

# Addressing the Disproportionate Impacts of COVID-19 on Marginalized Communities in Fairfax County

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PRESENTATION TO THE FAIRFAX COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

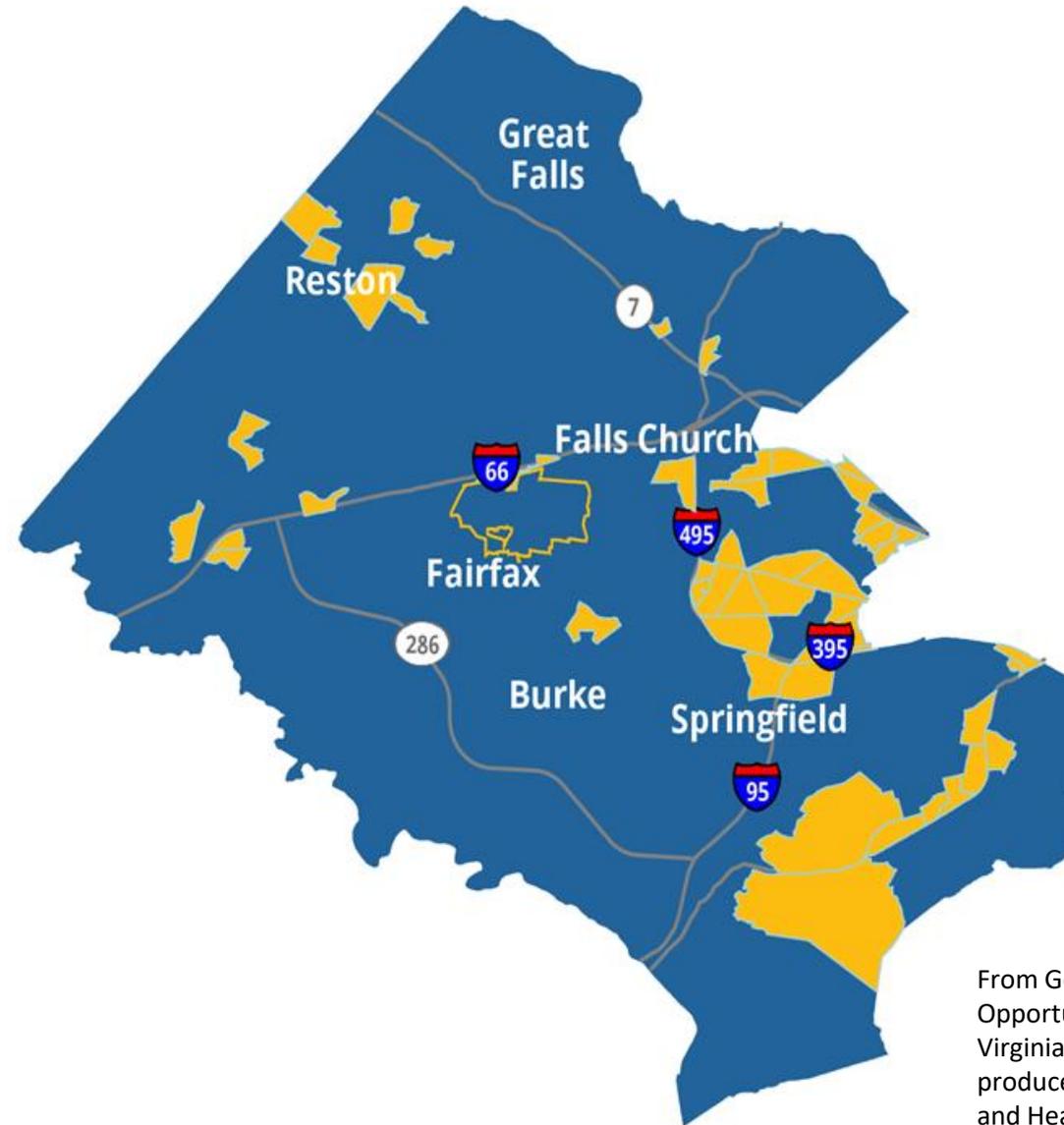
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JUNE 2, 2020

# Our Commitment to *Becoming One Fairfax*

- One Fairfax Policy was passed with the recognition that opportunity and vulnerability vary across Fairfax County
- Structure and capacity being built supports county's ability to
  - Explore and address the **situations and conditions contributing to disproportionate trends**
  - Consider **equity** and promote **collective action and shared accountability**
- Reports documenting our “uneven opportunity landscape” suggest that the most effective solutions in addressing it must
  - Be **place-based**
  - Be **system-focused**
  - **Address the spatial inequities** that constrain opportunity; and
  - Ensure **equitable access to services and resources**



From Getting Ahead: The Uneven Opportunity Landscape in Northern Virginia  
produced by The Center on Society and Health with the support of The Northern Virginia Health Foundation  
<https://novahealthfdn.org/getting-ahead-report/>

# Why people of color and low-income families are more vulnerable to COVID-19 infection and death

- Greater exposure to virus:
  - Living in neighborhoods and situations where social distancing is difficult
  - Dependence on jobs (e.g., in service industries) that don't permit staying home
  - Lacking a vehicle and dependence on public transit, heightening exposure to commuters
- Greater susceptibility to complications from infection:
  - Having chronic diseases that make COVID-19 lethal (diabetes, lung and heart diseases)
- Reduced access to care:
  - Lacking adequate health insurance coverage and inability to afford out-of-pocket expenses
  - Lack of access to COVID-19 testing
  - Compelling reasons to delay care
  - Less access to behavioral health services to cope with stressors
- Greater economic vulnerability:
  - More likely to have faced economic challenges before the pandemic and to have limited savings or disposable income to sustain expenses during the shutdown
  - Greater risk of food insecurity and unstable housing
  - More likely to have lost jobs and work benefits versus furloughing
  - More likely to experience delayed recovery from the economic shutdown and prolonged financial insecurity
- Health complications from economic deprivation

# What we are hearing from the community...

- There is great need:
  - Job loss
  - Food insecurity
  - Housing insecurity and living situations
  - Transportation challenges
  - Support for children with distance learning (and now plans for children over the summer)
  - Face coverings and sanitation supplies
- There are challenges accessing relief and resources
- There is a need for meaningful access to basic public health information and information on resources available
- Community members have experienced xenophobia, anti-immigrant sentiments, and other acts of hate
- There is a digital divide limiting abilities to apply for benefits, seek job opportunities, and for educational enrichment
- There is distrust of government and the medical/public health system

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

- Our typical equity considerations:
  - Who **benefits** and who is **burdened** by **past** and **current** actions?
  - How can **burdens be mitigated** and **benefits more broadly shared**?
- In the context of COVID-19, we must place particular focus on the populations and neighborhoods experiencing the most adverse health, economic, and social effects through these five overarching strategies:
  - **Expanded availability of testing and treatment;**
  - Engaging sector and community leaders to **understand the unique situations facing residents most at risk;**
  - **Communicating with residents in various formats and in ways that are relevant to their life situations**
  - **Connecting residents to services and supports;** and
  - **Fostering cross-sector planning and partnerships,** recognizing no single agency or sector can handle this complex situation alone.

*A thought for  
moving  
forward...*

*Our  
community is  
only as healthy  
and strong as  
those most  
vulnerable.*

- While COVID-19 is a public health crisis, Fairfax County must confront it recognizing that **health is tied to the conditions that people live in and the opportunities they have** for housing, jobs, transportation, health care, and more.
- We must acknowledge that **social and economic conditions in the community are making some people more vulnerable** to the effects of the disease than others
- In implementing the critical public health mitigation strategies necessary to curb the spread of the virus and a phased reopening, we must also **work aggressively to ensure that we are reaching disproportionately impacted communities so that all residents are better prepared and resilient** in weathering the range of challenges that this pandemic has brought.