
CALENDAR YEAR 2022 EQUITY IMPACT PLAN

ANNUAL REPORT

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Department Name: Diversion First

Equity Lead(s): Lisa Potter

Date: December, 2022

EQUITY IMPACT PLAN REPORT

Review your department's Equity Impact Plan for CY 2022 at [Equity Impact Plans | Topics \(fairfaxcounty.gov\)](#). Using that plan, add 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 2022 Equity Impact Plan, report them. Add more goals as needed.

Goal 1: Review and analyze Diversion First data for equity

Goal 1 Progress:

Diversion First involves multiple County agencies, with numerous programs and services offered to people with mental illness, substance use disorder and/or developmental disabilities. Cross-system programs involve multiple agencies and data systems. Efforts have advanced in a number of areas to gather, analyze and review data specific to program metrics, to include disaggregated data. For example, disaggregated data for the Merrifield Crisis Response Center (MCRC) has provided information related to those transported by law enforcement for behavioral health services and diverted from potential arrest. In 2022, of those who were transported to the MCRC by law enforcement officers, rates of diversion were similar for individuals of all races. This is a metric that will be reviewed on an ongoing basis.

Diversion First partners continue to work closely with the Department of Information Technology to automate data collection and reporting processes. The Community Response Team's Referral App and business intelligence tool underwent significant revisions and will soon be completed. The recently launched Co-Responder Team has been collecting data, to include demographics and information about crisis response locations throughout the community, and this data is reviewed by a cross-system team on a monthly basis. The Merrifield Crisis Response Center data was also automated and includes data variables that are critical to applying an equity lens. Significant progress was made with the data warehouse, and data related to multiple agencies is included. This will allow for greater individual level and system level analysis. As Diversion First programming continues to grow and evolve, processes are developed at the onset to capture data, to include demographics, for all new programs.

The Data Quality and Outcomes workgroup is comprised of members of county agencies involved in Diversion First programming and operations, to include the Fairfax-Falls Church Community Services Board,

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Fairfax County Police Department, Sheriff's Office, Fire and Rescue, Public Safety Communications, Court Services and Department of Information Technology. The Diversion First Equity Impact Plan is reviewed in this workgroup, along with program specific data to help inform program operations and decision making. In addition, many programs hold monthly meetings where data, to include equity data, is routinely reviewed and discussed.

Data is collected for individuals who receive services at the Merrifield Crisis Response Center (MCRC). This includes individuals who "walk-in" for services, and those who are transported by law enforcement officers. Individuals who are transported by law enforcement may be under an emergency custody order, may have been diverted in lieu of potential arrest, or may have been identified in the community as possibly needing behavioral health services. Data for those served through the MCRC was analyzed by referral category (i.e., walk-in, police transport, police diversion) and by race and ethnicity. Data was also compared against the overall county population and the Community Services Board's service population.

Goal 2: Provide opportunities for more diverse community/stakeholder input and involvement in Diversion First

Goal 2 Progress:

The Diversion First Stakeholders Group includes community members and families who are interested in diversion efforts in our community, as well as county leadership and staff. Virtual meetings were held and provided an opportunity for community members to attend and provide input and feedback on current and future programs and services. In addition, multiple Diversion First workgroups were held, including the Diversion First Leadership Group, MCRC Executive Steering Group, Quality and Outcomes Group, and regularly scheduled program-level meetings to review operations, procedures and data. Group membership includes County leaders, managers and administrators and staff providing front line services.

Fairfax County was named a national Stepping Up Innovator County in 2019, and participates in a quarterly cohort meeting with other Innovator Counties. The group shares success, challenges and lessons learned related to diversion programs and services. The group also discusses diversion equity practices and opportunities for increased stakeholder engagement. In 2022, a cross-system team of County staff also participated in a Stepping Up Community of Practice (CoP), which was comprised on over 20 counties from jurisdictions across the country. Throughout the CoP, counties analyzed and presented data related to tracking prevalence indicators for individuals with behavioral health issues who are incarcerated. The focus on this CoP was collecting data on racial equity indicators, exploring practices and policies that impact racial equity, and sustaining progress. The CoP provided an opportunity to learn about best practices from other localities and increase understanding of equity strategies across the county.

In addition, County staff involved in Diversion First provided numerous presentations to community groups, were involved in a number of media requests and interviews, and hosted site visits for member

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of the Virginia Association of Counties. All of these events provided opportunities to increase knowledge and understanding of diversion efforts in the County, and increased stakeholder involvement.

In 2022, the County was one of three Counties selected by the Council of State Government (CSG) to present on the *Seven Years of Stepping Up Justice* Briefing webinar, highlighting counties' achievement of the past seven years, exploring emerging trends in the field, and charting a path forward for the national Stepping Up initiative. The webinar included the Directors/Presidents of the CSG Justice Center, U.S. Department of Justice-Bureau of Justice Assistance, National Association of Counties and American Psychiatric Association Foundation.

Diversion First programs increased the use of surveys to solicit input from individuals receiving services. This effort will continue in the coming year, with additional emphasis on opportunities for feedback. This process consists of both qualitative and quantitative data regarding the experience of individuals who receive services as well as their outcomes. In addition, program materials included images that are reflective of the County's diversity.

Diversion First partners agencies have their own department level Equity Action Plans, many of which involve staff training on diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI). In addition, a number of national organizations provide training/webinars on a variety of DEI webinars applicable to the population served, and many Diversion First stakeholders have attended training/national webinars to increase awareness, knowledge and skills for equitable service delivery with Diversion First populations. In addition, the County joined the International Co-Responder Alliance, which provides opportunities for networking for every level of profession involved in Co-Responder programs, educational opportunities related to crisis response, program development and program evaluation, and sharing innovative solutions, best practices, and promoting diverse co-response models.