

Fairfax County Human Services Council

Community Engagement Sessions

Creating an opportunity for greater impact

Fairfax County Health, Housing and Human Services (HHHS) has long strived for a community where every individual can achieve his or her full potential. Yet, in many pockets of the county, the challenges to realizing this vision continue to remain deep and complex, resulting in inequities in economic and health outcomes.

In early 2020, the Fairfax County Human Services Council convened four community engagement meetings in the different human services regions. These meetings were coordinated by the Office of Strategy Management with support from Neighborhood and Community Services to identify community challenges and to understand the vulnerabilities of our county's residents through inequities in housing, child care, transportation and health care. Understanding these challenges, and how they influence respective health and human services needs is vital in the continuous effort to successfully identify gaps in services, effectively plan and coordinate efforts, and efficiently align programs and services that help maintain a thriving community for all residents.

The impact of COVID-19 has only exacerbated the circumstances for these individuals and reflects the critical need for policies and resources to support our residents.

Solutions require a comprehensive and collaborative approach. To change the trajectory of these trends and fully invest in the future, HHHS cannot do it alone.

These findings, along with the 2019 Health and Human Services Needs Assessment, are two of many initiatives that will be used to support and inform the countywide strategic planning efforts.

Fairfax County's strategic plan lays out a community-based vision for the next 10 to 20 years featuring strategies and metrics to advance that vision over the next 3 to 5 years.

Using the Countywide Strategic Plan as our framework, comments were categorized by the nine priority areas. The priority areas and a brief description of each can be found on the following page.



Community Engagement Sessions

Strategic Plan Priority Areas



Cultural and Recreational Opportunities

All residents, businesses and visitors are aware of and able to participate in quality arts, sports, recreation and culturally enriching activities.



Economic Opportunity

All people, businesses and places are thriving economically.



Effective and Efficient Government

All people trust that their government responsibly manages resources, provides exceptional services and equitably represents them.



Health and Environment

All people can attain their highest level of health and well-being within a healthy sustainable environment.



Housing and Neighborhood Livability

All people live in communities that foster safe, enjoyable and affordable living experiences.



Empowerment/Support for Residents Facing Vulnerability

All residents facing vulnerability are empowered and supported to live independent lives to their fullest potential.



Mobility and Transportation

All residents, businesses, visitors and goods can move efficiently, affordably and safely throughout the county and beyond via our well-designed and maintained network of roads, sidewalks, trails and transit options.



Safety and Security

All people feel safe at home, school, work and in the community.



Lifelong Education and Learning

All residents at every stage of life are taking advantage of inclusive, responsive and accessible learning opportunities that enable them to grow, prosper and thrive.

To learn more about the Fairfax County Strategic Plan, please visit:
Fairfaxcounty.gov/strategicplan

Community Engagement Sessions Findings

Four community engagement sessions held throughout the county allowed the HSC to interact with and hear feedback from 234 residents regarding Health, Housing and Human Services programs. The sessions were well attended with 97 participants from South County, 42 attendees from Ox Hill/West County and 95 participants from Heritage/East County.



The question posed to participants was:
What keeps you up at night?

Approximately 16 percent of comments received from participants stated that **Housing and Neighborhood Livability** were their top concern, followed by **Effective and Efficient Government** at 15 percent. Qualitative data was captured from the engagement sessions and categorized by the nine priority areas as developed by the county strategic plan. While the countywide strategic plan was paused due to COVID-19, the framework remains relevant to effectively plan and coordinate our efforts.



Community Engagement Sessions Comments

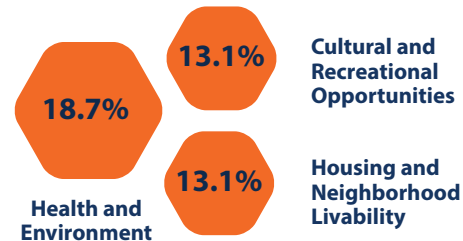
Annandale

Health and Environment was the top strategic plan priority area for the Annandale community engagement session at 18 percent.

"Implementation of mentoring programs that target youth and promote emotional wellness"

"Would like to receive help obtaining healthier food options"

"Need more community clinics accessible to economically disadvantaged communities"



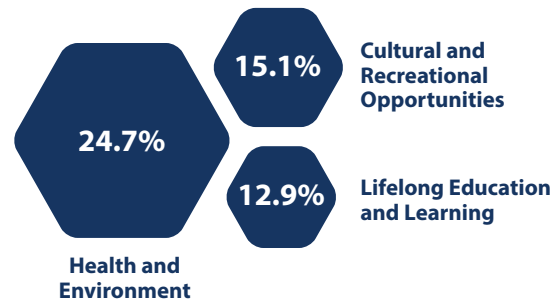
Ox Hill

Almost a quarter of all comments at the Ox Hill engagement session focused on the Health and Environment strategic plan priority area.

"There's not enough access to affordable healthcare providers"

"Need financial assistance for medications for low income people"

"More affordable healthcare for permanent residents over 65 years old"



South County

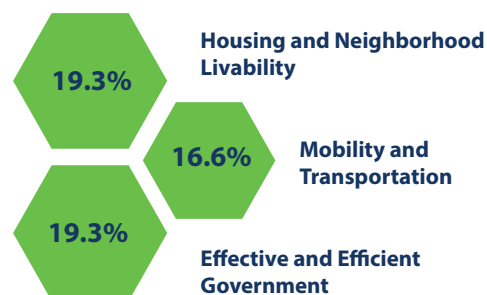
Top comments received from South County sessions were categorized into both the Housing and Neighborhood Livability and Effective and Efficient Government strategic plan priority area.

"Needs more affordable, quality homes for low income residents"

"There needs to be more community engagement within neighborhoods to discuss issues and concerns"

"Inequitable development and planning; too much gentrification"

"There is a lack of understanding what services are available and how to access them"



Community Engagement Sessions

Investing in Our Future

The community engagement sessions provided invaluable insight into the challenges and vulnerabilities our residents face throughout our community. Understanding these challenges and how they influence respective health, housing and human services needs is vital in the continuous effort to successfully identify gaps in services, effectively plan and coordinate efforts, and efficiently align programs and services that help maintain a thriving community for all residents.

What we can do:

- Share the findings with your neighbors, friends, members of your faith community, co-workers and others to increase awareness and help spur community dialogue.
- Follow the Fairfax County strategic planning efforts to learn about the priorities and how they impact our community.
- Read the Fairfax County Health and Human Services Needs Assessment and learn how Fairfax County and the needs of the community are changing.
- Identify and develop new partnerships to leverage resources, skills and knowledge.
- Bring together individuals from diverse backgrounds, experiences and disciplines to provide greater opportunities for social and economic mobility.
- Share information, expertise and resources through social media and other tools to collectively build solutions.

While we are currently in Phase 3 of this Community Engagement process, the Human Services Council remains committed to serving its community, facilitating transparency and addressing these challenges to improve outcomes for all who live, work and play in Fairfax County.

Community *Engagement* Process

