

Office of Public Affairs CY 2022 Equity Impact Plan



Leadership Sponsor: Jeremy Lasich

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Departmental Equity Guiding Statement: The Office of Public Affairs is committed to communicating with residents and employees in a fair and equitable manner regardless of age, race, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, national origin, marital status, disability, socio-economic status, or other characteristics in six key areas:

- 1.) Customer Service
- 2.) Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)
- 3.) External Communications
- 4.) Internal (Employees) Communications
- 5.) Language Access.

Context:

The biggest issue we face is communicating with all segments of the population throughout all areas of our work. This includes those who are underserved by technological access. The majority of our external communications efforts are focused online, primarily using NewsCenter, the county's website and social media platforms, such as Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube and Nextdoor. However, there is a portion of the population who do not have access to these channels and therefore, do not see our messages. In addition, many people who do have the technological capabilities do not follow county government messages on social media or visit the county's website and news platforms.

This is also true for internal communications since most information is posted on FairfaxNet or sent via email, which not all field employees have access to on a regular basis.

It is important to have communication strategies that vary from high-technology to no-technology to reach all of the community, as many government services (such as paying taxes) affect all county residents regardless of race, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, etc. Our biggest challenge is making sure everyone sees those key messages. As the countywide communications office, we must also take the lead in working with other county agencies to make sure their programs and services are promoted in an equitable fashion as well. It is essential to comply with the county's accessibility standard section 508 standards, ensuring access for people with physical, sensory or cognitive disabilities.

As the County's central communications office, the Office of Public Affairs distributes messages every day in various methods. We have learned that our reach was limited to only those who follow us on our various online accounts. Therefore, our shift to implement new methods of disseminating information through networks connected to the community has helped us expand our reach and the impact of County programs.

By working with community leaders, ethnic media, county communicators, and outreach professionals, access to information is increased. As the central communication office, we are committed to continuing to lead and advise our internal and external partners to implement communication that is not one size fits all, but rather responds to the needs of communities.

The Office of Public Affairs will continue to be a resource for other communicators to ensure that the message reaches various populations and that the information is shared in the channels used by community members in a simple way, so that it is easy to understand or translate.

Long-term Outcome(s):

- Cultural and Recreational Opportunities
- Economic Opportunity
- Efficient and Effective Government
- Empowerment and Support for Residents Facing Vulnerability
- Environment
- Health
- Housing and Neighborhood Livability
- Lifelong Education and Learning
- Mobility and Transportation
- Safety and Security

System-Level Infrastructure: OPA will be working with DIT for Fairfax Website support. The FOIA team will be working with county-wide FOIA teams for input on different FOIA related forms & engagement with the public. As the work progresses, OPA will work with other agencies as needed.

OFFICE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS CALENDAR YEAR 2022 EQUITY IMPACT PLAN

Goals	One Fairfax Area of Focus	Actions	Stakeholders	Timeline	Resources and Supports	Responsible Parties	Performance Measures
1. Provide efficient customer service in an equitable and timely manner to all members of the public, Fairfax County employees, and elected officials.	15, 17, 18 (digital, non-digital access)	1a. Gather data and conduct a survey to determine why limited English proficiency persons contact 703Fairfax significantly less than English speakers.	County Language Vendor, Department of Information Technology, members, OPA, and members of the public.	Current – 12/2022	OPA, 703Fairfax Customer Service Team, Department of Information Technology, SurveyMonkey, survey material for outreach events, Public Information Officer's survey data, Conference rooms, Census, Microsoft Teams	703Fairfax Customer Service Team	1a. Survey results Number of over the phone translations Number of in-person translations Number of documents translated in languages other than English
		1b. Create guidelines for equitable customer service and provide to customer service staff.	Members of the public, customer service staff, OPA, County Language Vendor.	January 2021 – December 2022	Staff time to create the customer service guidelines. Financial support for translating the customer service guidelines	Customer Service Team	1b. Increase in the number of inquiries combined (phone, email & social media) from limited English proficiency individuals. 1c. Number of partnerships
		1c. Build, strengthen, and maintain partnerships with Fairfax County contact center	703Fairfax Customer Service Team, Office of Public Affairs, Public Information Officers, all	Current – 12/2022	Staff time, Microsoft Teams, contact center employees and supervisors	703Fairfax Customer Service Team	Number of Team Meetings

		employees and supervisors.	Fairfax County public service employees and supervisors.				
2. Improve engagement with the community through providing information and public records to all county residents.		2a. Continue to provide the FOIA request forms in multiple languages as the need arise/requested.	Fairfax County Agencies (CW FOIA Teams)	7/1/2021 – 6/30/2022	OPA FOIA Team DIT – update OPA webpage	OPA FOIA Team	Number of fee waivers
		2b. Seek input from CW FOIA teams on ideas of how to better engage with the community when submitting a FOIA request.	Fairfax County Agencies (CW FOIA Teams)	7/1/2021 – 6/30/2022	OPA FOIA Team County Wide FOIA Teams	OPA FOIA Team, County wide FOIA Teams	
		2c. Provide FOIA 101 training to the public when the opportunity is present.	Organizations and the Community	7/1/2021 - 6/30/2022	OPA FOIA Team	OPA FOIA Team	
3. Provide education and resources to county website publishers that the Fairfax County website (www.fairfaxcounty.gov) must be accessible to everyone and in compliance with the United States Access Board’s Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act.	15, 17	3a. Provide classroom training to website publishers on how to create accessible documents, especially PDFs.	County vendor OfficePro, Department of Human Resources, Department of Information Technology	Current – 12/2022	Classrooms, staff time, training materials	Digital Team	Percentage of websites that are 508-compliant
		3b. Provide general "Why Digital Accessibility Matters" training available online to all county employees and provide consultation to county staff on digital accessibility.	County vendor OfficePro, Department of Human Resources, Department of Information Technology	Current – 12/2022	Staff time, Employee U, training materials	Digital Team	Percentage of staff trained

		3c. Conduct ongoing audits of LinkCheck compliance reports, which identifies accessibility issues and broken links on the county's website.	Department of Information Technology	Current – 12/2022	Staff time, LinkCheck application	Digital Team	
		3d. Manage blog on FairfaxNet, which provides digital communications resources and guidance for county employees.	Department of Information Technology	Current – 12/2022	Staff time, FairfaxNet	Digital Team	
		3e. Develop and maintain a quarterly metrics report that will analyze public website data and highlight significant stats and trends.	Department of Information Technology	Current – 12/2022	Staff time, FairfaxNet, PowerPoint	Digital Team	
4. Facilitate a deeper understanding among all county employees as to why and how equity and inclusion are foundational priorities for Fairfax County.	17, 18	4a. Provide regular information and updates on the policy and work of One Fairfax, via Team Fairfax Insider and executive messaging to highlight the importance of these priorities and their application.	County Staff	Current – 12/2022	One Fairfax Staff, Team Fairfax Insider, NewsLink, Executive Messaging	OPA Internal Communications Team	Quarterly articles in Team Fairfax Insider exploring equity and inclusion, including examples of success. Biannual executive communications emphasizing the importance of a foundation of equity and inclusion in all county efforts.
		4b. Feature regular examples of "success" in action with regard to department and countywide goals to	County Staff	Current – 12/2022	One Fairfax Staff, Team Fairfax Insider, NewsLink, Executive Messaging	OPA Internal Communications Team	

		contextualize policy and illustrate paths to successful implementation					
<p>5. Update the county's Language Access Policy to reflect the current language access needs of our community.</p> <p>Develop templates and tools for County agencies to ensure timely and accurate communication and access to all individuals, regardless of national origin or English proficiency.</p> <p>Develop periodic trainings for Fairfax County.</p>	All	5a. To establish a mandate that is consistent with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, for Fairfax County to follow when providing services to, or interacting with, individuals who are limited English proficient.	County Staff and BOS	Current-12/2022	One Fairfax, Fairfax County Language Access Coordinators and the County Executive's office	OPA Language Access Strategy Manager	Update and publish a new Language Access Policy to reflect the needs of our community.
		5b. Develop a plan to inform county agencies and community partners about the policy.	Internal and external partners.	6/2022-ongoing	One Fairfax Staff, Team Fairfax Insider, NewsLink, Executive Messaging, Traditional and non-traditional media.	OPA Language Access Strategy Manager, Countywide Language Access Coordinators	Develop an outreach and communication plan to disseminate the updated policy internally and externally.
		5c. Develop a toolkit for Language Access Coordinators to help coordinate at the agency level.	County Staff	2/2022-Ongoing	Language Access Coordinators	OPA Language Access Strategy Manager	Create a Language Access Plan template, Procedures for Accessing Document Translation and Interpretation Services

	<p>5d. Establish guidelines for county agencies to develop language access plans based on their operational needs that will be updated annually.</p>	<p>County staff and SMT</p>	<p>6/2022-ongoing</p>	<p>One Fairfax and SMT</p>	<p>OPA Language Access Strategy Manager, Countywide Language Access Coordinators</p>	<p>Agency level language access plans.</p>
	<p>5e. Develop periodic training for Fairfax County on the county's language access policies, Title VI compliance, and cultural sensitivity.</p>	<p>County staff and SMT</p>	<p>6/2022-ongoing</p>	<p>One Fairfax, OD&T, Employee U, countywide Language Access Coordinators</p>	<p>OPA Language Access Strategy Manager, Countywide Language Access Coordinators</p>	<p>On-demand trainings.</p>

Director's Signature: _____

