

I. PURPOSE

Fairfax County embraces its growing diverse population and recognizes it as a tremendous asset but also knows that racial and social inequities still exist. This policy defines expectations for consideration of racial and social equity, and in particular, meaningful community involvement when planning, developing, and implementing policies, practices, and initiatives. It provides a framework to advance equity in alignment with our stated visions and priorities. This policy informs all other policies and applies to all publicly delivered services in Fairfax County Government and Fairfax County Public Schools.

II. SUMMARY OF CHANGES SINCE LAST PUBLICATION

This is a new policy.

III. DEFINITIONS

Equity: The commitment to promote fairness and justice in the formation of public policy that results in all residents – regardless of age, race, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, national origin, marital status, disability, socio-economic status or neighborhood of residence or other characteristics – having opportunity to fully participate in the region’s economic vitality, contribute to its readiness for the future, and connect to its assets and resources.

Equity Tools: Information and processes used to identify who is affected by a decision, policy, or practice; how they are affected; and to guide recommendations to encourage positive impacts and/or mitigate negative impacts.

Publicly delivered: The services provided by government or public schools either directly (through the public sector) or through financing the provision of services.

Race: A socially constructed category of identification based on physical characteristics, ancestry, historical affiliation, or shared culture.

Racial Equity: The absence of institutional and structural barriers experienced by people, based on race or color that impede opportunities and results.

Social Equity: The absence of institutional and structural barriers experienced by people, based on other societal factors such as age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, national origin, marital status, disability, socio-economic status, neighborhood of residence, that impede opportunities and results.

IV. AREAS OF FOCUS TO PROMOTE EQUITY

Helping people reach their highest level of personal achievement is vital to our county's successful ability to compete in the global economy. Linking our residents and families to opportunities including education, workforce development, employment, and affordable housing helps ensure lifelong learning, better health, resilience, and economic success. The systems, structures, and settings in which our residents and families live, work, play, and learn, create an equitable community and are, in part, a product of policy and resourcing decisions.

Fairfax County Government and Fairfax County Public Schools, working in conjunction with higher education, business, nonprofit, faith, philanthropy, civic and other sectors, will give particular consideration to these initial areas recognizing that additional areas of focus may emerge based on changing factors and that assessment and prioritization are necessary to guide and inform collective actions to support a thriving community and promote equity with a goal of achieving the following:

1. Community and economic development policies and programs that promote wealth creation and ensure fair access for all people.
2. Housing policies that encourage all who want to live in Fairfax to be able to do so, and the provision of a full spectrum of housing opportunities across the county, most notably those in mixed-use areas that are accessible to multiple modes of transport.
3. Workforce development pathways that provide all residents with opportunity to develop knowledge and skills to participate in a diverse economy and earn sufficient income to support themselves and their families.
4. An early childhood education system that ensures all children enter kindergarten at their optimal developmental level with equitable opportunity for success.
5. Education that promotes a responsive, caring, and inclusive culture where all feel valued, supported, and hopeful, and that every child is reached, challenged, and prepared for success in school and life.
6. Community and public safety that includes services such as fire, emergency medical services, police, health, emergency management and code enforcement that are responsive to all residents so that everyone feels safe to live, work, learn, and play in any neighborhood of Fairfax County.
7. A criminal justice system that provides equitable access and fair treatment for all people.
8. Neighborhoods that support all communities and individuals through strong social networks, trust among neighbors, and the ability to work together to achieve common goals that improve the quality of life for everyone in the neighborhood.
9. A vibrant food system where healthy, accessible, and affordable food is valued as a basic human necessity.
10. A health and human services system where opportunities exist for all individuals and families to be safe, be healthy and realize their potential through the provision of accessible, high quality, affordable and culturally appropriate services.
11. A quality built and natural environment that accommodates anticipated growth and change in an economically, socially, and environmentally sustainable and equitable manner that includes mixes of land use that protects existing stable neighborhoods and green spaces, supports sustainability, supports a high quality of life, and promotes employment opportunities, housing, amenities and services for all people.

12. A healthy and quality environment to live and work in that acknowledges the need to breathe clean air, to drink clean water now and for future generations.
13. A parks and recreation system that is equitable and inclusive by providing quality facilities, programs, and services to all communities; balancing the distribution of parks, programs and facilities; and providing accessible and affordable facilities and programs.
14. A multi-modal transportation system that supports the economic growth, health, congestion mitigation, and prosperity goals of Fairfax County and provides accessible mobility solutions that are based on the principles associated with sustainability, diversity, and community health.
15. Digital access and literacy for all residents.
16. Intentional, focused recruitment efforts that bolster a diverse applicant pool; hiring and evaluation practices, and processes for employee feedback, to achieve and preserve a culture of equity and fairness for all employees.
17. Policies that prohibit all forms of discrimination under Federal and State law in county and school system activities, and ensure that all practices provide fair treatment for all employees, contractors, clients, community partners, residents, and other sectors who interact with Fairfax County including higher education, business, nonprofit, faith, philanthropy, and civic.

V. PROCESS

To achieve equity and advance opportunity for all, Fairfax County Government and Fairfax County Public Schools will work in partnership with others and utilize the influence of each respective institution to leverage and expand opportunity. Organizational capacity in the following areas will enable the development, implementation, and evaluation of policies, programs, and practices that advance equity:

a. Community Engagement

To foster civil discourse and dialogue, community engagement shall ensure that the breadth of interests, ideas, and values of all people are heard and considered. Outreach and public participation processes will be inclusive of diverse races, cultures, ages, and other social statuses. Effective listening, transparency, flexibility, and adaptability will be utilized to overcome barriers (geography, language, time, design, etc.) that prevent or limit participation in public processes. Fairfax County Government and Fairfax County Public Schools will engage with sectors such as higher education, business, nonprofit, faith, philanthropy, civic and others to collectively address barriers to opportunity.

b. Training and Capacity Building

Training will be designed for individual and collective learning with an emphasis on building competencies and skills to implement strategies that promote racial and social equity in employees' daily work. Foundational training will include, but will not be limited to: an understanding of implicit bias; institutional and structural racism; and the use of equity tools. Additional training for role and business area specific training will also be provided.

c. Applying Equity Tools

Consideration will be given to whole community benefits and burdens, identifying strategies to mitigate negative impacts, and promoting success for all people in planning and decision making.

Equity tools such as structured questions, equity impact analyses, disparity studies, etc. will be used to ensure that equity is considered intentionally in decision-making and the One Fairfax policy is operationalized.

d. Racial and Social Equity Action Planning

All organizations and departments within Fairfax County Government and Fairfax County Public Schools will conduct analysis, devise plans, set goals, and take actions through specific practices, policies, and initiatives within their purview.

e. Accountability Framework

Fairfax County Government and Fairfax County Public Schools will incorporate data and publish performance measures that can be analyzed, quantified, and disaggregated to evaluate the extent to which our systems are achieving goals identified through the racial and social equity action planning.

VI. ROLES

Fairfax County Government and Fairfax County Public Schools will designate and support staff members to lead the implementation of the One Fairfax policy. These staff members will work in conjunction with:

- The Board of Supervisors, School Board, and One Fairfax Executive Leadership Team to provide strategic, collective leadership in support of the equity-informed planning and decision-making processes prescribed by this policy and the development and pursuit of identified equity goals; and
- A multi-department, cross-systems equity staff team to facilitate coordination of racial and social equity action planning, collective action, and shared accountability across and within county and schools organizations.
- Boards, Commissions, Authorities and Advisory Committees to promote stakeholder engagement and input in support of equity informed planning and decision making.

Related policies and regulations:

Fairfax County Public Schools Policy 1450 – Nondiscrimination

Fairfax County Government Procedural Memorandum 39-06 – Harassment

Fairfax County Government Procedural Memorandum 39-04 – Reasonable Accommodation in Employment

Fairfax County Government Procedural Memorandum 39-05 – Reasonable Accommodation of Services and Devices

Fairfax County Government Procedural Memorandum 02-08 – Language Access Policy

The Code of Fairfax County, Virginia – Chapter 11 – Human Rights Ordinance