

# Department of Code Compliance CY 2023 Equity Impact Plan



**Leadership Sponsor:** Gabriel M. Zakkak, Director, Department of Code Compliance

**Equity Lead(s):** Gabriel M. Zakkak and Elizabeth Perry

## **Departmental Equity Guiding Statement:**

To incorporate the core values of diversity, inclusion, and equity while serving and maintaining desirable neighborhoods through education, community partnerships, voluntary compliance, and enforcement.

To create a workplace where all employees, regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation or identity, education, or disability, are and feel valued and respected.

## **Context:**

The Department of Code Compliance (DCC) Vision is “to be a leader in the preservation and protection of healthy and desirable neighborhoods”. It is a high priority of the department to educate citizens on the applicable county codes to ensure the safety of residents, protect communities, provides safe home and workplace conditions.

One of the largest challenges for the agency is achieving an effective level of outreach and education to all county residents. Many citizens still do not know exactly what DCC does, why we enforce codes, which codes we enforce, and why code enforcement can help save lives and improve neighborhood livability. In fact, many citizens are unaware of the many life safety issues they may have unintentionally created in their own homes through code violations. The agency has an extensive website to provide information, but many citizens do not or cannot visit the website to obtain this information. One of the issues causing this may be a language barrier, as our information is mostly presented in English. Also, as DCC investigations are initiated on a compliant basis, citizens may not seek our resources until they are subject to an investigation. Our intake staff is communicating through e-mail or telephone conversations, and our investigative staff are working with citizens in the field while addressing complaints, but we may not be achieving the outreach and education necessary to educate a majority of the county citizens on how to comply with code in order to ensure a safe community, with or without being subject to a complaint or investigation, and how to prevent violations. In addition, our staff may need to become more aware of equity issues so that they are better able to identify when there may be associated barriers to obtaining compliance from citizens and how to address them.

## **Long-term Outcome(s):**

- |                                                                                     |                                                                         |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cultural and Recreational Opportunities                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Health                                         |
| <input 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 type="checkbox"/> Empowerment and Support for Residents Facing Vulnerability | <input type="checkbox"/> Mobility and Transportation                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Environment                                                | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Safety and Security                 |

## **System-Level Infrastructure:**

Human Resources is important in the hiring processes of new staff, and in efforts to allow all staff to grow on a personal and professional level and to maintain consistent staffing levels to support our mission, including implementation of the equity action plan in the following areas: DPD; Zoning Ordinance, LDS; Unpermitted Construction, FCPD; Illegal activity; DPWES; Stormwater; DCC; Virginia Maintenance Code.

## DEPARTMENT OF CODE COMPLIANCE CALENDAR YEAR 2023 EQUITY IMPACT PLAN

Goals	One Fairfax Area of Focus	Actions	Stakeholders	Timeline	Resources and Supports	Responsible Parties	Performance Measures
1. To capitalize on opportunities to engage in outreach efforts on the importance of code and safety requirements.	11	1a. Engage in all available opportunities to provide outreach to communities through our own efforts and through other county agencies.	DPD, LDS, OPA, FMD, BOS	Ongoing	County Agencies	Management Analyst II	Monitor and track the number of outreach events conducted in 2023 to ensure that outreach efforts from previous years have increased.
		1b. Edit our Notice of Violations to provide appointments or services for assistance if recipients are unable to read the letter contents.	DCC/OPA	Complete before year end	Supervisors	Management Analyst II	Query DCC Leadership Team Supervisors for an estimate on current number of requests for appointments or services; and  Monitor and track the number of requests for appointments or services for assistance regarding responsible parties unable to read letter contents in 2023.
		1c. Provide educational videos on DCC website of other languages to explain the agency's services.	DCC	Ongoing	DIT Channel 16	DCC Equity Team	
2. Provide more regular DCC staff engagement opportunities and awareness on equity issues.	17	2a. Apply an "equity lens" to departmental All Hands meeting topics to demonstrate to staff how the things we do every day and how we do them can advance equity.	DCC	Ongoing	DCC Equity Team	Management Analyst II	Monitor and track the amount of training provided on or linked to equity. The goal is to have a minimum of three equity trainings at departmental All Hands meetings during 2023.
		2b. Provide DCC staff updates on Equity Impact Plan progress throughout the year and opportunities to be involved in implementation.	DCC	Ongoing	DCC	DCC Equity Team	Collect feedback from staff on training and experiences to gauge areas of interest, ways in which staff is identifying and/or addressing equity-related issues in their work,

		2c. Provide training to staff on the topic of equity.	DCC	Ongoing	DCC	DCC Equity Team	and the scope of training needs.  Identify trainings, informational videos, activities and other resources to make available to staff.
<b>3. Evaluate all requests for legal action.</b>	17/7	3a. Work with OCA and the Building Official to determine acceptable discretionary guidelines to follow before requesting legal action.	OCA, LDS, DCC	Complete before years end.	DCC	DCC Equity Team	Track the amount of litigation requests and compare to prior years to ensure number is decreasing. The goal is to keep citizens out of the court system and obtain voluntary compliance more regularly.

Director's Signature:                     *Gabriel Zakkak*                     03/09/2023 | 06:58:57 EST