

Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court CY 2023 Equity Impact Plan



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Departmental Equity Guiding Statement:

For more than 10 years, the Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court (JDRDC), in collaboration with other justice system stakeholders, has worked to reduce the overrepresentation of people of color in the justice system and ensure equitable treatment for all people encountering the Court. Despite this, racial and ethnic disparities continue to exist. JDRDC remains committed to addressing the overrepresentation of people of color in the justice system through intentional efforts to consider equity in our decision making and eliminate or change policies and practices resulting in unintended consequences. However, these changes will only take us so far. Ultimately, a systems approach is necessary to address the root cause issues and other social determinants occurring upstream of the Court, contributing to racial and ethnic disparities in the justice system. We will continue to work side by side with other agencies and justice system stakeholders to further identify and address root causes.

Context:

Despite long term efforts in criminal justice reform over the past 10 years, large inequities still exist at all contact points within our system. While national crime rates have increased 5% since 2019, they are still 47% lower than their peak height in 1991. Additionally, Black/African Americans continue to account for a disproportionate number of violent offenses (44%) in 2021, despite them only making up 13.6% of the total US population. Furthermore, white offenders account for a similar rate of all violent offenses at 43%, yet make up 75.8% of the population¹. Similarly, juvenile delinquency cases processed by the courts decreased for all racial groups and by 56% overall in 15 years between 2005 and 2019. However, the case rate for Black youth was three times the delinquency case rate per 1,000 juveniles for American Indian, White, and Hispanic youth. Even with an overall decrease in juvenile delinquency cases, the proportion of delinquency cases involving Black and Hispanic youth increased between 2005 and 2019².

Following national trends, Fairfax County continues to see long-term decreases in overall adult and juvenile crime rates; however, there was a small increase in property crimes

¹ Data Source: FBI Uniform Crime Reports. Retrieved from [FBI — Offenses Known to Law Enforcement](#)

² Data Source: OJJDP. (2019). Juvenile Court Statistics, 2019. Retrieved from [jcs2019c1.indd \(ojjdp.gov\)](#). Most recent data from OJJDP on juvenile statistics is from 2019.

between 2019 and 2020³. Over the past year, juvenile cases continue to be below average partly due to the COVID-19 pandemic and associated policy and practice changes, though there was a very slight 3% increase in juvenile complaints from last year. However, Hispanic and Black youth continue to make up a disproportionate percent of cases, representing 27% and 10% of the youth in Fairfax compared to 48% and 32% of juvenile cases respectively⁴.

A specific subset of offenses continues to be of concern among JDRDC's population. Following along with other national trends indicating an increase in drug abuse violations⁵, probation officers report that substance use and abuse, including the use of opioids, continues to be an issue for many JDRDC clients. Locally, in Fairfax, challenges exist accessing some Court ordered substance abuse and mental health services for adult clients who are uninsured or underinsured and don't meet the Community Services Board (CSB) priority population guidelines for treatment or services. Many private providers do not accept insurance. Paying out of pocket for services is not always an option for clients, especially those with less income, which disproportionately tend to be people of color.

Overall JDRDC has a diverse workforce, with staff of different races, ethnicity, and gender, represented at all levels of the agency. However, we continue to recognize the importance of our workforce being reflective of our client population. Finally, we continue to work on ways to improve our recruitment, hiring, promotion, and retention of minority staff to better reflect the client population we serve.

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:

JDRDC will continue working with and collaborating with other Fairfax County agencies to identify opportunities for earlier intervention and diversion away from formal justice system involvement and reduce racial and ethnic disparities. Central to this effort is Fairfax County

³ As reported in the [FCPD Annual Statistical Report](#).

⁴ Data source: JDRDC 2022 Annual Report. (Forthcoming).

⁵ Data Source: FBI Drug Abuse Violations – Uniform Crime Reports.

Public School (FCPS), Fairfax County Police Department (FCPD), Neighborhood and Community Services (NCS), and the CSB.

Additionally, JDRDC and DFS are continuing to work together to address and implement a process for youth involved in the child welfare system and juvenile justice for earlier identification and intervention to prevent justice system involvement. Statistically, youth encountering the welfare system are more likely to be involved with the juvenile court for delinquency.

This year, as a gang prevention initiative, JDRDC staff partnered with NCS staff to create an innovative summer employment program focused on court involved youth who had restitution judgements against them. The program participants were given the skills needed obtain employment and learn to make better choices in their everyday lives. The stipends they earned through the program enabled them pay partial or full restitution to their victims through their work experience without incurring fees for missed payments. This endeavor included collaboration with the Clerk's Office for the purposes of distributing restitution payment. We hope this partnership will be an example of future programming that can come from true collaboration.

This year should conclude a probation system review of the adult side of our system. JDRDC partnered with George Mason University researchers for this project. This project will allow external researchers to work with the JDRDC Leadership Team to create a process map by analyzing interfaces, handoffs, bottlenecks, and other case flow issues in the processing of criminal justice system cases. In addition, the researchers will review documents available including various practice manuals, statistical reports, program descriptions and reports, and court and probation practice forms to review the mission, vision, strategies, policies, and procedures. Individual interviews, group interviews and focus groups with key stakeholders, leadership, and employees will solicit expertise on current processes/practices and determine their views about the efficiencies and challenges of operation of the Fairfax County adult probation. It is hoped that this review will allow our agency to provide better and more equitable outcomes for the adult clients we serve.

JUVENILE AND DOMESTIC RELATIONS DISTRICT COURT CALENDAR YEAR 2023 EQUITY IMPACT PLAN

Goals	One Fairfax Area of Focus	Actions	Stakeholders	Timeline	Resources and Supports	Responsible Parties	Performance Measures
1. Increase access to substance abuse and mental health services	6, 7, 10	1a. The Racial and Ethnic Disparities (RED) team will collect data on the number of adult clients served by JDRDC in need of substance abuse/mental health assessment and services through new, uniform data collection document.	Directors of Adult CSU programs, Research, RED team	2023	Staff, time	RED team, Research, Unit Supervisors of JDRDC adult programs	<p>% of clients this data was collected for</p> <p>% of clients who received MH/SA services (Data measure pending)</p> <p>% of clients in need of MH/SA services, however unable to access (Data measure pending)</p>
		1b. To explore gaining access to the Department of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS) and Virginia Alcohol Safety Action Program (VASAP) data systems for further data gap analysis on adults in need of MH/SA services served by JDRDC.	Research, Community Corrections Unit and Alcohol Safety Action Program Directors, DCJS, VASAP	2023	Staff, time	Unit Supervisors of JDRDC adult programs, RED team, Research	% of clients with MH/SA needs (Data measures pending)

Goals	One Fairfax Area of Focus	Actions	Stakeholders	Timeline	Resources and Supports	Responsible Parties	Performance Measures
2. Ensure the JDRDC workforce reflects the population we serve	10, 16	2a. Build relationships with HBCUs and community colleges in Fairfax County.	Local Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), HR, JDRDC SMT	2023	Staff, time	HR, RED team, Volunteer/Intern coordinator	% of colleges/universities in the local DMV area that we've built professional relationships with for recruitment
		2b. Develop a hiring managers checklist with the assistance of JDRDC HR staff to include the expectation of panel members reviewing the implicit bias bench card together.	Hiring managers, HR, JDRDC SMT	January-March 2023	Staff, time	HR, RED team	% of interview panels who completed review of the implicit bias bench card
3. Apply an equity lens to both new and existing JDRDC policies, practices, and programming	7, 10	3a. Implement the new process of equity lens review.	JDRDC staff, client population we serve	January-June 2023	Staff, time	JDRDC SMT, RED team	#of equity lens reviews completed % of recommendations followed

Director's Signature: R. Matt Thompson
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