



# Department of Emergency Management and Security

## CALENDAR YEAR 2025 EQUITY IMPACT PLAN

**Leadership Sponsor:** Seamus Mooney, Coordinator

**Equity Lead(s):** Sulayman Brown, Deputy Coordinator

### **Departmental Equity Guiding Statement:**

Our mission is to administer equity into all phases of emergency management and security (Prevention, Protection, Response, Recovery, Mitigation) to produce the most inclusive outcomes possible. By prioritizing inclusivity and removing equitable barriers, we aim to foster resilience that helps support the most vulnerable populations.

**Context:** The most vulnerable populations (areas in the southern part of Fairfax County/low lying locations); such as the Mount Vernon district are often disproportionately affected by both natural and man-made disasters (flooding); and there are a variety of reasons why this occurs, such as geographical location. We have identified through our “Fairfax Alerts” notification system numbers that this area has a significantly lower sign up and usage of the information provided. For instance, individuals experiencing financial hardship may not have the necessary language skills and/or knowledge of resources to evacuate or properly prepare ahead of a disaster, unlike those who are more financially stable. The lack of means to access transportation, emergency supplies, or temporary shelter places them at a higher risk during crises.

Additionally, certain minorities and racial groups are more likely to harbor distrust toward government authorities due to previous negative experiences with governmental agencies. This mistrust, which unfortunately can be worsened by misinformation campaigns, can result in critical communication gaps during disasters, as government agencies' warnings and preparedness messaging may be met with skepticism or outright disregard. Such challenges can severely impede efforts to protect lives and property.

These concerns have been witnessed repeatedly in real-world situations within the field of emergency management at a national level. Recent natural disasters such as Hurricane Helene, wildfires and tornadoes throughout the country, have exposed the compounded struggles that vulnerable populations face. In particular, the response to Hurricane Helene highlighted significant issues with emergency management efforts in Rutherford County, North Carolina, where interactions between emergency personnel and community members were strained. The situation underscored the broader issue of how a lack of trust in governmental institutions can undermine disaster response efforts and leave marginalized communities more vulnerable to harm.



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### System-Level Infrastructure:

- Improve partnership with experts in public affairs and messaging to the residents of Fairfax County.

The Office of Public Affairs, the leading agency for all external communications throughout Fairfax County, is a valuable partner in working together to improve communication on the local level. A better relationship in the public eye would encourage increased trust among residents. While the need for emergency messaging in Fairfax County is infrequent, it is important to have established relationships and trust for when they are issued.

- Better carry preparedness messaging across Fairfax County.

This is a task that requires an active partnership between Fairfax County agencies to ensure that all areas of the county, particularly for pre-identified islands of inequity. The Department of Emergency Management and Security's goals would benefit by assisting in spreading messaging from the following groups:

- Department of Public Works and Environmental Services
- Department of Public Safety Communications
- Fairfax-Falls Church Community Services Board
- Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Department
- Fairfax County Health Department
- Fairfax County Police Department
- Neighborhood and Community Services
- Office to Prevent and End Homelessness

# EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AND SECURITY CALENDAR YEAR 2025 EQUITY IMPACT PLAN

## DEPARTMENT GOALS

**Goal 1: Increase emergency preparedness levels throughout Fairfax County.**

**One Fairfax Area(s) of Focus:**

6. Community and public safety that includes services such as fire, emergency medical services, police, health, emergency management and code enforcement that are responsive to all residents so that everyone feels safe living, working and learning to play in any neighborhood in Fairfax County.

**Countywide Strategic Plan Community Outcome Area(s):**

Efficient and Effective Government (EEG)

**Countywide Strategic Plan Strategies/Metric(s):**

EEG 3. Enhance communication and outreach to the community by using all available communication methods and tailoring messaging to individual needs.

Actions	Stakeholders	Resources/Supports	Responsible	Timeline	Performance Measures
1a. Reaching vulnerable groups of county residents who have limited access to preparedness and educational materials, emergency assistance information and resources in preparation for emergencies in their community.	DEMS DPSC FRD FCHD FCPD	Staff Time Community Engagement Events	Community Engagement Division	01/2025 – 12/2025	Community engagement resident communication metrics are compared year to year.
1b. Building capacity of resources for neighborhoods to tap into when an emergency happens for all Fairfax County residents and leveraging new approaches and educational tools in their community.	DEMS DPSC FRD FCHD FCPD	Staff Time Fairfax Alerts Handouts	Community Engagement Division	01/2025 – 12/2025	Increase of subscribers across learning platforms, social media, and website traffic.

# EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AND SECURITY CALENDAR YEAR 2025 EQUITY IMPACT PLAN

**Goal 2: Increase digital availability of emergency preparedness materials in multiple languages.**

**One Fairfax Area(s) of Focus:**

15. Digital access and literacy for all residents.

**Countywide Strategic Plan Community Outcome Area(s):**

Effective and Efficient Government (EEG)

**Countywide Strategic Plan Strategies/Metric(s):**

EEG 6. Expand capacity to meaningfully engage the community in places that are accessible and in ways that consider needs, traditions, and values of diverse ethnic, racial, and cultural groups.

Actions	Stakeholders	Resources/Supports	Responsible	Timeline	Performance Measures
2a. Create a digital application that allows for the sending of translated digital emergency preparedness materials. DEMS should work with the office of Public Affairs to ensure all agency web-based documents are accessible and complement each other with county, state and federal laws.	DEMS DIT OPA	Staff Time	DEMS DIT OPA	01/2025 – 12/2025	Completion of the application. Tracking usage of applications via annual surveys. Review of web-based documents annually.

# EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AND SECURITY CALENDAR YEAR 2025 EQUITY IMPACT PLAN

**Goal 3: Reduce inequality in disaster response by using digital and in-person community outreach to enhance resiliency to islands of disadvantage.**

**One Fairfax Area(s) of Focus:**

6. Community and public safety that includes services such as fire, emergency medical services, police, health, emergency management and code enforcement that are responsive to all residents so that everyone feels safe living, working, learning and playing in any neighborhood in Fairfax County.

**Countywide Strategic Plan Community Outcome Area(s):**

Effective and Efficient Government (EEG)

**Countywide Strategic Plan Strategies/Metric(s):**

EEG 6. Expand capacity to meaningfully engage the community in places that are accessible and in ways that consider needs, traditions, and values of diverse ethnic, racial, and cultural groups.

Actions	Stakeholders	Resources/Supports	Responsible	Timeline	Performance Measures
3a. Build the capacity of community members to use new approaches and to educate individuals in their neighborhoods and community.	DEMS DPSC FCHD FCPD FRD NCS	People Time Training	Community Engagement Division Equity Leads	01/2025 – 12/2025	Emergency Management outreach events in preidentified islands of disadvantage & county/resident engagement tools such as the county’s notification system & preparedness information via the monthly DEMS newsletter.

**Department Director’s Signature:**  \_\_\_\_\_  
DocuSigned by: Seamus Mooney  
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