

Fairfax County Public Library CY 2023 Equity Impact Plan



Leadership Sponsor: Jessica Hudson, Library Director

Equity Lead(s): Kevin Osborne

Departmental Equity Guiding Statement: The Fairfax County Public Library (FCPL) demonstrates its commitment to racial and social equity by building community and promoting literacies for all through programming, community spaces, technologies, and collections of educational and recreational resources; and making all policy decisions within an equity framework.

Context: In the recent past public libraries across the U.S. have worked to promote equity in many ways, including reviewing policies through an equity lens to reduce barriers to service and better serve traditionally marginalized communities, eliminating overdue fines to reduce barriers to services, auditing fiction collections to improve representation of traditionally marginalized communities, and recruiting and hiring staff who mirror the communities served. As part of the larger public library community, FCPL has modified its policies and launched new initiatives to increase equity.

Throughout 2020, FCPL held virtual racial justice programs for the public and FCPL staff. Past celebrations of cultural and heritage months in FCPL have been branch decisions. In late 2020, a staff-led Diversity and Inclusion in Programming work group identified celebrations of traditionally marginalized communities that would be celebrated throughout FCPL in 2021: Black History, Asian American and Pacific Islander, Pride, and Hispanic American months. FCPL received some complaints about Pride displays as well as significant complaints about a drag storytime that was presented in partnership with the McLean Community Center during Pride month.

In September 2021, the Fairfax County Library Board of Trustees voted to eliminate overdue fines on most library materials. This decision, which was implemented in January 2022, had a significant equity impact by encouraging people who had stopped using FCPL for fear of accruing fines to return to FCPL.

In 2022 in support of our community and the county's One Fairfax initiative, FCPL continued to expand its collection to better reflect the community's demographics. The collection includes more world languages and books from authors who reflect the county's rich diversity of ancestry, traditions and lived experiences.

Offering a broad collection is a challenge. Curators have long faced a dearth of published materials that reflect our nation's population. Between 1950 and 2000, Black and other novelists of color represented only 10% of all book reviews, less than 2% of U.S. best-sellers and 9% of U.S. literary prize winners.

Librarians faced an unprecedented number of book challenges in 2022. Across the U.S. and in Virginia the most targeted books were by or about Black or LGBTQ+ persons. Opponents of freedom of access in Virginia recently went so far as to propose book burnings. Several library systems nationwide have been defunded and effectively shuttered by censors.

Locally we have seen challenges to public school collections, complaints about book displays and vehement opposition to speakers addressing antiracism. Several books have been legally challenged by censors as “obscenity,” in an attempt to rendering them illegal thus making them impossible to access anywhere in the state, even through private purchase.

Long-term Outcome(s):

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|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cultural and Recreational Opportunities | <input type="checkbox"/> Health |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Economic Opportunity | <input 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 type="checkbox"/> Safety and Security |

System-Level Infrastructure:

FCPL will continue to message to the public about our elimination of late fees which enables more access to materials for users with fewer financial resources. FCPL will also work with the Department of Procurement and Material Management to work with small vendors/publishers to increase collection diversity.

FAIRFAX COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY CALENDAR YEAR 2023 EQUITY IMPACT PLAN

Goals	One Fairfax Area of Focus	Actions	Stakeholders	Timeline	Resources and Supports	Responsible Parties	Performance Measures
1. Increase diversity in FCPL's management and leadership positions	3, 16, 17	1a. Mentor current staff for management and leadership positions.	FCPL frontline staff, FCPL managers, FCPL's Organizational Development office	ongoing	FCPL staff and time	Branch managers	# additional staff prepared for management and leadership positions
		1b. Encourage staff to obtain MLS, including accommodations in work schedules.	FCPL frontline staff, FCPL managers	ongoing	FCPL staff and time	Branch managers	# staff enrolled in MLS programs
		1c. Publicize available scholarship funds.	FCPLEA members, Fairfax Library Foundation (FLF) staff, FLF Board, FCPL's Organizational Development office	ongoing	FCPL and FLF staff and time	FCPL leadership, FLF Scholarship committee, FCPL's Organizational Development office	#scholarships received by FCPL staff
		1d. Attend UMD, Catholic Univ. and ODU career fairs.	Library Human Resources, FCPL staff	depends on fair dates	FCPL staff and time	Library Human Resources staff	
2. Improve diversity in FCPL's collection to better mirror the diversity in Fairfax County and	18	2a. Continue building tools to evaluate the diversity of FCPL's material collection.	FCPL Collection Services staff, Ebsco and Gale staff	ongoing	FCPL, Ebsco, and Gale staff time. Money if/when Ebsco and Gale tools are available for purchase.	FCPL Collection Services staff	% BIPOC titles in Picture Book collection Baseline # diverse books in

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the City of Fairfax		2b. Conduct audits of FCPL's collection, section by section.	FCPL Collection Services staff, FCPL staff, Ebsco and Gale staff	when reliable tools are available	FCPL staff and time, Ebsco and Gale tools	FCPL Collection Services staff	measured collection areas
		2c. Purchase quality materials to fill identified deficiencies, as available.	FCPL Collection Services staff	ongoing	FCPL staff time and FCPL Collection collection money; Services staff access to Ebsco and Gale tools	2c. Purchase quality materials to fill identified deficiencies, as available.	Baseline % diverse books in measured collection areas
		2d. Continue to review selection criteria for implicit biases and correct as needed.	FCPL Collection Services staff	ongoing	FCPL staff and time FCPL Collection Services staff	2d. Continue to review selection criteria for implicit biases and correct as needed.	
3. Equip facilities with the necessary infrastructure and supplies to support the needs of a diverse population.	8, 10, 17	3a. Ensure there is a diaper changing table in every public restroom.	FCPL staff	ongoing	FCPL staff and time	FCPL leadership, FCPL's Facilities staff	# changing tables in all public restrooms
		3b. Provide free menstrual products in all public restrooms.	FCPL staff	ongoing	FCPL staff and time	FCPL leadership, FCPL's Facilities staff, FCPL's FSD	# menstrual products in public restrooms

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		3c. Ensure a waste can in all public restroom stalls.	FCPL staff	ongoing	FCPL staff and time	FCPL leadership, FCPL's Facilities staff, FCPL's FSD	#trash cans in restroom stalls
		3d. Provide disposable water cups in restrooms.	FCPL staff, FCPL's Facilities staff, FCPL's FSD	ongoing	FCPL staff and time	FCPL leadership,	
4. Administer the GARE Employee Racial Equity Survey to assess staff awareness of equity principles and initiatives within the county.	3, 10, 17	4a. Distribute the GARE survey to all staff with an explanation of the purpose.	FCPL frontline staff, FCPL managers, FCPL Administration	Feb 8 – Feb 28	FCPL staff and time	All staff	# all staff complete survey on time
		4b. Analyze staff responses by job class and identify areas for improvement	FCPL frontline staff, FCPL managers, FCPL Administration	May 1- June 30	FCPL staff and time	FCPL equity Lead, FCPL Administration, FCPL Organizational Development coordinator	# Areas for improvement and education identified
		4c. Implement training targeting knowledge gaps.	FCPL frontline staff, FCPL managers, FCPL Administration FCPL's Organizational Development office	ongoing	FCPL staff and time	FCPL equity Lead, FCPL Administration, FCPL Organizational Development coordinator	# Staff awareness of racial equity initiatives in the library and in the county increases

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Director's Signature:


