
EQUITY IMPACT PLAN ANNUAL REPORT CALENDAR YEAR 2024

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Department Name: Department of Information Technology (DIT)

Equity Lead(s): Michelle Breckenridge

Date: November 27, 2024

EQUITY IMPACT PLAN REPORT

DEPARTMENTAL GOALS

Review your department's Equity Impact Plan for CY 2024 at [Equity Impact Plans | Topics \(fairfaxcounty.gov\)](#). Add each departmental goal below and describe: 1) what was done to make progress toward the goal, 2) with whom (partners), and 3) how work toward this goal was measured/evaluated and the results. If you have data for the performance measures listed in your CY 2024 Equity Impact Plan, report them. Add more goals as needed.

Goal 1: Maximize Broadband/Wi-Fi availability for underserved communities (i.e., Black and Hispanic Communities).

Goal 1 Progress: A significant amount of high-level work on the Broadband/Wi-Fi Access topic has taken place in 2024. On June 4, 2024, at the Board's Information Technology Committee meeting, a detailed Digital Equity Update was provided. Members of DIT's Equity Partners group provided logistical support in advance of the Board IT Committee presentation. The presentation is available here:

https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/boardofsupervisors/sites/boardofsupervisors/files/Assets/Documents/PDF/Fairfax-County-Digital-Equity-Action-Presentation_FINAL.pdf

DIT staff, in collaboration with One Fairfax and the Countywide Digital Equity Coordination Team, worked with Guidehouse and the State Broadband Office to finalize the overall *Digital Equity Action Plan*. On a high level, DIT is moving forward on the *Digital Equity Action Plan* initiatives in Fairfax County's 5-Year Roadmap to ensure that all Fairfax County residents have the resources and skills to participate and thrive in digitally connected communities. DIT's Geographic Information Systems (GIS) team worked with the Department of Cable and Consumer Service (DCCS), and Guidehouse to support the county's BEAD (Broadband Equity Access and Deployment) Program challenge and *Digital Equity Action Plan* development. GIS developed interactive visualization tools for these datasets and the results of that analysis were presented to the Digital Equity Coordination Team in early February.

DIT has worked within county facilities to increase Wi-Fi access through external hotspots (Wi-Fi Protected Setups, WPS). DIT's Network and Infrastructure team worked with Neighborhood and Community Services' (NCS) management team to complete a project that provides free outdoor internet access over Wi-Fi at 26 NCS locations. The Business Systems Division of DIT is currently working to add payment kiosks in four locations to allow taxpayers to pay bills

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outside of the Government Center, using cash, checks, and credit cards. This will reduce the need for constituents to travel to the Government Center. Two of those locations will offer expanded 24/7 access and accommodate county residents with the ability to pay by cash at remote locations. The launch is anticipated by early January 2025 to finalize the configuration and receive delivery.

Going forward, DIT will continue to partner with the Countywide Digital Equity Coordination Team to identify additional needs and partnerships to advance digital equity. Through these collaborative efforts, we will work to identify, prioritize, and execute the next steps of the *Plan*.

Goal 2: Promote IT careers for high school students from historically marginalized or underrepresented racial or ethnic groups.

Goal 2 Progress: DIT's Equity Impact High School Internship Program was a highlight for DIT and a primary focus for DIT's Equity Partners in CY 2024. The Internship Program's aim is to bridge the racial representation gap in IT careers by providing Fairfax County high school students with paid internships and valuable exposure to technology careers. To continue to expand and enhance the reach and effectiveness of the Internship Program, significant time and effort was invested in three key objectives this year:

1. **Strategic Partnership Development:** Supporting DIT's efforts in actively seeking students from historically marginalized or underrepresented racial or ethnic groups to participate in the Program, DIT partnered with leadership in Neighborhood and Community Services, Community Services Board, Family Services, key contacts at Fairfax County Public Schools, as well as coordinators associated with the *My Brothers' Keeper* initiative in Fairfax County.
2. **Skill Building:** Teaching students foundational IT skills such as Network Administration, Software Development, Technical Support, IT Project Management, Data Analytics, and Cybersecurity.
3. **Mentorship:** Connecting students with Fairfax County IT professionals. Student interns were assigned to work side-by-side with DIT technical professionals on the Health and Human Services IT Support team, the IT Network team, the FOCUS IT Solutions team, and the Board of Supervisors IT Support team. They also participated in an engaging Q&A session with the Information Technology Policy Advisory Committee (ITPAC), comprised of Fairfax County business and industry leaders, for additional guidance and advice.

DIT's Human Resources staff received approximately 200 applications. Of those, nine students were interviewed and four participated in the 7-week (June 24 – August 9, 2024) Equity Impact High School Internship Program this year. The students ranged in age from 16 to 18 years old and attended different Fairfax County High Schools, specifically West Springfield High School, South County High School, Chantilly High School, and Fairfax High School. The racial

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representation of the students included one African American, one Latinx, and two Pan-Asian/Indian students. Genders represented included two female and two male students.

Goal 3: Provide equitable access to DIT certification, specialized training, degreed programs, and other county-sponsored continuous learning programs, to eliminate systemic racial and social bias in professional development opportunities.

Goal 3 Progress: The goal is to ensure that all individuals, particularly those from historically marginalized communities, have equal access to professional development opportunities within the Department of Information Technology. The focus is on identifying and increasing opportunities for professional development in digital information technology certification programs, specialized technical and vocational training, degreed programs (undergraduate and graduate), as well as County-sponsored continuous learning programs (e.g., leadership development, skills enhancement, etc.). This initiative aims to address and remove barriers to access, increase representation, and eliminate systemic racial and social bias in career advancement.

This year, in addition to updating the professional developmental matrix with the latest educational and training offerings available, to include Office of Development & Training sponsored training, and college programs, DIT's Professional Development Matrix underwent an overall makeover. The Matrix is now incorporated as a featured section on the newly launched *Equity Partners* SharePoint page. The Matrix was reimagined with cleverly branded categories to include:

- DIT Gems: Discover in-house training programs offered by divisions within DIT.
- Beyond County Lines: Find valuable programs and certifications from external organizations, some eligible for Tuition Assistance Program (TAP).
- Library Learnings: Tap into the vast resources offered by FCPL, including online courses, workshops, and speaker series.
- OD&T Expertise: Leverage the training and development programs curated by the Office of Development & Training (OD&T).
- Open Doors to Online Learning: Dive into the world of Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) and self-paced learning platforms.

The DIT Equity Partners continue to work with the Office of Development and Training, DIT's Human Resources team, as well as DIT Senior Leadership to encourage expanded learning opportunities and maximum awareness and participation to better serve DIT's working professionals. As the Matrix is still in the early stages of implementation, neither qualitative nor quantitative performance measures are available at this time.

Goal 4: Apply an equity lens in DIT's purchasing and contractual review processes.

Goal 4 Progress: DIT's Equity Partners continue to work in concert with their Department of Material Management (DPMM) partners to apply an equity lens throughout the purchasing and

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contractual review processes when procuring IT applications, hardware, software, and services to ensure fairness, inclusivity, and accountability in all procurement decisions.

This year, the focus was on policy and framework Development. A policy framework has been established that mandates the use of an equity lens in all purchasing decisions related to IT applications, hardware, software, and services. Specific equity criteria have been added to the General Purpose Statement in all DIT Request for Bid applications to secure a commitment from IT vendors to support underrepresented groups. This is the added verbiage:

As the agency that designs, manages, and implements all aspects of information technology solutions and supporting infrastructure enabling County agencies to deliver information and services, DIT is dedicated to equitably delivering and supporting an innovative, secure IT environment that identifies and eliminates barriers to at-risk and historically underrepresented communities. This commitment to equity is inclusive of all DIT procurement processes. While we cannot make selections based on Small, Women-owned, and Minority-owned (SWAM) business status in the state of Virginia, DIT is seeking offerors who are willing to ensure that 30 percent of the subcontractors they use will be SWAM as well as secure agreement from the successful offeror to participate in the County's Supply Chain CSR Initiative, which is part of the County's Department of Procurement and Material Management (DPMM's) equity program. DIT is committed to the integration of racial and social equity in its policies, practices, and processes in alignment with the County's Strategic Plan and One Fairfax Policy.

DIT's Fiscal Management Services Team has updated its annual 4th Quarter Prep Training session, presented to all DIT Program Managers and other DIT fiscal management services stakeholders, with detailed explanation of the Minority Indicator process requirement for all new vendors, as well as the new requirement to include a SWAM vendor quote in all uncontracted procurements. In addition, DIT Equity Partners met with DPMM to determine the viability of modifying FOCUS with a searchable Minority Indicator code to further promote supplier diversity in DIT's vendor review and monitoring process. This will support DIT's ability to create and document measurable performance metrics.

COUNTYWIDE GOALS

Report progress on Countywide goals related to the Regional Fair Housing Plan, if relevant to your department. As above, copy in each Countywide goal from your CY 2024 Equity Impact Plan, and describe progress made in CY 2024. If none, write "Not applicable."

Not applicable

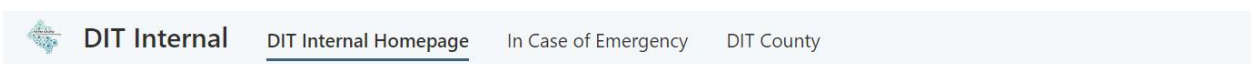
OTHER EQUITY-RELATED WORK

Was other equity-related work completed in addition to the goals above? If so, please describe.

In 2024 DIT completed the following equity-related work:

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- DIT Equity Partners Team launched the Equity Partners SharePoint page (see image below). It is located on DIT's Internal Home page. On the landing page, information about One Fairfax and its policy, mission Objectives and outcomes are accessible. The following topics are also linked on the page:
 - Meet the DIT Equity Partners Team
 - 2024 Equity Impact Plan
 - Equity Training
 - Professional Development
 - Resources
 - Did You Know? (Equity Partners segment delivered at Director's monthly *All Hands Meeting*)
 - Feedback Form



A section titled "Featured Topics" with a dark blue background. It contains three white cards, each with a photo and a caption. The first card shows a meeting room with the caption "DIT Human Resources". The second card shows hands typing on a laptop with the caption "DIT Internal and External Communication Guide". The third card shows a group of people with their hands stacked in a circle, with the caption "DIT Equity Partners" highlighted in yellow.

- Geographic Information Systems' (GIS) team worked on several equity-related projects in 2024:
 - Worked with DIT, the Department of Cable and Consumer Service (DCCS), and Guidehouse to support the county's BEAD (Broadband Equity Access and Deployment) Program challenge and Digital Equity Action plan development. Obtained and analyzed FCC broadband data and compared it to county data, including the vulnerability index. Developed interactive visualization tools for these datasets. These tools and the analysis results were presented to the Digital Equity Coordination Team in early February.
 - Ran a spatial analysis to determine the vulnerability index associated with public schools, community centers, libraries, and houses of worship in the county

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- Application development for the Department of Housing and Community Development
 - ✓ Created interactive applications to map Fairfax County Redevelopment and Housing Authority (FCRHA) owned/managed and Project Based Voucher (PBV) program properties. FCRHA program types include supportive, senior, and assistive living housing and the PBV program includes multifamily and senior housing.
 - ✓ Developed a PowerBI dashboard to track Home Repair for the Elderly (HREP) participants over time and compare with demographic/vulnerability index data. This program assists low-and moderate-income homeowners who are older adults and/or who are living with disabilities with minor home repair to help them remain in their homes.
 - ✓ Currently working with the Office to Prevent and End Homelessness to develop tools for tracking homelessness reports. They would like to have a better understanding of the spatial distribution of the homeless to improve their outreach efforts
- Application development to support DCCS's cable infrastructure surveying and reporting initiative that works to ensure cable providers are reliably serving customers throughout the county.
- Mapping client locations for the Department of Family Services
 - ✓ Domestic and Sexual Violence Services clients
 - ✓ Referrals to Children Youth and Families programs, including Child Protective Services, Healthy Families Fairfax, Parenting Education Program, and Protection & Preservation Services
- Assisted the One Fairfax team in publishing updated Vulnerability Index data layers
- Working with Neighborhood and Community Services (NCS) annually to assess the availability of childcare resources countywide, providing yearly analyses to identify areas where childcare supply is low. These results are found in the [Early Childhood Supply and Access Gaps application](#).
- Currently working with NCS on a process to gather and share information regarding emergency food access. This has entailed creating a survey and database to host emergency food provider data and building a public-facing interactive mapping application to share information on resource providers that are accepting new clients. This will also potentially inform regional efforts to collect/share emergency food resources.
- Worked with the Office of Environmental and Energy Coordination to assess rooftop and parking lot solar potential and add the results to the [Climate Action Viewer](#), sister application to [Resilient Fairfax](#). These apps assist in visualizing metrics related to addressing the causes and effects of climate change.
- Worked with the Department of Economic Initiatives on two projects to assist small businesses
 - ✓ Created maps for the [CORE \(Connecting Opportunities and Resources for Entrepreneurs\) website](#). Fairfax CORE links a large network of

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primarily nonprofit service providers offering a wide variety of free business support services. Business owners and prospective business owners can find and connect with resource partners who provide free assistance at every stage from conceptualization through business transfer.

- ✓ Assisted with applicant screening by location for [THRIVE](#), a grant program that provides consulting services to small businesses.
- Worked with the Department of Emergency Management and Security (DEMS) to update the [Cooling Centers app](#), a publicly-viewable interactive mapping application of locations available to anyone during extreme heat events.
- Assisted the Health Department with data management and automation for a hot spot/cluster analysis to identify communities historically and more currently at increased risk of sexually transmitted infections. Results were compared with areas of high social vulnerability to prioritize outreach and intervention efforts. [More details available here](#)
- Network and Infrastructure team worked with Neighborhood and Community Services' (NCS) management team to complete a project that provides free outdoor internet access over Wi-Fi at 26 NCS locations. The last site was upgraded on June 10, 2024.
- The Business Systems Division of DIT is currently working to add payment kiosks in four locations to allow taxpayers to pay bills outside of the Government Center, using cash, checks, and credit cards. This will reduce the need for constituents to travel to the Government Center. Two of those locations will offer expanded 24/7 access and accommodate county residents with the ability to pay by cash at remote locations. The launch is anticipated by early January 2025 to finalize the configuration and receive delivery.