues to raise the bar on operational excellence. This certification program has brought amplified structure to our project management enterprise and involves a rigorous curriculum and training modules that require months to complete resulting in our Certified Project Manager credential. To date, nearly 70 have earned the Certified Project Manager credential with many more working through the program.

CHA has also just graduated its first cohort from a newly developed leadership development program for our management staff. In the coming months, all CHA managers will participate in and complete the program.

EBJ: How do you ensure that remote or hybrid teams remain integrated into the company culture?

CHA: Our company has embraced a hybrid work culture and has many remote and hybrid employees. Hybrid employees follow a schedule based around days when everyone is in the office together to facilitate in-person meetings, events and activities. In addition, each employee is tagged to their closest office and receives communications and invitations to events and activities scheduled in that office. All training and opportunities for professional development are offered in-person and/or virtually to encourage the full participation of all employees.

EBJ: How do you envision the future of your company's culture and leadership development?

CHA: In 2022, CHA created a new position to lead our learning and development enterprise, hiring a seasoned and passionate individual to help guide us to new inclusion and diversity horizons. She has brought more than 15 years of experience in this area and is driving our new initiatives and projects in areas such as culture, diversity, recognition, and leadership development. She has developed and just graduated her first leadership development cohort at CHA with many more cohorts on deck to participate in the program. ▣

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