
CALENDAR YEAR 2023 EQUITY IMPACT PLAN

ANNUAL REPORT

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Department Name: Housing and Community Development

Equity Lead(s): Shanise Allen and Marwan Mahmoud

Date: December 2023

EQUITY IMPACT PLAN REPORT

Review your department's Equity Impact Plan for CY 2023 at [Equity Impact Plans | Topics \(fairfaxcounty.gov\)](#). Using that plan, fill in each goal below and describe: 1) what was done to make progress toward the goal, 2) with whom (partners), and 3) how work toward this goal was measured/evaluated and the results. If you have data for the performance measures in your CY 2023 Equity Impact Plan, report them. Add more goals as needed.

Goal 1: Use vouchers to increase and disperse affordable housing choices for people of color in communities where opportunity exists.

Goal 1 Progress:

- HCD started obtaining baseline data on the concentration of housing choice voucher participants in Fairfax County to evaluate the effects of the implementation of the geography-based payment standards.
- Geography-based payment standards have been developed. Effective on December 1, 2023, new local payment standards, known as [Real Market payment standards](#), were implemented. Real Market Payment standards are grouped into three zones, with each Fairfax County zip code assigned to a zone. A communication plan is being developed to provide information to new and relocating voucher holders of housing options in communities of opportunity, landlords and government officials.
- The FCRHA offers free orientation sessions to both current and prospective landlords. Attendees receive information about how to participate in the Housing Choice Voucher Program, and the opportunity to have questions addressed by housing program staff. The initial session took place on November 8, 2023. An additional resource available on social media is a video titled, "Overview of the Fairfax County Housing Choice Voucher Program." This video provides a brief description of the program for owners and individuals interested in learning more about the program and participating. The next informational orientation session will be held on January 17, 2024, and will be marketed similarly to the first session – Facebook, FCRHA.org, County NewsWire, and in coordination with the BOS District offices.

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[Fairfax County Recruiting More Landlords to Participate in Affordable Rental Program \(fcrha.org\).](https://www.fcrha.org)

Goal 2: Coordinate affordable housing investment with other county investments to increase opportunity in newly created neighborhoods and prevent displacement from neighborhoods of affordability.

Goal 2 Progress:

- The new scoring framework in the FY2024 Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) prioritized the construction and preservation of housing in areas of transit-oriented development and areas of opportunity. It also required that preservation applications demonstrate a commitment to minimizing displacement of low-income tenants. Reviewed and revised NOFA points to promote nonprofit acquisitions in areas lacking affordable housing.
- Convened a task force comprised of stakeholders including residential developers, affordable housing providers, advocates and county staff to evaluate lowering current AMI and/or percentages for for-sale WDU policy and extending Tysons high rise policy. The task force reached consensus on recommendations for policy and program improvements. BOS accepted recommendations November 2023. Six Program recommendations encompassed both administrative updates and policy changes as follows:
 1. Optimize Affordability Levels (Policy)
 - 1.1. Align affordability levels to reduce competition with market rate units by shifting the program away from the 120% AMI level.
 - 1.2. Shift the program affordability distribution to include units affordable at or below 70% AMI.
 2. Bedroom Distribution – require proportionality between the bedroom mix of WDUs and that of market-rate units, with flexibility for family-sized WDUs. (Policy)
 3. Geographic Applicability (Policy)
 - 3.1. Extend WDU program to encompass all areas within Fairfax County’s jurisdiction that are zoned or planned for medium- to high-density residential.
 - 3.2. The high-rise policy should not be extended outside of Tysons at this time.
 4. WDU Pricing Adjustments (Administrative)
 - 4.1. Update the WDU pricing model to better reflect affordability for households.
 - 4.2. Create two pricing schedules to better capture variability in HOA and condo fees across unit types.
 5. Refine Resale Requirements – Tie maximum WDU resale prices to AMI growth rather than CPI as is currently used. (Administrative)
 6. Assess Price Control Term – Maintain the existing 30-year renewing affordability term. (Administrative)

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- In collaboration with other County Departments, HCD studied and identified best practices for an interactive mapping tool - called a Displacement Index. HCD is beginning to apply an identified model to Fairfax County data and to create a framework for a Fairfax County interactive map.

Goal 3: Strengthen HCD's organizational commitment to racial and social equity.

Goal 3 Progress:

- In partnership with the Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE) and the One Fairfax office, HCD conducted a racial equity employee survey to assess the knowledge, skills, and experiences of HCD staff related to race and equity. The results of the survey demonstrated a need for HCD to create a more inclusive process for operationalizing equity. In collaboration with GARE, HCD hosted an all staff meeting where GARE shared the survey results and the HCD Director spoke to how HCD will respond to the results. Subsequently, HCD hosted virtual culture change sessions (HCD Equity Sessions) to obtain additional valuable insights and opinions from staff regarding their perspective of HCD's equity guiding statement, and their experience with equity at the agency. The sessions were led by a trained facilitator. There were 2 sessions for non-supervisors, one for Division Directors, and in the new year, there will be a session for supervisors. The facilitator and Equity Lead will submit a report of findings to the Deputy Director and HCD Director. The report will highlight trends and the main takeaways from the sessions. The findings will also be shared with all staff.
- A Communication Toolkit was designed to help employees to communicate internally and externally in alignment with the One Fairfax Policy. It will be implemented in the calendar year 2024. It provides a framework to advance equity in alignment with our stated vision and priorities. Strategies in the toolkit include the following: don't interrupt, be an active listener, embrace friction, give credit where credit is due, ask for clarification, don't assume, words and tone matter, equity, respect, responsibility, and collaborate.
- Every job announcement includes statement about HCD commitment to equity - **Statement for Job Vacancy Announcements** – Fairfax County passed the One Fairfax Policy, a racial and social equity policy that commits the county to intentionally consider equity when making policy, program, services, and personnel decisions. More information about the One Fairfax policy may be found at the following website: (<https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/topics/one-Fairfax>)
- Equity Interview Questions – created equity interview questions and require that each hiring manager use at least one equity question during an interview. Sample of questions –
 - What concepts are important to consider when approaching policy and practice from an equity perspective?

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- Provide an example of a project you led or contributed to in working with multicultural or diverse communities. Describe the challenges and opportunities that you worked through working on this team.
- What does it mean to have a commitment to social and racial equity?

Goal 4: Ensure HCD/FCRHA policy, planning and/or program documents consider racial and social equity.

Goal 4 Progress:

- HCD is actively engaging in writing a new mission, vision, and values statement. This initiative reflects a commitment to aligning organizational goals with principles of equity. HCD staff were encouraged to share their valuable insights and opinions on the draft statements through in-person sessions facilitated by the consultant and anonymous surveys. This inclusive approach ensured that the perspective of staff is considered, fostering a sense of ownership and collective commitment to the agency's mission, vision, and values.
- **Goal 5: Eliminate the disproportionality of people at-risk of or experiencing homelessness from communities of color and other marginalized populations by providing equitable paths to safe, stable, affordable housing.**

Goal 5 Progress:

- The Office to Prevent and End Homelessness (OPEH) created the Racial Equity Action Committee, which is comprised of various stakeholders such as people with lived experience, community-based organizations, CSB, DFS, and NCS. The group is working on 3 goals; creating opportunities for people with lived experience to participate in decision making conversations; upstream prevention; and cross sector partnerships.
- OPEH coordinated a training on equity facilitated by the Chief Equity Officer for the homeless services continuum of care.
- In partnership with providers from the homeless services continuum of care, OPEH reviewed several policies and procedures with an equity and trauma informed lens. Consequently, OPEH created new policies related to access to shelter and new procedural templates for program agreements.
- Via the Coordinated Entry Steering Committee and in partnership with providers OPEH started the process for identifying a new tool for prioritization of households for housing matches.

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Describe other equity-related work completed in CY 2023 (efforts that advance racial and social equity that your department was involved in within the department or countywide) not in the department's Equity Impact Plan.

- The FCRHA launched its first-year scholarships, valued at \$5,000 each, with the goal to promote postsecondary education and technical training for Fairfax County residents who live in affordable housing supported by the FCRHA. The 2023 scholarship awardees were diverse in ages ranging from 18-55, as well as ethnicity and background, four (4) Asian American, three (3) African American, and three (3) White Hispanic.
- The FCRHA purchased six units in areas of opportunity. Five of the Affordable Dwelling Units are in the Sully District. These units are three bedrooms, two and a half baths, townhomes that will serve families. The sixth is a two bedroom and one and a half bath, townhome in the Springfield District. All the units meet the equity criteria outlined in the 2021 Affordable Dwelling Unit Purchase Guidelines.
- As the lead County agency for addressing Recommendation #7 of the Chairman's Taskforce on Equity and Opportunity (*Implement policies to enable public safety personnel to live in and come from the communities they serve*), HCD convened a working group with members from uniformed public safety (police, fire and rescue, sheriff) to better understand the issues surrounding this recommendation and to provide options for HCD and relevant agencies to evaluate. The working group met with the Chiefs of Police and Fire and Rescue along with the Deputy County Executive for Safety and Security and the Chief Equity Officer to understand priorities and obtain input. HCD identified three actions in response to Recommendation #7 and will plan to report annually on progress to the BOS through the Equity Impact Plan Annual Report:
 - Evaluate if and how the FCRHA's magnet housing program can be modified to meet current needs of uniformed public safety personnel, both new recruits and existing officers.
 - Modified marketing
 - Annual housing availability and information sessions
 - Policy updates
 - Evaluate ability to assign certain units in subsidized housing stock for occupancy by police officers.
 - Improve outreach and marketing for ADU and WDU for sale units