
EQUITY IMPACT PLAN ANNUAL REPORT

CALENDAR YEAR 2024

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Department Name: Civil Service Commission

Equity Lead(s): Kristen Woodward and Nicole Rawlings

Date: February 26, 2025 (Updated)

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: Collect and analyze demographic data to identify disparities.

1a. Collect race demographic data on grievance outcomes

Progress:

The Civil Service Commission (CSC) serves as the appellate hearing body to adjudicate qualifying employee grievances pursuant to the Fairfax County Grievance Procedure outlined in the Fairfax County Personnel Regulations. Qualifying grievances are those that have properly navigated the managerial steps of the grievance procedure, as required, and received a favorable grievability determination entitling them to a hearing before the Civil Service Commission. Not all grievances initiated by employees advance to the hearing phase of the Grievance Procedure.

Employees may appeal certain types of disciplinary actions, perceived discriminatory treatment and or retaliation and the application of policy and procedures.

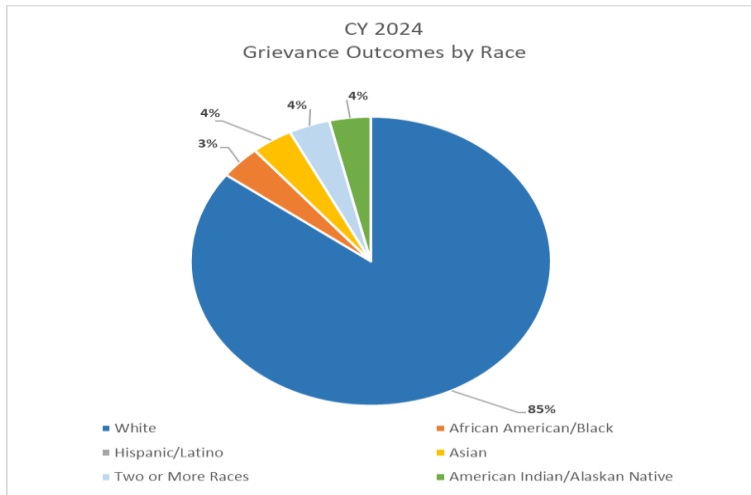
During calendar year 2024 (CY24), grievants identified as White in 85% of the appeals handled. In the remaining appeals, grievants identified as Black, Asian, American Indian and Alaskan Native, or Two or more races in equal numbers (approximately 3.7%)¹. See figure 1

¹ Percentages rounded to nearest whole number in Figure 1.

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Figure 1



Approximately 48% of the appeals resolved by settlement, 7% were dismissed, and 11% of the appeals were withdrawn by grievants prior to hearing. Nineteen percent of the grievances advanced to hearing and 15% percent remain pending resolution. Grievants identified as White in all grievances that advanced to hearing and in 77% of the grievances that settled.

Fifty-two percent of the County workforce identifies as White, 21% as Black or African American, 13% Hispanic/Latino, and 12% Asian. The remaining 3% identify as American Indian or Alaskan Native, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander or as Two or More Races.²

The data shows that White employees participated in the hearing phase of the grievance process at a rate that exceeded their percentage of the County workforce. This is a recurring trend. The data for the two prior calendar years 2022³ and 2023 both reflected that 68 % of grievants identified as White.

With respect to gender, of the grievances the CSC handled in CY24, 59% of individuals identify as male and 41% identify as female. Conversely, the County workforce is comprised of 49% of individuals who identify as male and 51% as female.

Grievance data can vary significantly from year to year based on the number of grievances filed and whether employees choose to pursue a matter through hearing. To evaluate potential causes for the disparity in participation, it is important that we look at these numbers in the context of the disciplinary data and based on participation in the Grievance process as a whole, not just one step

² The Department of Human Resources provided County workforce demographic data.

³ The data for 2022 was calculated based on the grievances filed within the calendar year rather than the number of grievances handled. The measure changed in 2023 to capture all grievance outcomes.

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of the process. Additional considerations include the grievant's department or agency and role. Other factors, such as early resolution of grievances may also influence grievant demographic data at the hearing stage. The Department of Human Resources and CSC continue to collaboratively develop and refine a more accurate means to track disciplinary and grievance outcomes by demographic information at all stages.

1b. Collect race demographic on who seeks/receives ADR services

Progress: The ADR Program collects race demographic data on individuals and groups who seek and receive ADR services. To initiate ADR services and support, ADR staff conduct confidential consultations. Following the consultation, clients receive an electronic evaluation that allows clients to self-report their race. In CY24, ADR staff conducted 83 consultations total as compared to Calendar Year 2023 (CY23) in which 74 consultations were conducted. The client response rate for completing the evaluation was 37%, approximately 30 individuals (see figure 3), thus making it difficult to draw meaningful conclusions. It is of note, however, that in CY24 the client response rate for the consultation evaluation increased by 13% as compared to CY23. Figure three shows that 46% of the respondents identified as White, while 52% of the county workforce identifies as White. Additionally, 30% of respondents identified as Black or African American. When comparing the county workforce data, 21% of employees identified as Black or African American. Employees who identified as Asian comprised 17% of the consultations completed. Moving forward, in Calendar Year 2025 (CY25), ADR staff will try different approaches for collecting demographic data during consultations.

After service delivery, excluding consultations, ADR staff provide clients with an electronic evaluation form.⁴ Clients self-report their race. When comparing Figure 4 to the overall county workforce, 53% of individuals who received ADR services identified as White, consistent with the 52% overall representation of White employees in the County workforce. In addition, 12% of individuals receiving services identified as Black or African American and 17 % of clients identified as Asian. While the data reflects diversity in those seeking service, it shows an underrepresentation of Black or African American clients, when compared to their overall representation in the County workforce, and an overrepresentation of clients who identify as Asian in comparison to their representation in the County workforce. In CY23, 23% of employees receiving services identified as Asian, this was slightly higher than CY24 with 17%.

⁴ ADR offers a variety of services such as consultation, conflict coaching, team process, mediation, and facilitated dialogue. Survey data for consultations is collected separately from other services.

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Figure 2

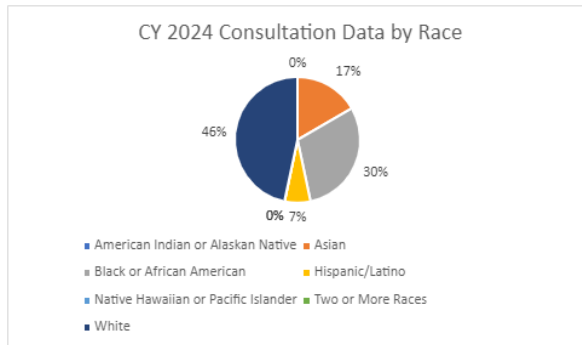
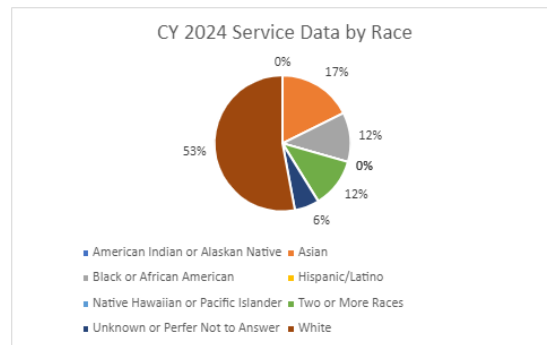


Figure 3



1c. Collect demographic data on who provides ADR services – excluding ADR staff

Progress: The ADR Program relies on County employees, who volunteer to serve as ADR Practitioners (Practitioners), to provide ADR services to fellow employees outside of their own respective departments (merit, non-merit, and probationary), volunteers, and contractors working with Fairfax County. Aspiring Practitioners must successfully complete training (28 hours of mediation training and an additional 6 hours of conflict coaching training), an application, an interview, and mock session(s) in order to be added to the roster.

In CY24, demographic data for Practitioners reflects that 57% identified as White, 36% as Black or African American, and 1% as Hispanic/Latino. When compared with the overall County workforce data, 52% of individuals identified as White, 21% identified as Black or African American, and 13% as Hispanic/Latino. However, individuals who identify as Asian, which accounts for approximately 12% of the county workforce, are not represented in the current Practitioner cadre. ADR staff try to maintain a diverse cadre of Practitioners. Individuals are not recruited, rather Practitioners serve of their own volition as volunteers. ADR staff share an overview of opportunities to become an ADR Practitioner after every workshop, presentation, or training delivered to help ensure that participants are equipped to take the next steps towards developing a Practitioner skillset. ADR serves a diverse set of participants throughout their training offerings (see figure 4). ADR will take more proactive steps in FY 2025 to encourage and foster greater diversity among its peer service providers.

1d. Collect demographic data on who attends ADR trainings

Progress: ADR staff offer a variety of training, both in-person and virtual, to County employees which strive to enhance their knowledge, skills, and abilities in preventing, managing, and resolving workplace conflicts. ADR training is available to County employees and advertised through NewsLink, Employee U, and the ADR SharePoint site.

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Five hundred eighty-five County employees participated in ADR training in CY24.⁵ Figure 4 shows training participants by race/ethnicity. The racial makeup of individuals who attended ADR training is relatively similar to the overall racial demographic makeup of the county workforce. However, collected data reflects that female employees participate in training at disproportionately higher rates than male employees. Eighty one percent of training participants identified as female, while 19% identified as male (see figure 5). When compared to the overall workforce county data regarding gender, 54% identified as female, while 46% identified as male. ADR will continue to collect and monitor demographic data and utilize the information to help inform employee outreach and engagement strategies.

Figure 4

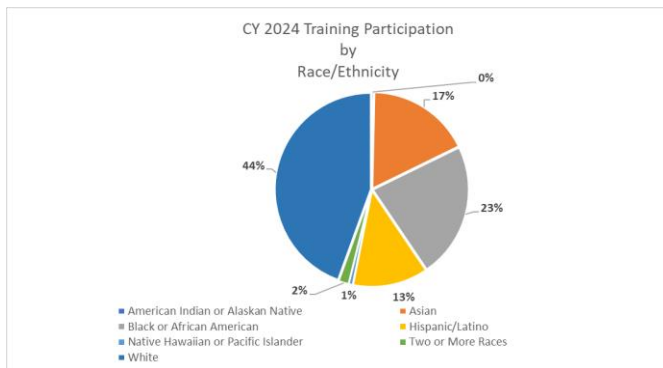
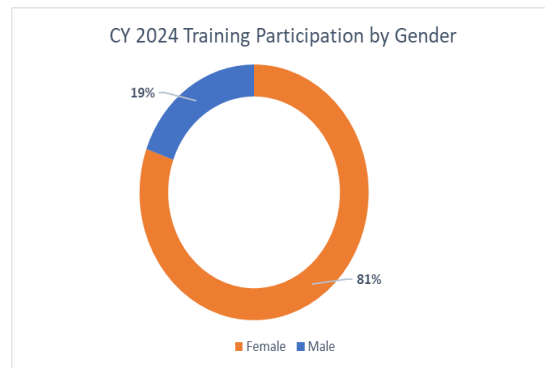


Figure 5



Goal 2: To create understanding of how our processes, policies, and decision-making are informed by implicit bias (IB) and incorporate strategies to interrupt them

2a. Incorporate Implicit Bias/microaggression training/discussion in practitioner meetings

Progress: ADR staff facilitate bi-monthly Practitioner Meetings. The meetings were a combination of virtual and in-person sessions with various opportunities for engagement including small group discussion, role playing, and case study evaluation. The meetings focused on further skill development, identifying implicit bias, strategies for interrupting bias, and addressing microaggressions in ADR service delivery. Additionally, meetings prompted reflection on approach and regrouping regarding approach the topic of bias.

ADR staff created an electronic evaluation which measured Practitioners level of awareness and ability to address and interrupt implicit bias, structural racism, and microaggressions in service delivery. ADR staff distributed the evaluation in May and November. Individuals who attended Practitioner meetings reported an increase in awareness and/or understanding of implicit bias/structural racism/microaggressions. Seventy-five percent indicated that their understanding and awareness increased significantly, while 25% indicated their understanding increased

⁵ Individuals attending more than one ADR training were only counted once.

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somewhat. Furthermore, 100% of Practitioners reported that they felt more equipped to address and manage implicit bias/structural racism, and microaggressions as a result of the sessions.

ADR staff updated mediation training material to include information about interrupting bias. The strategies presented inform training participants how to manage the process as it relates to interrupting bias in self, clients, and co-mediators. In making these updates, ADR staff aspire to start conversations around mitigating bias in ADR service delivery earlier, and thereby onboarding any future ADR practitioners with a foundational understanding of these concepts.

2b. Develop reflection tools used to assist practitioners in identifying and interrupting implicit bias that might be impacting service delivery

Progress: ADR staff created and distributed a self-reflection tool at the end of CY 2023 to assist practitioners in identifying and interrupting bias in ADR service delivery. At the beginning of CY 2024, ADR staff revisited this tool as well as shared additional strategies for interrupting bias in self, client, and co-mediator to help normalize conversations around bias and provide tools to help mitigate bias in ADR service delivery. Practitioners provide mediation and conflict coaching services to County employees and continually debrief with ADR staff after service delivery. ADR staff ask open ended questions, provide feedback, and share observations. This facilitative approach promotes a learner mindset and helps practitioners actively incorporate an equity lens when working with ADR clients.

2c. Explore and participate in external training opportunities around ADR and equity

Progress: ADR staff prioritize continued learning and personal development to effectively interrupt bias and promote equity in all aspects of their work. Staff participated in training offered through the County's Organizational Development & Training department titled "The Impact of Unconscious Bias in the Workplace." Additionally, ADR staff participated in "Disability Equity Through the Lens of the Social Model" and "ADA Anniversary Month Celebration: Windmills Training on Perspectives." Staff attended training and workshops hosted by One Fairfax such as the "Communities of Opportunity Dashboard" session and the 2024 Equity Conference held at the Fairfax County Government Center with guest speakers Professor John Powell and Dr. Steven Woolf.

Goal 3: To ensure inclusive and representative training source materials and content

3a. Identify and address gaps in the inclusion of source materials written/created by diverse authors

Progress: ADR staff sought to further diversify its source materials for training content in CY 2024. Recognizing that ADR Program training material previously mirrored the notable gap in the alternative dispute resolution field, which often fails to incorporate the voices of diverse practitioners and scholars, ADR staff explored a variety of books, articles, and podcasts written by

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diverse authors with expertise relevant to ADR training topics. A few of the key books incorporated into ADR training content in FY 2024 include:

Feedback Mentality: The Key to Unlocking and Unleashing Your Full Potential: Dr. Shanita Williams.

Subtle Acts of Exclusion, Second Edition: How to Understand, Identify, and Stop Microaggressions: Jana, Tiffany, Baran, Michael.

Microintervention Strategies: What You Can Do to Disarm and Dismantle Individual and Systemic Racism and Bias: Sue, Derald Wing et al.

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.

CSC captured its equity efforts in the above goals.