



Office of Environmental and Energy Coordination CY 2023 Equity Impact Plan

Leadership Sponsor: Susan Hafeli

Equity Lead(s): Kate Daley

Departmental Equity Guiding Statement:

The Office of Environmental and Energy Coordination (OEEC) develops and implements environmental, energy and climate policies, plans and programs to ensure a sustainable environment for current and future generations of Fairfax County residents. The OEEC's work is guided by both the One Fairfax Policy and the county's Environmental Vision, which states that everyone living and working in the county, "no matter what income, age, gender, ethnicity, or address... has a need and right to breathe clean air, to drink clean water and to live and work in a quality environment." In carrying out these objectives, the OEEC strives to ensure its plans and programs reflect the diverse needs of the Fairfax County community, are implemented equitably, and help reduce disparities for our vulnerable and historically underserved populations.

Context:

The OEEC was established in July 2019 to lead the cross-organizational development and implementation of the county's environmental, energy, and climate policies and programs by coordinating and engaging with county agencies, authorities, businesses, and residents. The OEEC's work is focused on the community and county government operations. Regarding the former, the OEEC is overseeing various plans and programs, including implementation of the Community-wide Energy and Climate Action Plan (CECAP) and Resilient Fairfax, to address climate change and its various impacts. Such plans and programs are expected to result in cross-cutting environmental, economic and social benefits for those living and working in the county, particularly vulnerable and underserved populations.

Over the past two years, in coordination with an interdepartmental team with over 20 county agencies, community members, and representatives from local infrastructure and utility groups, the OEEC collected and analyzed data to determine our most climate vulnerable populations. This data, along with federal and local mapping tools, such as those developed under the Justice40 Initiative or the county's Vulnerability Index, are being used by the OEEC to determine where to focus its programs and initiatives to best meet the needs of marginalized, underserved or overburdened populations. These mapping tools are used in the decision-making process when determining where to implement community-wide programs and initiatives (e.g. HomeWise, Charge Up Fairfax, or the Fairfax County Tree Canopy Program) and the degree of support needed for program participants. Mapping tools are also used to develop targeted programs or initiatives to provide direct support to marginalized, underserved, or overburdened populations. For instance, the OEEC is currently working with Neighborhood and Community Services (NCS), the Faith Alliance for

Climate Solutions (FACS), and other partners to seek and implement federal funding to develop a resilience hub in a climate vulnerable community in the county.

Targeted intervention in these communities can ensure that everyone in the county is able to help us realize a carbon neutral future and the numerous economic, social and environmental benefits that will result. However, the success of such programs and initiatives depends on feedback, buy-in and active engagement with residents, businesses and organizations within these communities to determine specific needs, barriers to action and paths forward. While the OEEC has been working to establish meaningful partnerships with relevant internal and external entities, engagement with our more vulnerable communities, through both in-person events and virtual educational and outreach opportunities, continues to be limited. Developing and implementing strategies to increase these engagement levels remains a top priority for the office in 2023.

Turning to the county government work, the OEEC oversees implementation of the Operational Energy Strategy to reduce the environmental impact of county operations and help meet the county's goal of energy carbon neutrality by 2040. The OEEC also oversees an employee engagement group, Fairfax Employees for Environmental Excellence (FEEE), to foster a culture of sustainability within the workforce and raise awareness about pertinent environmental initiatives. As it relates to equity, FEEE's role is two-part: FEEE can offer resources and a source of connection for those working on equity within the county, particularly as it relates to the environment; and by increasing its reach within the workforce, FEEE can help ensure a sustainable, healthier working environment for all county employees. FEEE is continuing its efforts to expand its resource and learning opportunities and engage a more diverse representation of the employee workforce in 2023.

Long-term Outcome(s):

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

System-Level Infrastructure:

- Implementing inclusive community engagement strategies to increase buy-in, feedback and engagement on the office's climate action programs and initiatives within vulnerable communities will require cross-organizational coordination to access shared resources, identify teaming opportunities and develop consistent messaging. Coordination is likely to include the Office of Public Affairs, Health and Human Services (e.g., Neighborhood and Community Services), Department of Public Works and Environmental Services and other agencies operating within the environmental realm.
- As the OEEC develops new climate action programs and initiatives, it will draw from the cross-sector strategies and recommendations included in CECAP and Resilient Fairfax, which will require input and coordination from other county agencies working

within those sectors (e.g., transportation, waste, and natural resources) to identify and leverage existing initiatives, partnerships, and equity considerations.

- As the OEEC continues to work with vulnerable communities to implement its climate action programs and initiatives, it is likely to identify specific barriers to action that will require legislative fixes in the Virginia General Assembly. As specific barriers are identified, the OEEC will work with the Government Relations team within the Office of the County Executive and other relevant county agencies to discuss paths forward.

OFFICE OF ENVIRONMENTAL AND ENERGY COORDINATION CALENDAR YEAR 2023 EQUITY IMPACT PLAN

Goals	One Fairfax Area of Focus	Actions	Stakeholders	Timeline	Resources and Supports	Responsible Parties	Performance Measures
1. Increase and promote language access to OEEC resources	11, 12	1a. Convene a cross functional team to identify and define officewide language access needs and required resources.	OEEC; OPA and other agencies to be consulted on an as-needed basis	January – December 2023	Staff time	OEEC Language Access Team; Equity Lead to report on progress.	# of resources translated, # of views, downloads or distributions of translated resources % of requests accommodated for translation services
		1b. Team to develop an OEEC-specific Language Access Plan with internal goals, processes, and guidance for staff.	OEEC; OPA and other agencies may be consulted for best practices	January – December 2023	Staff time, resources for contractual support (as needed)	See above.	# of individuals with access to OEEC’s educational and outreach materials as a result of translations
2. Develop and leverage partnerships to expand community engagement opportunities	11, 12	2a. Explore existing community engagement opportunities within the county to identify teaming opportunities for education and outreach events.	OEEC, FEEE, CECAP Coordinating Team, Resilient Fairfax Planning Team, other cross-departmental groups	January – December 2023	Staff time	OEEC	Engagement rates over time: # of events held, # of individuals/ organizations reached by geography and population Development of meaningful connections: Of those reached, how many returned to us for more information?
3. Integrate equity considerations into FEEE	11, 12	3a. Identify and implement new promotion opportunities for FEEE (e.g., new employee orientation).	OEEC/NVSWCD (FEEE co-leads), FEEE members, HR	January – December 2023	Staff time	OEEC Equity Lead	Member size, retention and representation: # of employees, types of agencies represented in membership at beginning vs. end of year
		3b. Ensure FEEE educational resources address and reflect environmental justice and equity issues.	OEEC/NVSWCD (FEEE co-leads), FEEE members	January – December 2023	Staff time	OEEC Equity Lead	Resource development and influence: # of equity-focused resources developed, member feedback on usefulness of resource(s)

		3c. FEEE to develop and host an event in 2023 focused on equity and/or environmental justice.	OEEC/NVSWCD (FEEE co-leads), FEEE members	January – December 2023	Staff time	OEEC Equity Lead	
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Director's Signature:  (Acting Director)
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