



Department of Family Services (DFS) CY 2022 Equity Impact Plan

Leadership Sponsor: Michael A. Becketts, Department of Family Services Director

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Departmental Equity Guiding Statement: The Department of Family Services (DFS) is committed to addressing institutional racism in its core responsibility to support the safety, health and wellness of county residents. DFS recognizes systemic oppression and institutional racism have contributed to disparities in opportunities for county residents to succeed. DFS will support equitable outcomes by examining its policies, practices and procedures to eliminate disparities in service delivery and outcomes for county residents.

Context: The Department of Family Services unequivocally rejects racism, bigotry, and violence in all its forms, including the systemic racism directed at people of color which has been woven into the fabric of our policies, procedures, and practices. DFS further rejects the criminalization of people of color, both native-born and immigrant. Collectively, we speak up for everyone's right to physical and psychological safety, justice, and access to opportunity.

DFS strengthens the well-being of our diverse community by protecting and improving the lives of all children, adults, and families through assistance, partnership, advocacy, outreach, and quality services. We interact with and assist clients across all life domains with innumerable intersections.

DFS is utilizing the ADDRESSING framework (Hays, 2011) to move beyond one-dimensional conceptualizations of identity to an understanding of the complex, overlapping cultural influences that form each individual. The ADDRESSING framework enables us to better recognize and understand cultural influences as a multidimensional combination of **A**ge, **D**evelopmental and acquired **D**isabilities, **R**eligion, **E**thnicity and Racial Identity, **S**ocioeconomic status, **S**exual orientation, **I**ndigenous heritage, **N**ational origin, and **G**ender.

- **Age and Generational Influences** – includes not just chronological age, but also generational roles that are important in a person's culture. For example, the role of eldest son in many cultures carries specific responsibilities, just as being a parent, grandparent, or aunt brings with it culturally based meanings and purpose. Age and generational influences also include experiences specific to age cohorts, particularly experience that occurred during the cohort's childhood and early adulthood (i.e., the formative years).
- **Developmental or other Disability** – the broad category of disability includes disability that may occur at a time during a person's lifetime, for example, as a result of illness, accident, or stroke. Developmental disabilities are specifically those that affect a person's development from birth or childhood.
- **Religion and Spiritual Orientation** – In North America, the largest religious minority groups are Muslim, Jewish, Hindu, and Buddhist, and there are many small groups. Although some members of particular Christian religions (e.g., Mormon, Seventh-Day Adventist, Jehovah's Witness, and fundamentalist Christian) think of themselves as minority groups, they are still Christian groups and as such have privileges that non-Christian groups do not have. Similarly, some individuals with atheistic beliefs consider themselves part of a minority group; however, atheists still benefit from privileges related to the dominant sector.
- **Ethnicity and Racial Identity** – In the United States, the largest grouping of ethnic and racial minority cultures are Asian, South Asian, Pacific Islander, Latino, and African American. Also included are people who identify as biracial or multiracial and people of Middle Eastern heritage

who are experiencing racism and other oppressive attitudes and behaviors from the dominant culture. Within each of these large cultural groupings, there are many specific groups. The definition of these cultures as minority groups is specific to the United States; what constitutes a minority group depends on the country and its dominant culture.

- **Socioeconomic Status** – usually defined by education, occupation, and income. Includes people who have lower status because of limited formal education and the occupations and lower income that usually go along with less education. This focus is on people who are living in poverty, often in rural and inner-city areas.
- **Sexual Orientation** –includes people who identify as lesbian, gay, and bisexual. In the United States, sexual minority groups often use an acronym that includes additional groups, such as LGBTQIA (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, ally or asexual), but because some of these groups are more related to gender, they are grouped under the influence of gender identity.
- **Indigenous heritage** – people of Indigenous, Aboriginal, and Native heritage. As of 2018, Virginia has seven federally recognized Native Americans tribes. Native American residents make up a population. In our community, non- natives have more power and advantages over their native counterparts.
- **National Origin** –includes immigrants, refugees, and international students. Language is often a strong cultural influence related to national original, but it may also be related to the identity domains of ethnic and racial identity, Indigenous heritage, and disability.
- **Gender** –includes women and people of transgender, transsexual, intersex, gender questioning, androgyne, and other gender-nonconforming identities.

Using this intersectional approach to understand the complexity of individuals, we will work to evaluate policies, practices, procedures, and programs. Within the context of DFS's Equity Plan, it is critical that the value and strengths of the communities being served are a key factor when moving to implementation of any equity related strategy. Our communities are resilient and have unique strengths. As an agency, we are committed to working in partnership with communities across the county to achieve positive outcomes of economic opportunity, safety, health, and wellness.

The need to step into our mission, vision, and values is clear and leaders are making much-needed changes to focus on inclusion, making space and amplifying the voices of everyone in the workplace and community. There is an urgent need to increase the level of awareness and understanding of equity. Building capacity within the organization to ensure equity in all practices is a priority for DFS.

A review of DFS client demographics reveals that many clients fall into multiple groups that may be underserved or under-represented. While considering the context of disparities in our work, the DFS Equity team included the following areas to focus its Equity Impact Plan: the intersection of gender, socio-economic status, and age in the populations we serve.

The construct of masculinity in the United States indicates that men have certain qualities; specifically, they are providers and protectors for their families. When engaging with an organization like the Department of Family Services the typical social construct of masculinity is discordant with reasons that the man is engaged with the agency.

It is typical that, when in transaction with DFS, men are seeking supports like food assistance, employment assistance, caregiving assistance, services as a perpetrator of violence against others - intimate partners, children, and vulnerable adults. Seeking support from DFS or being required to work with DFS may conflict with the narrative of masculinity in our culture.

Contrary to this narrative, the services and supports offered by DFS is there to support wellness in families and with individuals. Accessing these services should be without shame or stigma as our services are to support resilience and self-sufficiency in families. Through our equity impact plan, we will consider how DFS can effectively shape our service delivery system to engage and support our male clientele.

While Fairfax County is one of the richest counties in the nation, many residents struggle with meeting basic needs such as food, healthcare, and housing. In 2017, 75,417 people lived below the poverty level. Of those, 49,128 were people of color.

While America long ago declared a “War on Poverty,” and billions have been invested to address these issues, poverty rates have barely budged. Over the last five years the median income in Fairfax County has increased greater than 10%, while poverty rates have remained constant at approximately 6%.

The current system penalizes individuals for making economic progress and does not provide strong enough outcomes. The “Benefits Cliff” is a well-documented phenomenon where low- income families lose eligibility for public assistance as their earned income increases.

By 2030, the number of adults older than 65 years of age is expected to increase to 72 million, boosting the aging population in this country to 20 percent, according to the U.S. Administration on Aging. In Fairfax County, the number of County residents aged 65 and up will increase to nearly 233,000 by 2035, a gain of 54 percent.

Dramatic growth in the older adult population brings both challenges and benefits. Older adults have disabilities and health problems. Many live alone, often in houses unsafe for their occupants. Those who can no longer drive may lose connections to friends and services. Some live on reduced incomes. Some become targets of criminal activity.

Thanks to improvements in health care and healthier lifestyles, people in their 50s, 60s, 70s, and 80s are living longer and better. They travel, they study, they volunteer, they start businesses. They use modern technologies. They engage with the arts. They patronize local restaurants and shops. They vote. With some social and physical supports, they can remain active in their communities for many years to come

Community members with disabilities face challenges accessing services that others would not face. As DFS engages in a review of policies, practices, procedures and programs, this aspect of our clients will be a focus to ensure equitable access.

DFS is a workforce that is compassionate toward everyone we are privileged to serve and work with. We recognize that if we are to make significant strides towards true equity and physical and psychological safety for our workforce and for every person we serve, there are operational changes and action steps that must be taken through the power of collective action. While we realize our individual efforts may be awkward and uncharted, DFS has long fought to secure equal footing for those we serve.

We intentionally hold-high the torch of equity, illuminating where we can do better; we have begun to earnestly integrate an equity lens into the foundation of our work. DFS is well-positioned to create and operationalize steps to reduce inequities and address systemic oppression which hampers the growth and wellbeing of our communities and has committed to collectively move the system away from its oppressive underpinnings.

Long-term Outcome(s):

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| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cultural and Recreational Opportunities | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Health |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Economic Opportunity | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Housing and Neighborhood Livability |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Efficient and Effective Government | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Lifelong Education and Learning |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Empowerment and Support for Residents Facing Vulnerability | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mobility and Transportation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Environment | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Safety and Security |

System-Level Infrastructure:

- Support from the Data Analytics Unit to disaggregate and analyze population specific data
- Support from Divisions' Business Analysts to collect and analyze population specific data
- Support from the Department of Human Resources regarding hiring
- Collaboration with the Commission on Aging to develop the 50+ Community Action Plan
- Collaboration with Department of Housing and Community Development to improve equitable approach to interdepartmental practices and services
- Collaboration with Health Department to improve equitable approach to interdepartmental practices and services
- Collaboration with Department of Neighborhood and Community Services to improve equitable approach to interdepartmental practices and services
- Collaboration with Fairfax-Falls Church Community Services Board to improve equitable approach to interdepartmental practices and services
- Collaboration with Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court to improve equitable approach to interdepartmental practices and services

DEPARTMENT OF FAMILY SERVICES CALENDAR YEAR 2022 EQUITY IMPACT PLAN

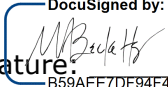
Goals	One Fairfax Area of Focus	Actions	Stakeholders	Timeline	Resources and Supports	Responsible Parties	Performance Measures
1. Implement Our Comprehensive Communication and Engagement Strategy to Increase Knowledge and Application of an Equity Lens	18	<p>1.1 Continue executing a multidimensional, values-driven campaign to educate and inform staff about equity and how it relates to our work.</p> <p>1.1.1 Use ADDRESSING and Values videos to educate and inform new and existing staff on the framework supporting the foundation of our equity work</p> <p>1.1.2 Launch an equity resource webpage for DFS staff to include a glossary of terms and other relevant resources</p> <p>1.1.3 Begin an Equity Book Club focused on collective action and the cost of institutional/structural racism</p> <p>1.1.4 Continue offering One Fairfax trainings and explore other DFS equity - related training</p>	All staff	Q1 – Q4 CY2022	DFS Equity Team, DFS Equity Leads, DFS SMT, DFS COMM Team, IT Team, and POD Team, County Equity Office	DFS Equity Team, DFS IT, DFS Professional and Organizational Development, all people in DFS with supervisory responsibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Pending measure</i> - percent of staff indicating strongly agree and agree on “I have a basic understanding of concepts related to racial equity” • Percentage of book club participants who can identify institutional racism as it relates to human services • Hold three sessions of One Fairfax or other DFS-related equity training. • Reviewed and updated Equity Impact Statement • Survey administered and results analyzed
		1.2 Evaluate the DFS Equity Impact Statement to ensure it aligns with DFS values	All staff	Q1 CY2022	DFS Equity Team, DFS Equity Leads, DFS SMT, DFS COMM Team	DFS Equity Team, TBD Equity Team Workgroup, DFS SMT	

		<p>1.3 Work with GARE and the One Fairfax office to conduct a survey of employee’s knowledge, skills, and experiences related to race and equity.</p>					
<p>2. Build Internal Capacity to Consider Equity in Decision Making and Planning</p>	<p>10,18</p>	<p>2.1 Use a values-driven approach to shaping the strategic work of the department to center on equity.</p> <p>2.1.1 Continue structured dialogue series with DFS SMT. Focus discussions on overarching issues in human services. Reflect on group learning and identify opportunities for change to policies and practice.</p> <p>2.1.2 Identify consultant services to establish strategic direction in focusing on Equity value and One Fairfax</p> <p>2.1.3 Use data collected from survey about employee’s knowledge, skills, and experiences related to race and equity to shape ongoing and emerging strategies.</p>	<p>All staff</p>	<p>Q1 – Q3 CY2022</p>	<p>DFS Equity Team, DFS SMT</p>	<p>DFS SMT and Program Managers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of DFS SMT and Program Managers demonstrating a deep level of understanding about barriers to opportunity and embedded racial inequities in their special area of focus—including critical data and information about how inequities are produced and how they can be reduced to impact positive outcomes for County residents serviced by DFS • <i>Pending measure</i> - percent of strongly agree and agree with the survey question “Leadership in DFS participates in and supports conversations about racial equity.”
		<p>2.2 Apply a racial equity analysis to decision making planning, policy, and practice</p> <p>2.2.1 DFS SMT to identify and pilot an equity analysis tool</p> <p>2.2.2 Establish a workgroup to examine the intersections of gender, race, and socio-economic status</p>	<p>All staff</p>	<p>Q2 – Q4 CY2022</p>	<p>DFS Equity Team, DFS SMT</p>	<p>DFS Equity Team, DFS SMT, Male Engagement Workgroup, CYF Workgroup, Equity Team/HR Workgroup</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • List of Equity related interview questions available to all DFS hiring managers

		<p>as it applies to outcomes and our service delivery system. Identify and implement more gender supportive engagement practices.</p> <p>2.2.3 Redesign child welfare group decision making to have more parity in Child Protective Services</p> <p>2.2.4 Develop the 50+ Community Action plan through an equity lens to propose initiatives</p> <p>2.2.5 Survey knowledge of Hiring Managers of Implicit Bias and examine hiring practices to ensure an equitable approach. Share equity related interview questions broadly to all DFS hiring managers.</p>					
<p>3. Interdepartmental Stakeholder Engagement to Identify Intersections and Improve Practices and Services</p>	10	<p>3.1 Partner with other departments with a similar customer base to map out common strategies for engaging County residents seeking supports from HHHS agencies</p> <p>3.1.1 Use an equity lens to analyze existing program partnerships and understand gaps to identify potential improvements</p>	All staff County HHHS Agencies	Q2 – Q4 CY2022	DFS Equity Team DFS SMT	DFS Equity Team, DFS SMT, DFS Managers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of interdepartmental practices and services identified for improvement
<p>4. Implement Economic Mobility Project to Support Low Income</p>	1	<p>4.1 Partner with county-wide Economic Mobility design teams to develop an implementation plan for the Guaranteed Basic Income (GBI) pilot initiative.</p>	County-wide Economic Mobility Committee	Q1 - Q3 CY 2022	County-wide Economic Mobility Design Committee,	DFS Leadership and PAES Implementation Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation planning team adapts an equity-focused project design

<p>Families with Pathways to Economic Opportunity</p>	<p>4.1.1 Participate in implementation planning process alongside Economic Mobility Design Teams</p>	<p>and County-wide Steering Committee</p>		<p>DFS Economic Mobility implementation planning group, Contracted design partner</p>		<p>framework into an implementation plan with high fidelity to a project design philosophy to “trust and invest” in low-income families’ abilities to make their own best decisions free from county-mandated compliance requirements</p>
	<p>4.1.2 Engage with community advisors (diverse residents living in targeted opportunity neighborhoods who have lived experience with poverty) and participating nonprofits in developing implementation plans</p>					
	<p>4.1.3 Hire and orient implementation project staff in the GBI initiative’s “trust and invest” approach to supporting participating beneficiary families</p>					
	<p>4.2 Develop a menu of voluntary and holistic economic mobility support services available to participating families, with new policies, processes and procedures that reflect the “trust and invest” project approach</p>					
	<p>4.3 Develop plans to collect qualitative and quantitative information in partnership with participating families to give voice to their experiences and to support and inform the broader learning agenda for the GBI pilot initiative</p>					

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Director’s Signature

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