

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 and/or has plans to implement in the future. 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

Current Activities	Lead	New Activities	Lead
The Health Department held temporary testing sites in Bailey's and Annandale 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	More targeted testing events to be scheduled in the communities with the most cases The Virginia Department of Health will provide tests, masks, and hand sanitizer to communities disproportionately impacted by COVID-19	Health Department One Fairfax
Working with safety net healthcare providers to provide clinical follow-up for those who test positive and to link them to available county services as needed	Health Department Office of Strategy Management for Health and Human Services	Ensure the provision of wraparound services at testing events	Health Department Department of Family Services
The Directory of Health Safety Net Providers lists all the community health safety net providers, along with their current operating status and hours	Office of Strategy Management for Health and Human Services		

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

Current Activities	Lead	New Activities	Lead
Hosting town hall meetings with leaders of the Hispanic/Latinx community (League of United Latin American Citizens and other community leaders such as NovaSalud and Edu-Futuro) to explore partnerships and new ways of reaching the Latino community	Health Department	Convening virtual town hall meetings with African American community leaders on the disproportionate impacts of COVID-19 and to develop strategies for organizing a community response (in planning phases)	Health Department Neighborhood and Community Services One Fairfax Team
Regularly convene nonprofits who serve vulnerable residents through the Community Provider Coordination Team focusing on the critical areas of need – Health Access, Food Access, Financial Assistance, Transportation, and Out of School Time/Youth Programming to ensure service availability and continuity, address service gaps and cross system accountability on serving residents in an equitable manner.	Neighborhood and Community Services	Moving from response to recovery, develop ongoing non-profit/houses of worship/county convening mechanisms that ensure service delivery is effective, efficient, coordinated and focused on the most vulnerable in the community	Neighborhood and Community Services
Regularly communicating with leaders of disproportionately impacted communities	Health Department Neighborhood and Community Services One Fairfax Team	Allocating resources to support Outreach and Community Engagement through community stakeholders with deep knowledge of the issues and demonstrated experiences working with communities most impacted to inform strategy	One Fairfax Team

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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

Current Activities	Lead	New Activities	Lead
<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		
<p><i>Translated Information</i></p> <p>The COVID-19 language portal features information and resources in Spanish, Vietnamese, Chinese, Arabic, Urdu, and Farsi</p> <p>Launched a Spanish-only text service</p> <p>Health Department Call Center with language interpretation available</p>	Health Department Office of Public Affairs	<p>Design customized communications that 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>Use a variety of communication channels to promote accessibility to different segments of the population</p>	Health Department Office of Public Affairs

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<p><i>General Information</i></p> <p>Assistance from a distance provides access to online government services</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>	Office of Public Affairs Department of Information Technology		
<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, Race and Social Equity principles and practices, data on disparate community outcomes, county/community Human Services programming, health information and funding opportunities</p>	Department of Neighborhood and Community Services with other county agencies and nonprofits	Integrate COVID-19 community provider coordinating efforts into existing collaborative efforts to ensure sustainability and accountability. Where necessary, stand-up new groups that ensure ongoing communication and that service delivery is effective, efficient, coordinated and focused on the most vulnerable in the community.	

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

Current Activities	Lead	New Activities	Lead
<p><i>Providing Direct Material Support</i></p> <p><u>Coordinated Services Planning</u> connects residents to resources for emergency food, shelter, clothing, healthcare, employment, financial assistance, and other essential needs; monthly Coordinated Services Planning call data is provided by Supervisor District and mapped according to call volume for emergency food, rental assistance, and utility assistance</p>	Neighborhood and Community Services	Creation of public-private partnership to support undocumented workers not included in federal relief and to expand support for workers to access available local and state benefits	One Fairfax Team
<p><i>Sheltering</i></p> <p>Partnering with nonprofit homeless service providers and community health centers to identify, shelter, and support people who test positive for COVID-19</p> <p>Established contracts with four hotels to provide a safe location for residents who require self-isolation because of testing positive; rooms also used for sheltering vulnerable clients of the Community Services Board, the Department of Family Services, and individuals referred by Federally Qualified Health Centers</p>	Office to Prevent and End Homelessness Department of Family Services Health Department		

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

Current Activities	Lead	New Activities	Lead
<p><i>Community Food Distribution</i></p> <p>A searchable resource map is being updated to provide more information food access programs as well as other food resources in the community</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) is providing free grab and go meals for students and other county children under the age of 18 at locations throughout Fairfax County; 30 school sites are offering curbside pickup for breakfast and lunch• FCPS buses are delivering grab and go meals along 13 bus routes at designated intersections• FCPS Food and Nutrition Services has resumed the USDA Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program at Dogwood, Hutchison, Hybla Valley, and Weyanoke Elementary Schools• The county continues to provide meals to current Senior Center and Adult Day Health Care participants• FASTRAN continues to support the Department of Family Services' Meals on Wheels routes	Neighborhood and Community Services Department of Information Technology	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	One Fairfax Team

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Current Activities	Lead	New Activities	Lead
<p>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:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Latino community – World Central Kitchen food distribution; partnership with Giant Foods to fast-track purchased food from GOYA for food pantries• Addressing culturally competent best practices with food pantries during Ramadan <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>Plans are underway to expand the Neighbor to Neighbor Program to serve more residents</p>	

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Current Activities	Lead	New Activities	Lead
<p><i>Behavioral Health Services</i></p> <p>Agencies are adapting to delivering behavioral health services that comply with social distancing guidelines and are geared to increase access in the community:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Promoting the use of telemedicine and virtual consultations• Healthy Minds Fairfax has created a temporary directory of providers accepting new clients accepting new patients through telehealth and in-person services• DFS has established a Parent Support Line	Community Services Board Department of Family Services		
<p><i>Sick Leave/Telework (County employees)</i></p> <p>Paid sick leave for County employees; allowing for telework and temporary reassignment as feasible</p>	Department of Human Resources	Advocating for emergency paid sick leave legislation	Government Relations
<p><i>Childcare</i></p> <p>Office for Children has assisted their childcare providers in applying for the Virginia Department of Social Services CARES Grant – 200 county permitted family childcare providers have been awarded funding which will support families and children experiencing vulnerabilities.</p>	Neighborhood and Community Services		

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

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<p><i>Nonprofit Funding</i></p> <p>The County has received over \$200 million in stimulus funds from the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act Coronavirus Relief Fund; \$25 million for nonprofits:</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, the hotline for residents with emergency needs. Funding has been allocated utilizing geographic indicators of vulnerability, consistent with the One Fairfax Racial and Social Equity Policy and is proportionate to documented CY 2019 community basic needs data.• \$5 million for nonprofits to continue to serve the most vulnerable and to build stronger, more equitable communities as they experience an increase in demand and adapt to changing circumstance	Neighborhood and Community Services	Community needs will be continuously assessed and monitored to identify and address emerging needs and sustained basic needs.	

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The Fairfax Relief Initiative to Support Employers (Fairfax RISE) is a \$25 million grant program to assist 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		
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		