

# Equity Impact Plan Annual Report

## Calendar Year 2024

### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Department Name: Fairfax County Park Authority (FCPA)  
 Equity Lead(s): Sara Baldwin & Matt Peters  
 Date: November 26, 2024

### EQUITY IMPACT PLAN REPORT

#### DEPARTMENTAL GOALS

**Goal 1:** Increase the diversity in FCPA staff at all levels of the organization.

**Goal 1 Progress:**

FCPA continues to measure and seek ways in which to diversify its workforce. In CY24, non-White representation was 52% of all merit/full-time hires (an increase from the prior year), contributing to the goal of increasing diversity in our workforce. The agency’s Recruitment Team continues to review and approve the composition of all hiring panels to ensure diverse representation and that the interview includes at least one question relating to racial and social equity. Prior to interviews, each panel must attend the FCPA pre-briefing which includes information on equity in the interview process and is now in Employee U.

This year, the agency was able to create a new baseline for BIPOC non-merit employees (E-status/G-Status) for CY24, showing 36% representation. (An E-status position is one in which the employee cannot exceed 1500 work hours in one year. A G-Status employee is one in which an employee may not exceed 900 work hours in one year). A new baseline was also created for representation in each division which will help to target areas where there needs to be improvement and the ability to work with divisions on future strategies for diversifying their workforce.

Division	Merit % Non-White	E-Status % Non-White	G-Status % Non-White
Administration	49%	57%	44%
Development	24%	n/a	n/a
Director's Office	40%	21%	21%
Golf	31%	36%	24%
Marketing & Communications	35%	n/a	67%
Park Operations	42%	20%	42%
Park Services	31%	40%	40%
Planning & Stewardship	37%	17%	n/a
Resource Mgmt & Interpretation	11%	21%	21%

Outreach in a variety of settings was a major focus for increasing diversity, especially for attracting interns to our organization. Staff attended 10 college job fairs including 2 HBCU’s, 16 high school job fairs including the Adult Education Center, 2 middle and 1 elementary school career day presentations and 4 community events in the County. FCPA partnered with the FCPS work-based

# Equity Impact Plan Annual Report

## Calendar Year 2024

learning program director, high school career center counselors and school-based faculty to build employer brand awareness in schools. As a result of these efforts, the FCPA intern program made great strides this year in many areas. A more centralized approach helped provide the focus needed to fill requested G status positions, provide better advertising and outreach and secure over \$20k in donations for supporting more internships across the agency. Of the 38 total interns, 42% were people of color representing a variety of degrees from several different colleges. In addition to the direct outreach efforts which began in January, the successful launch of the intern program on social media and the FCPA website for colleges and universities as well as advertising on Diversityjobs.com helped to attract a wide range of diverse interns.

**Goal 2:** Create a culture within FCPA that considers One Fairfax in all decision-making and fosters opportunities that advance racial and social equity.

**Goal 2 Progress:**

In CY24, the Park Authority’s workforce attended a variety of trainings throughout the year that created meaningful dialogue and attention to the County and FCPA’s commitment to ensuring equity in our park system. Since 2021, a total of 171 merit employees have participated in One Fairfax trainings (37.5% of the merit workforce), with 60 merit employees attending in 2024. Also beginning in January 2024, FCPA conducted 9 sessions of the inaugural Cultural Intelligence training with a total of 244 merit and E-status positions participating. The commitment to training and engagement is also carried through in presentations at division staff meetings such as the One Fairfax Equity Action Plan session held with the Agency’s Deputy Director/Equity Ambassador for the Resource and Interpretation Division.

New hires to the organization are required to attend the One Fairfax Equity Training within 30 days of hiring. This year, 29 new employees (63%) have completed the required viewing of the video within the deadline and Human Resources staff are continuing to monitor and ensure compliance.

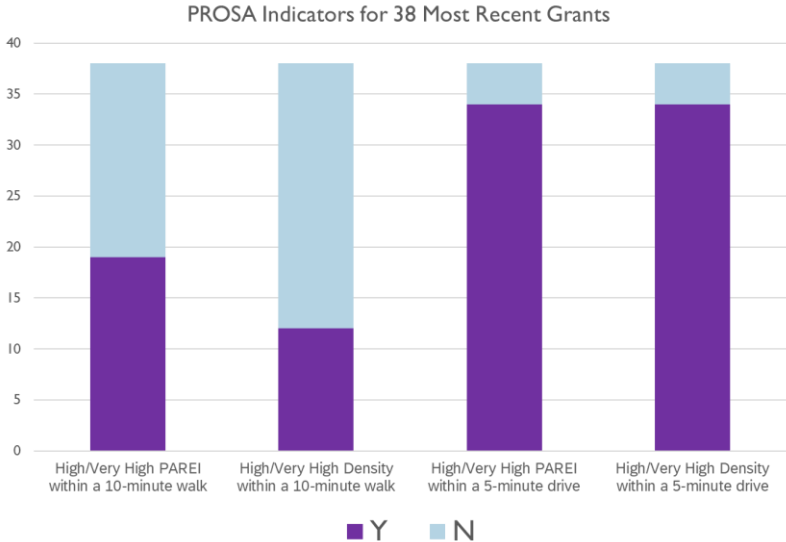
**Goal 3:** To provide accessible, high quality, complete parks within a 10-minute walk of all Fairfax County residents.

**Goal 3 Progress:**

The Park Authority takes great pride in the Mastenbrook Grant program that provides matching funds for community driven projects in our parks. This year staff completed an equity review of the program and presented its findings to the Park Authority Board which resulted in their decision for a more equitable criterion for grant eligibility. The review analysis included information from the FCPA PROSA (Parks, Recreation, Open Space and Access) Plan and the Park Authority Race and Equity Index (PAREI) tool which helped inform decision-making for improving equity in the Mastenbrook program. It also provided a great example of how those tools work for the Park Authority in making informed decisions regarding equity in facilities, programs and services for the community.

# Equity Impact Plan Annual Report

## Calendar Year 2024



FCPA has made other great strides this year in developing, identifying and applying equity data to decision-making for getting parks closest to its residents. The Long-Range Planning Section continues to analyze existing and potential parkland opportunities based on the PAREI tool. They worked with the FCPA GIS team to identify priority parkland acquisition areas based on the PROSA equity lens and provided this information to the FCPA Acquisition and Lease Manager for future planning. In addition, the Planning Team applied a PROSA review to potential new park and park renovations for the 2026 bond project selection process.

The Park Authority continues to train staff and provide presentations on the use of tools like PROSA, PAREI and Placer AI so they are able to prioritize equity in projects such as facility condition assessments, program services, etc. There is a continual use of these tools to ensure the equity lens is always in focus.

**Goal 4:** All Fairfax County residents have a safe 10-minute walk to a park via trails, sidewalks, crossings, etc.

**Goal 4 Progress:**

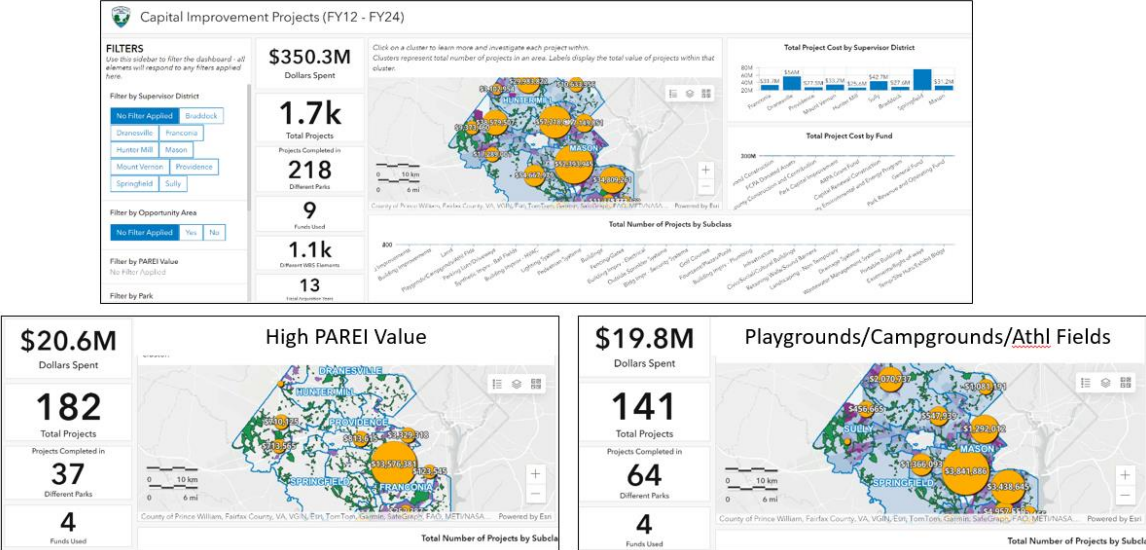
The Park Authority developed the Parks, Recreation, Open Space and Access (PROSA) Strategy to identify and prioritize areas for park investments and improvements. The Park Authority Board-approved strategy provides a framework for equitable access to the FCPA park system, one in which improves 10-minute walk access and uses analysis to prioritize recreation needs and projects with an equity lens. In 2024, staff completed the development of a new tool to map all major investments throughout the park system from 2012 and onward. This map, which is based on what new asset information is recorded in the FOCUS system, allows staff to overlay both the Park Authority Racial Equity Index and the Opportunity Index (among other layers) and compare to where investments have

# Equity Impact Plan Annual Report

## Calendar Year 2024

been made. This became operational in FY24 and will now be part of the financial close out process each year.

### CIP Investment Mapping Tool



Park Authority staff continue to actively serve on the ActiveFairfax team that has developed a plan to improve transportation access for pedestrians and bicyclists. This plan seeks to improve connections between schools, commercial areas and parks. FCPA staff attended all FCDOT meetings, reviewed and provided comments on the Active Transportation Toolkit and the public engagement materials. The plan also identifies trail network routes that would provide improved access to parks and has now gone to the community for feedback in November 2024.

**Goal 5:** Provide safe parks countywide.

**Goal 5 Progress:**

FCPA is proud of the collaborative connection we have with FCPD and the ongoing efforts in place to identify and address public safety issues and criminal activity occurring within Parks. We have implemented numerous strategies in this effort including:

- FCPA schedules annual meetings between FCPD Sub-Stations and the FCPA operational stakeholders in those districts. These meetings will focus on reviewing incidents and trends from the previous year, seeking guidance and best practices on how to prevent and best handle these concerns.
- FCPA continues to explore utilizing “rangers” in parks to assist with educating the community on park rules and regulations as a prevention strategy. FCPA requested funding for FY25 to implement the first phase of a park ranger program however the initiative did not receive funding.

# Equity Impact Plan Annual Report

## Calendar Year 2024

**Goal 6:** Provide parks that are clean and litter-free in all areas of the County.

**Goal 6 Progress:**

Staff used the Park Authority Racial Equity Index to make site selections for volunteer group clean up projects such as National Public Lands Day. In FY24, 47 park clean ups were conducted in opportunity areas, which represents 63% of the total clean ups throughout the county.

**Goal 7:** Enhance community engagement opportunities for people of color.

**Goal 7 Progress:**

The Park Authority continues to expand and improve its efforts to ensure that people of color are represented in the many areas of community engagement throughout the system. This year, free Rec Center open houses were promoted via email blasts in January and September with messaging tied to seasonal promotions. Open houses were also promoted via community outreach networks to external partners and county-wide agencies that serve communities of color.

The MarComm Division continues to use PublicInput.com as a tool for engaging and expanding the diversity of involvement in initiatives, programs, services planning projects and studies it undertakes. As an example, in November, FCPA asked for feedback on its proposed designs for the Mount Vernon Woods Park, which is in a Very High vulnerability area in the county with a 90.2% population of color and 69.1% of the population having low-income occupations. Planning staff researched this park using PAREI, HUD webmaps and the county's vulnerability index to better understand the "10-Minute Walk Demographic Profile".

This year, there was a huge outreach effort to engage the public in the [FCPA Equity Study](#). In partnership with NCS, the Equity Survey to understand barriers among underserved communities in income and race/ethnicity (Black, Hispanic/Latino, AAPI) categories was introduced at 19 public meetings and translated in eight languages. Posters and outreach material were sent to more than 40 community hubs including FCPA and NCS facilities, resource centers and non-profit partner locations. Participants at these events took the survey both on the website and via paper. In addition to emailing, the Public Information Office (PIO) distributed two press releases announcing the initiative and inviting the public to go to the website and participate. For additional awareness, the initiative was covered by local media including WTOP, FFXNow, Annandale Today, Reston Now, Tysons Reporter and Connection. Social media efforts garnered 32 organic posts, 7 social media pages as well as publication on Facebook, Instagram, X, LinkedIn and Nextdoor. A paid advertisement resulted in 39,000 impressions reaching 29,000 viewers and better than 470 clicks. Approximately 2400 people completed the survey, with findings shared at the October 2024 HHS Committee to the Board of Supervisors. The survey found that cost is the top barrier for households with income of \$75k or under. Other barriers identified for Hispanic/Latino and Black households were distance and lack of familiarity of opportunities. Black and Hispanic/Latino households remain the most underrepresented in FCPA program enrollment overall. The study found that there were several opportunities for improvement including growing overall awareness of FCPA programs among non-white segments and continuing to make better efforts to better understand barriers and ways to overcome.

# Equity Impact Plan Annual Report

## Calendar Year 2024

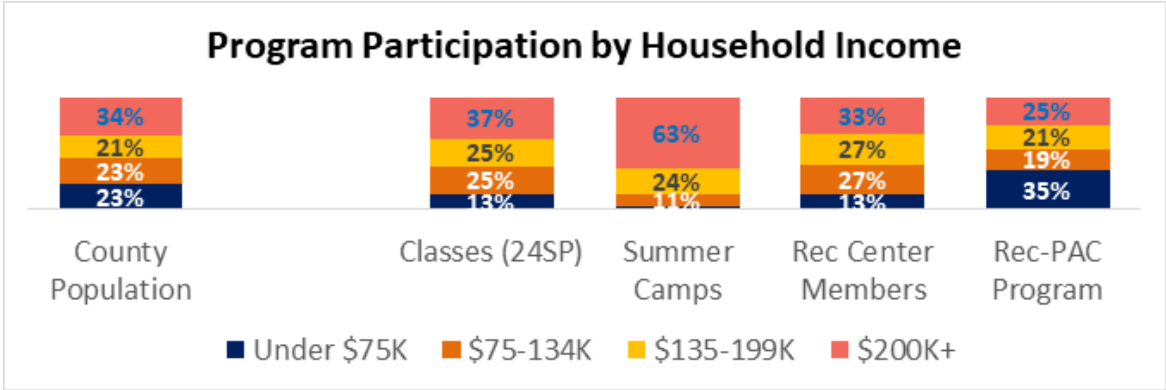
FCCA currently activates input on the social media County-approved platforms (X, Facebook, and Instagram) and each over indexes in engagement among multi-cultural segments of various ages. Other major outreach efforts include promotion of the many cultural celebrations throughout the year such as Black History Month, Women’s History Month, Asian Pacific Islander Desi Month, Juneteenth, National Native American Indian Heritage Month, Hispanic Heritage month and Latino Conservation Week.

**Goal 8:** Increase access to recreation/wellness opportunities regardless of income.

**Goal 8 Progress:**

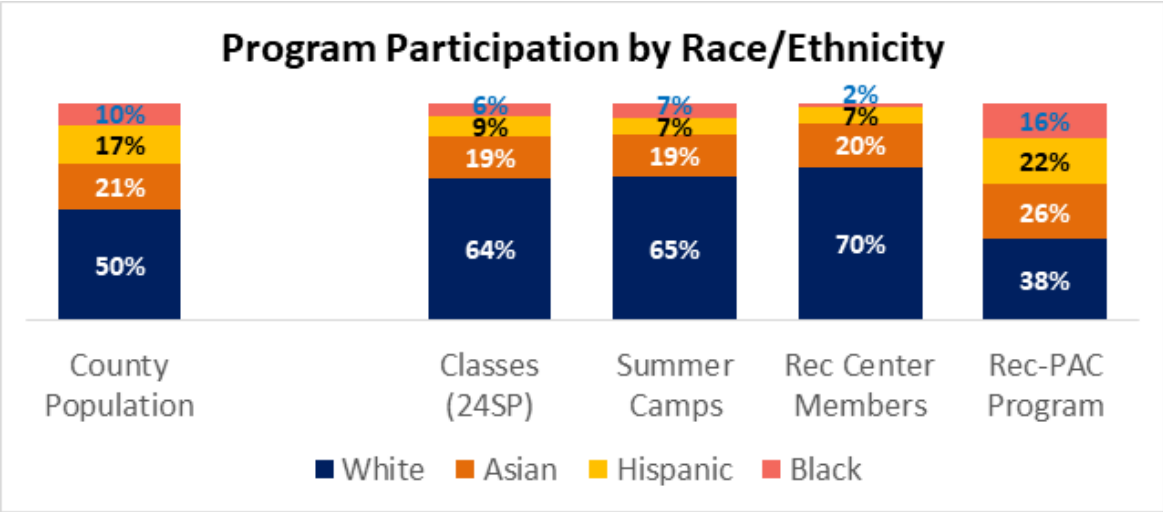
The Fairfax County Park Authority is firmly committed towards enhancing equity in all aspects of our county park system – including equity of access to park programs and facilities. Since July 2022, FCCA has worked with consultant firm HR&A to conduct a comprehensive review of the Park Authority’s fee-based revenue funding structure to determine strategies for how we can enhance the equity with which park services are provided.

The findings of that study and proposed recommendations, along with a history of the development of the park and recreation system, were presented to both the Fairfax County Park Authority Board and the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors. The charts below are just one example of the information presented that reflect FCCA’s reliance on fees which means that some of the agency’s public recreation programs charge more than many county residents can afford and that participation skews wealthier and whiter.



# Equity Impact Plan Annual Report

## Calendar Year 2024



As the Park Authority works to increase access to recreation and wellness in a variety of ways. The MarComm team distributed scholarship information at key outreach events throughout the year across the county such as Culmore Days, Back to School Resource Fairs, and Earth Day to name a few. Thus far in CY24, FCPA has provided scholarships for over 5,200 classes such as adapted fitness training, arthritis water exercise, pickleball, pottery and golf lessons with participants ranging in age from 0 to 98.

The mobile nature center, Wonder Wagon, creates a park without borders offering free natural and cultural based experiences targeted at high and very high vulnerability areas. This year, the Wonder Wagon made 86 visits and reached 6,300 individuals with programs, exceeding its target of 76 visits, providing equitable access to nature and history throughout the county.

The FCPA Natural Resources Branch has now incorporated One Fairfax metrics in its project prioritization and site selection processes for the Helping our Land Heal Program and the Bamboo Management Program.

The Sully Community Center camps, offered in partnership with Neighborhood and Community Services, were popular again this year. Campers are provided transportation and a sliding fee scale to provide equitable access for low-income children. This program is advertised widely to the community, often with direct outreach to targeted populations in low-income areas. There are also many diverse low cost/free events such as the Lunar New Year Celebration at Twin Lakes Golf Course and Culmore Days as well as Earth Day and the Summer Entertainment concerts. Several other affordable programs across parks in the county continue to be geared towards attracting more diverse audiences. A community member expressed interest in more roller-skating opportunities which are popular with the Black community. FCPA staff developed monthly skate nights that are held and well attended by a diverse community at Franconia Rec Center. The themed, three-hour skate nights are kept low priced so that its affordable for families to attend.

**Goal 9:** Enhance the engagement of the Latino community in parks and recreation.

# Equity Impact Plan Annual Report

## Calendar Year 2024

### **Goal 9 Progress:**

The Park Authority's Hispanic Heritage Month/Latinx Conservation Week website was created to include FCPA information on programs and events to celebrate Latino Conservation Week and Heritage Conservation Week. The webpage includes information such as the origins of Hispanic Heritage Month, spotlights on promoting outdoor activities and conservation efforts, Latino and Hispanic vendors at the FCPA farmers markets, volunteer opportunities, Program partners and Latino and Hispanic staff stories, celebrating their heritage and passion for parks. There is also information to expand communications with the Hispanic and Latinx communities en Espanol through social media pages and blogs.

The FCPA Hispanic Heritage Month and Latino week celebrations in 2024 included a free farm tour with animal meet and greet in Spanish at Frying Pan Farm Park, an invasive management volunteer opportunity, a Family Day at Annandale Park, and Salsa in the Park: A Celebration for Nature Conservation. The free Salsa in The Park program held in September featured nature exploration with the FCPA's Wonder Wagon, a dancing workshop, a bike clinic and a live Marimba performance.

**Goal 10:** Expand and enhance programming and interpretation related to the history of Black people in Fairfax County.

### **Goal 10 Progress:**

The Park Authority continued to expand its programs celebrated during Black History Month across the County to include an event at Historic Frying Pan Church, Paths of Freedom Seekers at EC Lawrence Park, Enslaved Lives and the Legacy of Slavery at Historic Huntley and others at Colvin Run Mill and Green Spring Gardens Park. Rec Centers also celebrated through a variety of ways such as highlighting Black athletes and sports/recreation achievements and drop-in fitness classes showcasing songs by Black artists.

The "JEDI checklist" has been used to assess if programs are welcoming for people of color and accommodating for all abilities at Sully Historic Site, Hidden Pond Nature Center, Lake Fairfax Park and Colvin Run Mill.

The Black History Month webpage not only featured programs but also highlights historic sites in our park system to better understand Fairfax County's Black and African American heritage. Other features include an opportunity for the user to conduct its own research on African American history and links to other county resources such as History Commission and Historic Court Records.

Interpretive efforts continue to evolve related to the history of Black people in Fairfax County. Interpretive signs are in development at multiple parks, an interpretive exhibit project is underway, and interpretive plans have been updated to include stories of people of color. A large interpretive project at Sully Historic Site has a team that has been working on updating the site's interpretive plan that offers a more robust discussion about the themes and methods for interpretation and sharing of Black history and culture in Fairfax County. The team created an approach and budget for moving forward for a CY25 start for engaging a contractor to work with the interpretive team to move the project forward.

# Equity Impact Plan Annual Report

## Calendar Year 2024

The Park Authority has partnered with the Gum Springs Historical Museum to provide technical assistance in the care of its collections. In Spring 2024, the Park Authority’s Collections Manager shared the final “Collections Assessment for Preservation at the Gum Springs Museum.” This technical report was written by Collections Assessment for Preservation assessors and will help the museum create a long-term preservation plan for their collections, improve collections care, increase staff and board awareness of collections conservation concerns, improve environmental conditions, and upgrade collections storage. Ultimately the recommendations in the report will serve as a fundraising tool for future projects, facilitate the development of a long-range preservation plan, and prepare the museum for accreditation.

FPCA continues to use the History Commission’s African American History Inventory document and searchable database as a foundation for interpretation for various parks throughout the system. Most notably in 2024, FPCA used this database as a start for the collection of information for the Quander family. The Archaeology and Collections Branch also uses this in the development of historic contexts and statements of significance.

### 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.*

Not applicable