

US EPA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT



Recruitment Plan Virginia Environmental Excellence Program

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Submitted by:

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1.0 BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

The Virginia Environmental Excellence Program (VEEP) is the Department of Environmental Quality's (DEQ) partnership program designed to augment the Agency's regulatory and enforcement programs. The ultimate goal of VEEP is to move toward a new type of environmental protection system based not only on regulatory requirements but also on environmental stewardship, incentives, and the encouragement of collaboration and innovation.

This plan outlines the recruitment strategy being used by the DEQ to support the success of VEEP. It lists the program objectives that the plan supports and describes the recruitment objectives, tools, and activities aimed at the continued improvement of VEEP and its support of DEQ's overall mission.

2.0 PROGRAM MISSION, OBJECTIVES, AND METRICS

The program's stated mission is the overall vision for VEEP and defines the essence of the program. The program's objectives are developed to support the mission and the metrics are used to track progress towards the program objectives.

The mission of the Virginia Environmental Excellence Program (VEEP) is to improve environmental performance across the Commonwealth by establishing meaningful collaborative relationships and encouraging voluntary environmental stewardship and innovation in both the regulated and non-regulated community.

There are four objectives of VEEP that support this mission. These objectives are measurable outcomes that will define program success. The framework, management, and implementation of the program are designed to meet the objectives. The objectives, the metrics that are used to measure success, and the implications on recruitment are:

Objective 1: Improve Protection of Public Health and the Environment

The environmental value of VEEP is based on its ability to promote continuous environmental improvements at member facilities. This objective requires metrics based on the individual environmental performance of member facilities and their success at improving their environmental performance.

For recruitment, this means developing a large enough membership base to achieve meaningful environmental improvements within the E2 level. It also means focusing on the recruitment of facilities that are most likely to be successful in increasing their environmental performance. Within the E4 level this means increasing collaboration, innovation, and the deployment of VEEP throughout the Commonwealth through promotion of the program and mentoring of prospective and current members.

Metrics:

- *Member environmental performance improvement* – This is a measure of the value of each E2 member based on their improvement of environmental performance. Performance indicators will be identified each year and for each

member through their commitments and the facilities will be evaluated on their progress towards these commitments.

- Program environmental performance improvement – This is a measure of the value of the program based on the cumulative improvement of environmental performance of its E2 members.
- Program environmental innovation and collaboration – This is a measure of the value of the E4 program and the extent to which members participate in collaboration and innovation, including mentoring.

Objective 2: Increase the Business Value to DEQ

Recruitment efforts are a part of the business value of VEEP. The program's success lies on the value it brings to the DEQ in supporting the DEQ mission efficiently and effectively. The program continues to increase its value by maximizing its effect on environmental performance per staff resources expended.

For recruitment purposes, targeting facilities that are most likely to become members and remain members and that have the most potential for environmental improvement will maximize the value of the E2 level. Targeting facilities that are the most likely to become mentors, help promote the program, form collaborative relationships, and foster innovation will maximize the value of the E4 level.

Metrics:

- Renewal rate – This rate measures the staying power of members and therefore the long term health of the program. A poor renewal rate will require a greater recruitment effort to keep membership levels from sinking. Higher renewal rates also result in better use of staff time since high program turnover can drain staff resources.
- Recruitment method evaluation – This is a measure of the value of the recruitment strategy by evaluating the success of the methods for contacting facilities. An annual evaluation will be made of what recruitment efforts were made and whether that effort resulted in any new memberships.
- Program Value – This is a measure of the value that the program brings to DEQ. The program value is expressed in environmental performance per DEQ resources expended.

Objective 3: Maximize Program Membership

Maintaining membership growth within the E2 level will maximize the potential outcome of the program. The greater the number of members at this level, the greater the potential for increased environmental performance. DEQ will set membership growth targets for the E2 level in order to maximize its benefit within the community. At the E4 level, a membership target will be set to maximize the number of facilities that are appropriate to this highest level of environmental achievement while not risking the dilution of the level by allowing membership to grow too high.

Recruitment will be focused on the E2 level with the expectation that E4 members will likely not need the level of active recruitment that potential members to the E2 level will require.

Metrics:

- E2 membership growth rate – The annual membership growth rate at the E2 level shows the greater demand for the program as well as the potential to improve environmental performance.
- E4 membership maximization – The membership at the E4 level should reflect the appropriate number of facilities that represent the true environmental leaders across the Commonwealth.
- Sector diversity – This is a measure of the representation of members across business sectors to broaden and maintain even representation from most business sectors, and the public sector, including local governments and universities.
- Geographic diversity – This is a measure of the geographic diversity of membership. While some regions and states have more facilities than others, the membership should be congruent with the facility demographics of each region. If it is below, then recruitment can be adjusted to focus on poorly represented regions relative to the number of facilities located there.
- Size diversity – This is a measure of the balance of larger and smaller facilities in the program to ensure all sizes of facilities are represented in membership.

Objective 4: Expand Broad Stakeholder Participation

Expanded ownership through broad stakeholder participation means that people outside the program feel a vested interest in seeing the program succeed. In recruitment, expanded ownership means more outside groups and individuals help promote the program and bring in new members. As outside groups succeed in bringing in more members, their personal desire to see the program succeed for the benefit of their recruits will grow. This objective becomes more important as program staff resources are stressed. Groups that can assist in recruitment include DEQ program staff and external stakeholders such as non-profit organizations.

For recruitment, this means that DEQ program and regional staff will, when possible, be included in promoting the program and continued efforts to reach out to external stakeholders will be conducted as resources permit.

Metrics:

Recruitment by External Stakeholders – This is a measure of the successful recruitment of new members by groups external to the VEEP staff.

3.0 RECRUITMENT STRATEGY

VEEP's recruitment strategy is to target qualified facilities that would most benefit from membership and provide the greatest potential environmental improvement with the least drain on program staff time. These will most likely be facilities that would enter the program at the E2 level. With the limited resources of VEEP staff, recruitment will be carefully targeted and limited in scope.

3.1 Identifying Potential Members

To implement the recruitment strategy, efforts will first be focused on identifying appropriate sectors that have large environmental impacts within the Commonwealth, a large number of facilities located in Virginia, and can be reachable through associations or other focused outreach methods. The following factors will be considered when targeting facilities or sectors for recruitment.

Facilities that Benefit from Membership: Increasing Hit Rate

Even if a facility meets membership criteria, it may not be convinced that it should apply for membership. The incentives offered by the program play a large role in a facility's decision to become a member. Recruitment messages will avoid raising unrealistic expectations of prospective applicants by highlighting benefits such as recognition by DEQ, networking, and a collaborative relationship with DEQ, rather than focusing on regulatory incentives. Program branding remains vital in building the recognition incentive as a means to attract and retain members. Any recruitment should highlight the membership criteria in order to discourage unqualified facilities from applying prematurely.

Member Environmental Contributions: Increasing Environmental Outcomes

Recruitment will target facilities that provide the highest potential environmental performance gains per facility. From a risk perspective this includes facilities whose operations or sites pose potentially the most significant risk to human health and the environment. To help identify these facilities, the larger polluters in Virginia will be identified through the use of databases including the Toxic Release Inventory.

Member Diversity: Increasing Diversity

At present, there are approximately 440 facilities participating in VEEP, representing various types of operations, from local governments (55%), state agencies (19%), federal agencies (6%), manufacturers (8%), and others (12%). DEQ believes that this broad approach is critical to the ultimate success of the program because all types of facilities can play an important role in environmental protection and leadership.

Sector, geographic, and size diversity are all important to the success and deployment of the program. Periodically a review will be conducted of the members to identify specific sectors, DEQ regions, or organization sizes that will be targeted for recruitment. This information will be considered with the data on the facility sectors that are the larger polluters with the understanding that a sector may be targeted based on the cumulative environmental impact based on the number of facilities located in Virginia and not just the environmental impact of a single large polluter.

Member Retention: Increasing the Percentage of Renewals

Member renewal rates measures the staying power of the program and the success of recruiting and admitting members who are likely to stay with the program and continue to benefit from it. A poor renewal rate will also require a greater recruitment effort to keep membership levels stable and a high renewal rate will result in better use of staff time since high program turnover can drain staff resources.

Combined, the elements of the recruitment strategy – qualified facilities that are likely to benefit from the program and with high potential for environmental contribution -- should yield the highest quality of prospective facility applicants. This will ensure that the limited VEEP staff focus on those potential applicants that are most likely to provide the greatest benefits to the program's objectives.

3.2 Recruitment Activities

Recruitment activities includes formal events and outreach activities as well as informal day-to-day activities. These activities may be conducted by VEEP staff but they may also be conducted by DEQ staff and external stakeholders. It is vital to include DEQ program staff, enforcement staff, VEEP members, environmental non-profit organizations and any other entities that can spread the word on the program and its benefits. Other than the events and outreach conducted by VEEP staff and detailed in the annual plan, the following recruitment opportunities will be leveraged.

Recruitment by Members: Increasing the Promotion of VEEP through Members

Mentoring is crucial in the recruitment process because it helps build trust with prospective applicants, and tears down barriers in the application process that might otherwise cause a facility to give up on joining. Mentoring can be formal or informal. At a minimum, a VEEP member can serve as a mentor to a qualified prospective applicant who simply wants to hear what another facility thinks of the program. Additionally, a mentor may assist a qualified prospective applicant fill out the application. On the most involved level, a mentor may make long-term commitments to help an unqualified facility take actions that will help it meet membership criteria sometime in the future.

Recruitment by members also includes presentations at conferences and meetings, distribution of informational materials, and informal testimonials on program membership.

Recruitment by Regional Staff: Increasing the Promotion of VEEP through DEQ Program Staff

The regions play an important role in both short-term and long-term recruitment because they have the closest ties to individual prospective member facilities. Their opportunities to build trusting relationships with facilities can help persuade qualified facilities to consider VEEP membership. Regional activities also help brand the program at the local level, which is something that cannot be achieved by the Central Office.

Regional staffing and resource levels are extremely limited due to tight budgets and increasing numbers of responsibilities. These resource limitations affect regional efforts on recruitment; however, a minimal level of activity is crucial because regions are best positioned to help build trust with facilities considering VEEP membership. Whatever efforts they can provide, each region should be able to provide materials on the program when interacting with potential members during their normal DEQ activities.

To support recruitment activities, regional office staff will:

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- Identify facilities that may be appropriate for the program as either on-ramp facilities (E2) or high-performing facilities (E4),
 - Provide advice to VEEP staff in targeting potential sectors that are prime for recruitment activities, and
 - Assist in compliance reviews to identify facilities which meet the compliance requirements, including having good relationships with regional staff.

Recruitment by Enforcement Staff: Using EMS in Supplemental Environmental Projects (SEPs)

Although not strictly a recruitment activity, VEEP staff work with the DEQ enforcement staff when it is decided that including the implementation of an EMS into a SEP is appropriate. At this point the facility is not a potential candidate for membership due to the compliance criteria; however, the enforcement staff may encourage the facility to work towards VEEP membership so as to gain not only the benefits of the EMS, but participation in VEEP as well. Membership in VEEP can be particularly helpful in rebuilding the public reputation of a facility that has received unwanted public exposure during an enforcement action but has now overcome their compliance issues.

3.3 Recruitment Tools

In order to leverage resources and target the potential members that will bring the greatest value to the program, VEEP may use the following recruitment tools:

- Associations – Recruitment can be very effective through associations especially when particular sectors have been identified for recruitment. Such outreach requires limited staff time and can reach a large number of potential members. Outreach through associations can include presentations at meetings and information being included in routine association mailings.
- Conferences – Much like presentations to associations, conferences can be very effective at reaching large numbers of potential members within a particular pool of facilities and requires limited staff time and resources.
- Mailings – Mailings offer an opportunity to reach a much broader audience of prospective applicants that can be done at conferences. While it is a more passive medium, it does help remind facility about the program and may reach many facilities that are not able to attend conferences and meetings due to their small size and/or limited resources.
- Brochures and Other Information – Brochures and informational handouts are available for distribution at meetings and conferences, by DEQ program staff, and by downloading off the website.
- VEEP Website – As mentioned above, brochures and informational handouts are available on the website as well as detailed information about the program, the application process, and current members of the program.
- VEMSA – The Virginia EMS Association (VEMSA) is an alliance of Virginia public entities, private business, federal facilities, and colleges and universities that promotes EMS and provides an additional forum for the recruitment of members.

4.0 MEASURING SUCCESS

Many factors will play an important role in determining the success of recruitment. Recruitment efforts must be measured to determine which recruitment activities have the greatest value. Good measurement will also help determine what other factors may be influencing recruitment (and retention) of members.

The metrics listed under the appropriate objectives in Section 2.0 should be used to measure the success of recruitment activities. On an annual basis or more often as appropriate, the VEEP staff should identify specific objectives for recruitment during that year using the attached Annual Recruitment Plan Summary. Additional metrics may be identified and added to those listed. On at least an annual basis, the staff should evaluate the success in meeting the objectives, evaluate the recruitment strategy, revise it as appropriate, and reset new objectives.

5.0 SUMMARY

The VEEP recruitment strategy is designed to bring the highest quality facilities into the program who are most likely to remain in the program and benefit from the program. Recruitment includes both formal recruitment events and outreach efforts as well as the day-to-day promotion of the program by members, DEQ staff, and others. The purpose of the strategy is to document the specific audience that will be targeted to maximize the value of the program and ensure that it meets its objectives and fulfills its mission.

While the current strategy includes the objective of increasing program membership, it is important to remember that there is a limit to the availability of staff resources. VEEP staff must remain vigilant that membership increases do not outpace the program resource requirements needed to implement application reviews, compliance reviews, annual reporting, and membership services.

Annual Recruitment Plan Summary Virginia Environmental Excellence Program 2009-2010

Objective 1: Improve Protection of Public Health and the Environment

Member Environmental Performance Improvement		
	Baseline	Objective
% of members that reduced their solid waste generation by more that 20%		
Activities to Support this Objective		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 		

Program Environmental Performance Improvement		
	Baseline	Objective
Amount of Solid Waste Recycled by Members		
Air Emissions Reductions by Members		
Activities to Support this Objective		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 		

Program environmental innovation and collaboration		
	Baseline	Objective
Number of E4 Innovation or Collaboration Activities		
Activities to Support this Objective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 	

Objective 2: Increase the Business Value to DEQ

Member Renewal Rate		
	Baseline	Objective
% of Member Renewals		
Activities to Support this Objective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 	

Recruitment Method Evaluation		
	Baseline	Objective
Presentations		
Promotion by DEQ Staff		
Activities to Support this Objective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation to VMA 	

Program Value		
	Baseline	Objective
Pollution Indicator/Resources Expended		
Activities to Support this Objective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 	

Objective 3: Maximize Program Membership

E2 Membership Growth Rate		
	Baseline	Objective
% Increase in the Number of E2 Members		
Activities to Support this Objective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 	

E4 Membership Maximization		
	Baseline	Objective
Number of E4 Members		
Activities to Support this Objective	•	

Diversity		
	Baseline	Objective
Sector		
Geographic		
Size		
Activities to Support this Objective	•	

Objective 4: Expand Broad Stakeholder Participation

Recruitment by External Stakeholders		
	Baseline	Objective
Number of Members recruited by members		
Number of Members recruited by DEQ staff		
Activities to Support this Objective	•	