
EQUITY IMPACT PLAN ANNUAL REPORT

CALENDAR YEAR 2024

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Department Name: **Public Works and Environmental Services**

Equity Lead(s): **Courtney Willis-Banks**

Date: **December 16, 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: Implement departmental training, policies, and programs that further our diversity and equity goals in employee recruitment, retention, and development.

Goal 1 Progress:

1a. Through targeted recruitment outreach, revised hiring practices, enhanced onboarding, and increased professional development opportunities, increase opportunities for more female employees at all levels of DPWES, for Black employees at S32+, and for Hispanic employees at S23+

Metrics:

- % of DPWES employees identify as female (Target: 50%) = 25.2%
- % of DPWES S32+ identify as Black (Target: 10%) = 14.0%
- % of DPWES employees S23+ identify as Hispanic (Target: 16%) = 6.7%

DPWES continues to implement a wide range of diversification initiatives, including testing new job advertisement channels and ensuring recruitment procedures fully comply with Department of Human Resource requirements. Although overall merit position vacancy rates have now fallen below 15% department-wide, DPWES continues to lag most significantly in recruiting female employees, particularly in leadership positions. Women comprise only 33% of the executive level, 18% of the division director level, and 40% of the branch lead level positions. With sponsorship from both the DPWES Deputy Director and Assistant Director, DPWES continues to support our Women of Works affinity group to provide additional development and networking opportunities for female employees.

EQUITY IMPACT PLAN ANNUAL REPORT

CALENDAR YEAR 2024

DPWES also continues to promote supervisor training to ensure consistent application of County personnel regulations and to provide new supervisors with skills to support an employee-centric work culture. All supervisors are required to have completed the DPWES supervisor training curriculum, and in 2024 DPWES launched its first class under a new cohort system to foster relationship building among new supervisors. This training is in addition to leadership development opportunities provided by DPWES to staff through our ongoing Leadership Excellence Opportunity (LEO) for all staff and Leadership in Frontline Teams (LIFT) specialized for skilled trade professionals cohort programs as well as support provided by DPWES to the County's EMERGE program. DPWES Human Resource and Organizational Development and Training staff also implemented a "Resources Roadshow" presentation on available County benefits after learning many County benefit programs are underutilized by employees, as well as a new Coaching for Growth manager coaching program, Computer Confidence training to improve computer proficiency, new employee exit interview process, and continued development of an enhanced onboarding program. DPWES Human Resource professionals are additionally reviewing interview panel compositions, and will provide recommendations for policy revisions in CY2025 based on their analyses.

DPWES also continues to promote employee engagement as part of our initiatives to create a work culture that promotes a sense of belonging. The DPWES Executive Team hosted a series of monthly, one-hour hybrid employee town halls rotating through each of the DPWES facilities to respond to questions from employees in an open forum setting. DPWES also piloted an anonymous, online quarterly employee pulse survey to gauge employee perspectives on a sense of safety, belonging, and value. The number of employee participants ranged from 187 (19% of employees) to 296 (30% of employees). Responses suggest that 91-94% of employees feel their individual work contributes to the success of DPWES, 78-93% of employees feel safe at work, and 71-76% feel a sense of belonging in DPWES.

1b. Identify implicit bias training vendor appropriate for DPWES and develop a plan to train all DPWES employees

In 2024, DPWES successfully contracted vendor Atana to provide a "How Was Your Day" training for employees. The online unconscious bias, anti-harassment training was optional for non-supervisor employees, and builds on results from DPWES' 2023 Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion employee survey. Approximately 65% of DPWES employees elected to take the optional "How Was Your Day" training in 2024. DPWES supervisors and managers were required to complete a complementary virtual anti-bias, anti-harassment training in small peer groups facilitated by Atana consultants. Almost all DPWES supervisors completed the required training. These two training courses yielded an increase of 27% in employees recognizing and accepting personal bias, 16% in employee awareness and acknowledgement that biases influence our thoughts, and 7% in recognition that our biases can harm others. Overall, after training, 86% of employees agreed

EQUITY IMPACT PLAN ANNUAL REPORT

CALENDAR YEAR 2024

biases can harm others and there was an 11% increase in the percentage of employees who would be more likely to speak up against harassment and discrimination in the future.

DPWES will continue to expand on these efforts to ensure supervisors have the skills and understand expectations to support a work culture free of harassment, discrimination, and retaliation with additional engagements and training for DPWES supervisors next year.

1c. Continue English-language proficiency courses for DPWES employees

DPWES initiated the second session of at-work, paid English-language proficiency training for employees provided under contract by the English Empowerment Center. In the second round, DPWES again had approximately 10 employee participants. Additionally, DPWES was awarded the English Empowerment Center's Community Partner of the Year Award in recognition of our efforts to further the development of all employees and to ensure pathways to advancement are available to diverse candidates.

1d. Support employee affinity groups, including the Women of Water

In the first quarter of 2024, Women of Water (WOW) expanded from an affinity group branded for DPWES Stormwater and Wastewater business areas to become Women of Works (also WOW) and include women throughout the entirety of DPWES, built a SharePoint site, filled key roles on the steering committee, and drafted and finalized signed charter documents to formalize the group's mission and structure. Throughout the year, WOW hosted six impactful speakers on a variety of professional development topics: Molly Green (DPWES), Kelli Parris (T. Rowe Price), Board of Supervisors Vice Chair Kathy Smith, Brenda Reigelsberger (Organizational Development and Training), Dr. Kelly Crace (College of William and Mary), and Director Linnaea Jablonski (Department of Human Resources). WOW also organized a weeding event targeting non-native invasive plants at the Government Center Ellipse and three social gatherings to promote community and fellowship amongst the group.

Goal 2: Evaluate the delivery of DPWES programs and projects to determine if our services are provided equitably to Fairfax County

Goal 2 Progress:

In 2024, DPWES implemented a new approach to assessing the equitable delivery of public services to our customers. Previously, DPWES utilized our cross-functional External Equity to assess selected DPWES programs for equitable service delivery. Realizing time-limitations of the equity team was creating a bottleneck to more widespread equity assessments and that only the assessed program managers and the equity team were participating, DPWES developed a peer-

EQUITY IMPACT PLAN ANNUAL REPORT

CALENDAR YEAR 2024

based approach for 2024. All branch leads and complex managers in DPWES participated in peer groups facilitated by trained members of the DPWES Equity Team. Branch leads were required to identify one line of business under their control, discuss it with their peer group, develop one action item to enhance the equitable delivery of that line of business to be completed in calendar year 2025, and include a quantifiable metric to measure the progress of their actions. A summary of progress through December 2024 is provided in table 1.

Table 1. Summary of Equity Actions by Branch Leads through December 2024. CAP = DPWES Capital Facilities business area; DO = DPWES Directors Office business area.

Actions	Responsible Parties	Performance Measures	Progress through December 2024
Procure 4-6 sign stands and develop a template for posting notices of community engagement events related to capital projects	DPWES Capital Facilities (CAP) Public Private Partnerships Branch	Change in meeting attendance and website visits for projects utilizing these boards	Two sign bases and mounting hardware procured. FY 2024 data on the visits to the project webpages used to establish a baseline for comparison.
Utilize social media to increase awareness of capital projects	CAP Building Design Branch	Change in number of impressions and website visits for projects with social media postings	Outreach efforts Willard-Sherwood Health and Community Center project community meeting were implemented via web and flyers. Staff currently collecting data on the number of hits the postings and the website received.
Update Construction Management (CM) Guide procedures for increasing community awareness of projects	CAP Building Construction Branch	Change in number of website views following updated posting guidelines	Construction Management Guide procedures for project signs updated. FY2024 data has been pulled to serve as baseline for comparison. Additionally, project pages are being added for CIP construction projects that do not currently have a construction summary page.
Update door hangers to include notices in five languages other than English	CAP Inspection Branch	Number of door hangers posted in multiple languages	The most dominant languages spoken other than English determined. Cost to print new door hangers obtained.
Create and maintain a tracking spreadsheet for LAD provided access services (including translation and in-person meetings) and whether administrative settlement or condemnation authority were used.	CAP Land Acquisition Division	Number and type of translation services and in-person meetings offered and provided for all LAD projects in FY25	Tracking information such as project location by Tax Map, department, division and number of affected properties. Continuing to offer translation services and in person meetings.

EQUITY IMPACT PLAN ANNUAL REPORT

CALENDAR YEAR 2024

Actions	Responsible Parties	Performance Measures	Progress through December 2024
Analyze number of public and County electric vehicle charging stations installed relative to vulnerability index scores	CAP Special Projects Branch	Number and type of electric vehicle charging stations installed by SVI score	Designs for four locations to in January 2025 with construction by June 2025. Design efforts for additional locations will start after these are completed.
For all projects not beyond 65% completion, increase community engagement to understand construction impacts on pedestrian use patterns and collaboratively identify feasible mitigation strategies to minimize impacts	CAP Stormwater Construction Branch	Number of projects for which community engagement was performed to identify and mitigate impacts to pedestrian during construction	Plans at 65% completion or less have been reviewed and recommendations for pedestrian safety identified. Community meetings to discuss are scheduled.
Proactively engage quarterly with Supervisor District offices on streetlight petition inquiries and known conditions for those areas including SVI score, existing conditions, and accident information	CAP Streetlight Branch	% projects funded compared to % of projects funded for the last two years relative to SVI scores	18 streetlight petitions requested in the first two quarters of FY 2025. Staff completed 12 preliminary assessments and 6 are under review. From the 12 streetlight petitions assessed, 2 were identified on roads with high number of accidents and in communities with high vulnerability rating index.
Complete validation of 11 Priority A survey marks using SVI scores for prioritization	CAP Survey Branch	Report on the number of marks completed and how SVI scores were used to determine prioritization	Preliminary filtering using aerial imagery to determine likelihood of physical recovery completed, reducing the possible recovery from 11 to 5. One recovered and 5-hour observation conducted, although the quality is unusable due to mark now being in tree cover. Four others in queue for recovery operations.
Implement a tracking system for project signage	CAP Transportation Construction Branch	Report on the number of project signs deployed and their location to the DPWES Director	System for tracking project information signage implemented, with information for three projects recorded to date. Information on signage for a total of seven projects estimated to be captured this fiscal year
Implement inclusive community engagement for all projects over \$10M	CAP Wastewater Collection Branch	# of projects for which inclusive community engagement was done	Eleven projects identified, with dedicated websites being developed for each. Semi-annual mailings planned to actively gather input from the community.

EQUITY IMPACT PLAN ANNUAL REPORT

CALENDAR YEAR 2024

Actions	Responsible Parties	Performance Measures	Progress through December 2024
Implement inclusive community engagement for all projects over \$10M	CAP Wastewater Treatment Branch	# of projects for which inclusive community engagement was done	Community engagement and input processes for all major projects over \$10 million are being developed.
Add transcripts for all YouTube video uploads to allow for translation, add dynamic QR Codes for all printed materials, minimize text in social media graphics and include text as post to allow for translation, and produce public flyers in at least 2 languages	DPWES Directors Office (DO) Communications and Media Group	Change in views for more accessible social media postings relative to baseline; # flyers translated	Recent YouTube videos include generated English closed captions translatable to any language. The same applies to the social media posts on X/Twitter and Facebook. If text is needed (brochure, flyer) it is provided in at least three languages, including English. During the month-long Solid Waste Survey information was posted in English, Spanish and Korean. Postcards and flyers have been developed in at least one alternate language.
Increase awareness of use of Google Analytics to improve website access	DO Web Services	Number of demos provided and attendees; Report on baseline website metrics to identify areas for improvement	Completed investigation of Google Analytics tool to understand tool capabilities and limitations on location and language data to interpret vulnerable community public website usage. Updating web health and traffic Power BI report to incorporate Google Analytics dimensions, and actively developing materials to support knowledge sharing with staff. Completed prototype of in-house solution to assess reading levels for Web Accessibility, and developing plan to enable DPWES to start utilizing new Site Improve tool recently announced for .gov2026.
Proactive inspection of recycling compliance at 20 multifamily facilities operated by Department of Housing and Community Development in high SVI areas	Solid Waste Enforcement Branch	Number of facilities inspected, number of facilities in compliance initially, number of facilities brought into compliance after inspection	Implementation plan and data collection formats have been finalized, and 19 of 20 initial inspections of targeted properties completed.
Add wayfinding signage in English and Spanish at the I-66 Transfer Station	Solid Waste Engineering Compliance Branch	Number of new signs and lane markings added	Initial wayfinding and destinations signs have been delivered to the site and seven destination signs with QR codes for web translations have been installed. Eleven new dynamic QR codes have been created to track usage and are being printed for retrofit onto existing

EQUITY IMPACT PLAN ANNUAL REPORT

CALENDAR YEAR 2024

Actions	Responsible Parties	Performance Measures	Progress through December 2024
			signs. The large new entrance wayfinding sign requires contractor installation and is in procurement phase. Refinement of wayfinding barriers is ongoing.
Design and conduct a customer survey to identify use patterns by demographics and measure customer satisfaction	Solid Waste Field Operations	Report to the DPWES Director on survey results with recommendations for facility modifications to improve customer experiences	We have improved our Entrance signage at I-95 improved. Creating an internal app to track customer service and satisfaction levels. Consultants working on ways to create more efficient means of egress for customers at the facility. Three trucks to receive vehicle wraps for outreach identified, and artwork in development.
Add signage with QR codes to connect residents with web resources on all non-routine heavy maintenance projects lasting 5 or more days	Stormwater Maintenance Operations Branch	Number of project signs deployed	In progress
Track inclusive public engagement activities; analyze illicit discharge and improper disposal (IDID) investigations relative to SVI scores	Stormwater MS4 Program Coordination Branch	Change in number of inclusive public engagement activities; report on spatial distribution of IDID investigations by SVI	Initial comparison of stakeholder self-reporting of equity inclusion has been done, with equity metrics for outreach increased by more than two-fold. However, only 25% of stakeholders self-reported incorporation of equity into outreach activities. Records of pollution investigations tracked in InforEAM were geolocated and overlaid with vulnerability index layer. Although the program is response-based, vulnerable areas of the county do not appear to be underserved by program investigations.
Mail informational resources to up to 1,000 properties in vulnerable communities identified to be most at-risk from flooding	Stormwater Conveyance Branch	Prioritized list of properties in vulnerable areas most at-risk from flooding; Compare change in service requests from vulnerable areas after mailing	823 properties identified to receive the mailer. Finalizing the mailer now, which will include a QR code and accommodate multiple languages.
Develop and install signs for stormwater ponds with QR Code	Stormwater Facilities Branch	Number of website views; Number of new signs installed	Sign designer has been successfully procured, and we are currently in the process of reviewing the draft designs received. These designs will incorporate

EQUITY IMPACT PLAN ANNUAL REPORT

CALENDAR YEAR 2024

Actions	Responsible Parties	Performance Measures	Progress through December 2024
links to websites that are language-accessible			a QR code that links to the county's website, ensuring easy access to relevant information for community members.
Initiate trail reconstruction prioritization procedures by condition and SVI instead of by user complaint	Stormwater Transportation Assets Branch	Number of walkways prioritized for reconstruction based on failing condition, access to transit, and SVI	Tracking walkway projects based upon assessment rating, usage and vulnerability, underway. As of July 2024, 35 asphalt walkway maintenance projects were completed with 22 trails rated D or F and 9 trails identified in high vulnerability areas.
Translate the Tree Basics book into 6 languages, distribute to libraries, and add a QR Code linking to web resources that can be translated into languages other than English	Stormwater Forest Pest Management Branch	Number of translated Tree Basics books distributed	Tree Basics booklets was updated to include a QR code linking to online versions and translations in six languages. 1,800 booklets in total were printed in English, Spanish, Mandarin, Vietnamese, Korean, Arabic, and distributed to 23 Fairfax County Public Libraries.
Update Title I school analysis for use in outreach programming assessment, and track additional Revitalize, Restore, Replant (R3) program metrics	Stormwater Watershed Assessment Branch	Report on the R3 program metrics including Title I, ESL, SVI composition of schools receiving R3 programming	Fairfax County Public Schools Title 1 status and Vulnerability Index composition analysis by each school's attendance area has been completed for FY25 using the updated School Year 2024-25 data. Stormwater outreach staff actively using this information in educational programming and exploring options for more broadly sharing this with other DPWES outreach programs. The eleven proposed metrics are actively being collected and analyzed.
Assess correlation between the per capita flood zone requests and SVI score by census tract	Stormwater Watershed Modeling and Analysis Branch	Report describing correlation between flood zone requests and SVI with recommendations for focused outreach	All data needed to create choropleth map showing distribution of per capita flood zone requests with vulnerability scores by census tract obtained. Breakpoints for variables are being refined, and draft maps being evaluated. The final map and report being developed.
Assess all Stormwater Planning projects relative to SVI scores	Stormwater Watershed Projects Implementation branches	% of projects planned by SVI score	GIS Projects Layer of all CIP-funded stormwater planning projects being developed. This effort to compile updated geospatial information for all active and completed projects will allow us to evaluate our project distribution using the vulnerability index.
Focus sewer science offerings in Title I	Wastewater Environmental	Change in number of Title I schools	Since August, a FOG door hanging event at Audubon Estates reached 700

EQUITY IMPACT PLAN ANNUAL REPORT

CALENDAR YEAR 2024

Actions	Responsible Parties	Performance Measures	Progress through December 2024
schools in areas with sewer backups and proactively distribute door hangers with Fats, Oil, Grease (FOG) info in these areas	Monitoring Branch	receiving sewer science; number of proactive door hangers distributed	residences. For schools, the sewer science program was held at 3 title 1 schools reaching 457 children. For spring 2025, 4 additional Title 1 schools are signed up for the program. There are 5 title 1 schools in high SSO areas that have registered for our water quality field trip to be held in March and May and including approximately 373 children.
Expand CDL training program access and assess demographics of program applicants and participants	Wastewater Gravity Sewers Branch	Number and demographics of employees and contractors seeking and completing CDL training	In 2024, two limited-term employees obtained their CDL learners permit, and two are registered for 2025. The employees obtaining their learners permit were both male and Hispanic.
Expand plant tour offerings to two languages other than English and Spanish	Wastewater Maintenance Branch	Number of tours completed, and number of tours in languages other than English	Process presentations were developed and provided to educate staff. The plant open house was held in December with maintenance staff available to give plant tours in Arabic, Spanish and Korean.
Analyze wastewater permit data review time by location	Wastewater Engineering, Planning and Analysis Branch	Variation in review time by SVI score	A Power BI report for all completed first cycle wastewater reviews on building and trade permits within a six-month period (4/24 – 10/24) was completed. Project addresses with reviews past the typical 5 business day period were cross-referenced with the 2021 Vulnerability Index (VI) block groups to determine if there were any significant disparities between review times of High and Very High VI groups. Data being analyzed now.
Improve methods for communicating with owners and residents where backflow preventers are installed	Wastewater Projects and Assets Branch	Report on new backflow outreach strategies, % of properties contacted	The current process and tracking logs were reviewed and updated. Outreach mailers planned to engage identified property owners.
Analyze wastewater infrastructure needs relative to SVI scores	Wastewater Pump Stations Branch	Report on patterns in the conditions of wastewater assets relative to SVI with recommendations for future actions	Project manager identified, and now performing research and compiling existing data for the analysis.
Review outreach methods to wastewater plant neighbors, and include the direct odor phone line information	Wastewater Treatment Division	Report on outreach methods study with recommendations for future actions to DPWES Director	15 groups in Lorton area were identified for odor outreach information and have been contacted. The plant odor complaint direct phone line was distributed in the door hangers to the

EQUITY IMPACT PLAN ANNUAL REPORT

CALENDAR YEAR 2024

Actions	Responsible Parties	Performance Measures	Progress through December 2024
in outreach materials to the communities near the plant			neighborhoods adjacent to the plant. Our goal is to reach 100 households in FY 2025. Project information for raw wastewater pump station capital project being shared with community groups.

Goal 3: : Implement community engagement and public participation processes that are inclusive and equitable for all Fairfax County residents

Goal 3 Progress:

3a. Complete training of all DPWES project managers on using the Inclusive Community Engagement Framework

DPWES did not make planned progress on this goal. Although Stormwater Planning staff developed a template for designing an inclusive community engagement process, it is still under review. The planned trainings for Project Managers did not take place because the department-wide standard operating procedure has not yet been finalized. This initiative was delayed until 2025.

3b. Perform targeted outreach to evaluate the equity impacts of the new Solid Waste Management Plan

DPWES successfully conducted a web-based survey utilizing the Public Input platform to solicit input on the Countywide Solid Waste Management Plan revisions. The survey was advertised via multiple virtual outlets including advertisements at bus shelters. The survey received approximately 16,000 views with 5,000 participants completing some portion of the survey, and 2,000 participants sharing comments. In addition to the survey, DPWES conducted focus groups specifically for small businesses, commercial properties, communities in areas with high vulnerability index scores, private trash collection companies, hospitality industry representatives, multi-family properties, residential property managers, single-family residents, homeowners associations, and INOVA. The feedback provided by these focus groups was instrumental in shaping the proposed plan that staff are now implementing, and this model will be used again by DPWES to ensure inclusive engagement on similar countywide issues going forward.

3c. Continue collaboration with Culmore Partners to identify more effective means of partnering with local community groups to achieve larger collective impact

The solid waste outreach and education team piloted a new engagement approach in the Culmore community to better reflect local needs and address potential barriers to participation. The team

EQUITY IMPACT PLAN ANNUAL REPORT

CALENDAR YEAR 2024

worked with non-profit partners to strengthen communication and trust within neighborhoods and expand resident participation and input.

On May 24, the Solid Waste Management Program’s consultant, RRS, held a focus group meeting with Culmore residents on the Solid Waste Management Plan update and zero waste goals. DPWES staff member Kirsten Buchner interpreted and the consultant also brought bilingual staff. The overall experience was very eye-opening and insightful. The solid waste enforcement team followed up on concerns residents raised about current waste and recycling. Participants also discussed building code issues. To circle back with residents on their concerns and share more information on county resources, Solid Waste Management and Wastewater Management joined Fairfax County’s Department of Code Compliance (DCC) on November 7 to highlight department services to attendees at the Culmore Family Resource Center in Falls Church. The solid waste enforcement team responded to issues raised during this engagement session by initiating investigations at several of the neighborhood multi-family apartment complexes.

In partnership with the Stormwater and Wastewater business areas, the Solid Waste outreach and education team completed programming at a series of three Morning STAR sessions where they shared information on recycling right, composting, and green jobs. Morning STAR program is run by Hispanics Against Child Abuse and Neglect (HACAN) to engage pre-K to eighth grade Latino students in STEAM-based enrichment activities. Additionally, the team is also working with Second Story, HACAN, and Friends of Holmes Run on engagement activities to encourage residents to drink water from the tap rather than single-use plastic bottles.

Additionally, the DPWES Director continues to represent the department in certain equity initiatives including the interdepartmental Gum Springs coordination group as well as in the Communities of Opportunity working group.

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.

None

EQUITY IMPACT PLAN ANNUAL REPORT CALENDAR YEAR 2024