

Applying an Equity Lens in Fairfax County's COVID-19 Response & Recovery Efforts



While COVID-19 is a public health crisis, Fairfax County is confronting it recognizing that health is tied to the conditions that people live in and the opportunities they have for housing, jobs, transportation, education, health care, and more. And while anyone can contract COVID-19, we acknowledge that social and economic conditions in the community are making some people more vulnerable to the effects of the disease than others.

To effectively respond and recover, we must understand that our community is only as healthy and strong as those most vulnerable. We must continue to implement the critical public health mitigation strategies necessary to curb the spread of the virus, as we also work aggressively to ensure that opportunities are available to all communities so that residents are better prepared to weather the range of challenges that any disaster might bring. Our targeted mitigation strategy, focused on the populations and neighborhoods experiencing the most adverse health, economic, and social effects/outcomes is necessary and involves these five overarching strategies:

- 1. Supporting the expanded availability of testing and treatment;*
- 2. Engaging sector and community leaders to understand the unique situations facing residents most at risk;*
- 3. Communicating with residents in various formats and in ways that are relevant to their life situations to ensure they have the information and resources necessary to protect themselves and their families;*
- 4. Connecting residents to services and supports to mitigate the social and economic impacts; and*
- 5. Fostering cross-sector planning and partnerships, recognizing no single agency or sector can handle this complex situation alone.*

The county recognizes that to comprehensively address the complex and intersecting issues that are leading to the disproportionate impacts we are seeing in the COVID-19 crisis will require action at the individual, community, organizational, and policy level. Below is a listing of activities, organized by the overarching strategy areas, that the county is implementing currently. As this is an evolving situation, this list of activities will continue to evolve, informed by the voice of community and reflective of expanded cross-sector partnership.

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Supporting the expanded availability of testing and treatment		
Activities	Lead	Status
The Health Department held temporary testing sites in Bailey's, Annandale, Herndon, Mount Vernon, and Springfield using data to make decisions about where to target testing based on case data and information provided on the webpage COVID-19 Case Data for the Fairfax Health District .	Health Department	Ongoing
Health safety net providers have established standing COVID-19 testing sites in the communities most impacted by the disease as evidenced by Fairfax Health District case data and the Fairfax County COVID-19 Vulnerability Index .	Health Department Office of Strategy Management for Health and Human Services	Ongoing
Working with health safety net providers to provide clinical follow up for those residents who test positive to link them to available county services as needed and to enroll patients without a medical home and provide ongoing comprehensive primary care services to persons in emergency shelters for Quarantine, Protection, Isolation/Decompression (QPID).	Health Department Office of Strategy Management for Health and Human Services Office to Prevent and End Homelessness	Ongoing
The Directory of Health Safety Net Providers lists all the community health safety net providers and their services, along with their current operating status, hours and a searchable map of the locations; COVID-19 testing locations are listed separately.	Office of Strategy Management for Health and Human Services	Ongoing
The Health Department is in the process of hiring Community Health Workers with the goal of hiring 30 from the Fairfax County's Latinx community.	Health Department	Ongoing

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Engaging sector and community leaders to understand the unique situations facing residents most at risk

Activities	Lead	Status
The Health Department has been holding ongoing meetings with the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) to understand the concerns of the community and get guidance from them. Incorporating feedback and discussions of barriers to amend response efforts to meet needs of residents at highest risk of COVID-19 disease (for example, time, location, expansion of supports, communication message reviews).	Health Department	Ongoing
Convening virtual town hall meetings with African American community leaders on the disproportionate health, economic, and social impacts of COVID-19 and to develop strategies for organizing a community response.	Health Department Neighborhood and Community Services One Fairfax Team	Planning
Regularly convening nonprofits who serve vulnerable residents through the Community Provider Coordination Team (CPCT) focusing on critical areas of need: Health Access, Food Access, Financial Assistance, Transportation, and Out of School Time/Youth Programming. Expanded participation from organizations representing the interests of immigrant populations.	Neighborhood and Community Services	Ongoing
Allocating resources to support Outreach and Community Engagement through community stakeholders with deep knowledge of the issues and demonstrated experiences working with communities disproportionately impacted by COVID-19.	One Fairfax Team	Planning

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Communicating with residents in various formats and in ways that are relevant to their life situations to ensure they have the information and resources necessary to protect themselves and their families

Activities	Lead	Status
<p><i>COVID-19 Information</i></p> <p>Health Department guidance on COVID-19 testing; toolkit resource: Slow the Spread of COVID-19; guidance for specific audiences for long-term care facilities and deaf, hard of hearing, and deafblind individuals.</p> <p>COVID-19 Case Data for the Fairfax Health District keeps the public informed about cases, hospitalizations, and fatalities; rates by age, racial and ethnic groups; epidemic curve; and trajectory of cases; and COVID-19 testing by week.</p>	Health Department	Ongoing
<p><i>Information Accessibility</i></p> <p>The COVID-19 Language Portal on the county's website features information and resources in Spanish, Vietnamese, Chinese, Arabic, Urdu, and Farsi, Hindi, and Korean.</p> <p>Launched a Spanish-only text service.</p> <p>Health Department Call Center with language interpretation available.</p> <p>Customized communications explain how to identify symptoms, maintain social distancing, and follow hygiene and sanitation directives that are sensitive to language, literacy, culture, and customs.</p> <p>Using a variety of communication channels to promote accessibility to different segments of the population.</p>	Health Department Office of Public Affairs	Ongoing

Activities	Lead	Status
<p><i>General Information</i></p> <p>Assistance from a Distance provides access to a number of key government services online and by phone.</p> <p>The county has developed numerous COVID-19 geospatial resources, including interactive maps for food resources, healthcare, health safety net, lodging, stores offering special senior shopping hours, and organizations accepting donations.</p>	<p>Office of Public Affairs</p> <p>Department of Information Technology</p>	Ongoing
<p><i>Streamlining Information to Community Providers and Residents</i></p> <p>Coordinating a centralized information-sharing platform to disseminate resources available to community providers and residents on a recurring basis through the Community Provider Coordination Team; resources include best practices in service delivery, racial and social equity principles and practices, data on disparate community outcomes, county/community Human Services programming, health information and funding opportunities.</p>	Neighborhood and Community Services with other county agencies and nonprofits	Ongoing
<p>Integrating COVID-19 community provider coordinating efforts into existing collaborative efforts to ensure sustainability and accountability. Standing up new groups that ensure ongoing communication and that service delivery is effective, efficient, coordinated, and focused on the most vulnerable in the community.</p>	Neighborhood and Community Services with other county agencies and nonprofits	Planning

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Connecting residents to services and supports to mitigate the social and economic impacts

Activities	Lead	Status
<p><i>Providing Direct Material Support</i></p> <p>Coordinated Services Planning connects residents to resources for emergency food, shelter, clothing, healthcare, employment, financial assistance, and other essential needs. Funding to support basic needs is provided by existing county and community resources, as well as new resources made available through the CARES Act Basic Needs Supplemental Grant, CSBG, and CDBG allocations.</p>	<p>Neighborhood and Community Services</p> <p>Department of Family Services</p> <p>Housing and Community Development</p>	Ongoing
<p>A <i>Service Navigation Support Team</i> established with staff designated to support residents in isolation or quarantine in accessing emergency food, housing, and other basic needs assistance as needed.</p>	<p>Health Department</p> <p>Neighborhood and Community Services</p>	Planning
<p><i>Direct Assistance</i></p> <p>Established a public-private partnership through philanthropic support with Ayuda, CASA Virginia and Edu-Futuro to facilitate access to available local and state benefits and to provide direct assistance to affected workers ineligible for federal relief due to immigration status.</p>	<p>One Fairfax Team</p>	Planning
<p><i>Sheltering</i></p> <p>OPEH established contracts with six hotels to provide Quarantine, Protection, Isolation/Decompression emergency shelter for those who have met the eligibility criteria. The shelter sites are operated by four non-profits: Shelter House, FACETS, New Hope Housing, and Cornerstones; a central intake line operated by Northern Virginia Family Service was established to help process referrals and hotel assignments.</p>	<p>Office to Prevent and End Homelessness</p> <p>Department of Family Services</p> <p>Health Department</p>	Ongoing

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Connecting residents to services and supports to mitigate the social and economic impacts

Activities	Lead	Status
Beginning July 1, program participants will be assigned to Case Managers who will assess the client's needs and connect them to support services. Case Managers will refer clients without a medical home to the FQHCs.		
<p><i>Community Food Distribution</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A searchable map in English and Spanish provides information on food resources in the community. The county continues to provide meals to current Senior Center and Adult Day Health Care participants; FASTRAN transportation is covering the Meals on Wheels routes. Community providers are working together to meet food access gaps, improve food supply chain challenges, and changing their business process to reduce barriers to participation. A Food Access Strategic Plan is being developed and will work to address access, equity, and inefficiency areas in the food distribution system. <p>Equitable Food Access Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chef Jose Andres' World Central Kitchen distributed individually packaged, fresh meals in communities across the county Worked with Giant Foods to fast-track purchased food from GOYA for food pantries and direct disbursement to residents. Implementing a pilot program with support from the Human Services Council's Innovation Fund to engage small businesses such as ethnic grocers, restaurants, and food trucks to supply and distribute culturally reflective and nutritious foods through our food distribution network. 	<p>Department of Information Technology</p> <p>Department of Family Services</p> <p>Neighborhood and Community Services and nonprofit and faith community partners</p> <p>One Fairfax Team</p>	Ongoing

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Connecting residents to services and supports to mitigate the social and economic impacts

Activities	Lead	Status
<p><i>Food Delivery</i></p> <p>The Health Department's Neighbor to Neighbor Program expanded its service to offer support for older adults who need help with grocery shopping by connecting callers to volunteer shoppers – a partnership with Department of Family Services' Aging, Disability, and Caregiver Resource Line, Fire and Rescue, and CERT volunteers.</p> <p>The Food Pantry Food Delivery Program was created to support vulnerable residents by delivering their food pantry allocation to their home.</p>	<p>Health Department</p> <p>Neighborhood and Community Services</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>

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Fostering cross-sector planning and partnerships, recognizing no single agency or sector can handle this complex situation alone

Activities	Lead	Status
<p>The County has received over \$200 million in stimulus funds from the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act Coronavirus Relief Fund</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$20 million to support the County's non-profit partners through the existing network of community-based organizations directly connected to the Coordinated Services Planning model \$5 million allocated to nonprofits to support their continued service to the most vulnerable and to build stronger, more equitable communities as they experience an increase in demand and adapt to changing circumstances <p>Community Services Block Grant</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$870,000 in CARES Act Supplemental CSBG funds is being used to increase access to emergency food assistance <p>Community Development Block Grant</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approximately \$2.5 million in federal CDBG coronavirus funding allocated to support eligible affordable housing providers in need of financial assistance due to the unexpected loss of rental income during the COVID-19 pandemic. Funding is targeted to providers that serve households with incomes at or below 60% of AMI on properties with active Fairfax County HCD/FCRHA loans or on land owned by the County or FCRHA. \$75,000 made available to County nonprofit partners who provide targeted public services to prevent, prepare for, and respond to COVID-19 	<p>Neighborhood and Community Services</p> <p>Department of Family Services</p> <p>Housing and Community Development</p>	Ongoing

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Fostering cross-sector planning and partnerships, recognizing no single agency or sector can handle this complex situation alone

Activities	Lead	Status
A GIS Equity Resources webpage has been developed and includes the Fairfax County COVID-19 Vulnerability Index to help County leadership and staff understand populations vulnerable to COVID-19 and target interventions and resources by geography/population in response and recovery efforts.	One Fairfax Team	Completed
The Virginia Department of Emergency Management Health Equity Working Group has provided face coverings and hand sanitizer to the county to distribute to communities disproportionately impacted by COVID-19 and is making healthy equity training and outreach materials in multiple languages available. 17,000 face coverings to be distributed to CBOs during week of June 29.	Health Department One Fairfax Team	Planning
The Fairfax Relief Initiative to Support Employers (Fairfax RISE) grant program to assists small businesses and nonprofits affected by COVID-19; the grant program also establishes a minimum allocation of 30% of total funding towards awards for women-owned, minority-owned, and/or veteran-owned businesses.	Department of Economic Initiatives	Grant application period is closed