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# EQUITY IMPACT PLAN ANNUAL REPORT CALENDAR YEAR 2024

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Department Name: Fairfax County Public Library

Leadership Sponsor: Eric Carzon, Library Director; Christine Jones, Acting Library Director

Equity Lead(s): Dianne Coan, Acting Deputy Library Director; Dustin Booher (Digital lead), IT Project Manager

Date: 6 December 2024

## EQUITY IMPACT PLAN REPORT

### DEPARTMENTAL GOALS

**Goal 1:** Increase diversity in FCPL's management and leadership positions.

**Goal 1 Progress:** The work toward this goal took several forms including publicizing availability of funds for staff development, including MLS degrees, mentoring, and outreach. Scholarship and application deadlines are routinely shared via SharePoint announcements and the agency newsletter to staff. We believe these to be successful overall as staff received 23 graduate and undergraduate scholarships as well as 10 staff development scholarships from the available agency sources. Due to agency staffing shortages, specifically turnover in Library Human Resources, we were not able to attend the planned recruiting events and career fairs. The actions around outreach will carry into the 2025 Equity Impact Plan. While there is no formal agency mentoring program, FCPL has created a culture of informal mentorships and modeling. Interested staff are encouraged to speak with supervisors and incorporate actions into their Career Management Plans as part of the annual evaluation process. Managers and subject matter experts are both encouraged and provided the flexibility to assist. We have several examples of mentored staff who have advanced in their career plans into leadership roles, both at the branch level and within administration.

**Goal 2:** Improve diversity in FCPL's collection to better mirror the diversity in Fairfax County and Fairfax City.

**Goal 2 Progress:** While working toward the goal of improving collection diversity, FCPL recognized the ongoing national environment of book banning in 2024 with 1,128 unique titles challenged nationally between January and August 31, 2024. Though slightly lower than 2023, the 2024 national numbers are still significantly higher than from 2020. FCPL continued to purchase materials by and about under-represented communities and highlight them in ways to reach their intended audiences without provoking challenges. These included books by Black, LGBTQ+, Latino/a and immigrant authors. The books frequently included characters from the

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same background and frequently dealt with their lived experience. Care was taken to avoid “the single story”, e.g. including stories of Black joy alongside those revealing trauma. We also included more books both in other languages and translated from other languages, *The Vegetarian* by Han Kang being an example of both. Overall, this approach was successful as we continued to see good circulation of the materials and received only one challenge in 2024. In addition to diversity in our materials, FCPL continues to update catalog subject headings to use more person-first language, following industry discussions and trends. This inclusive language is more welcoming to community members while still maintaining the authority control required for easily accessing materials. We also modified our call number schema to be more inclusive of a wide range of cultural holidays. This flexibility allows us to easily incorporate holiday picture books from beyond our previously enumerated holidays.

**Goal 3:** Equip facilities with the necessary infrastructure and supplies to support the needs of a diverse population.

**Goal 3 Progress:** FCPL provides complimentary menstrual products in all public women’s rooms and most family bathrooms, as fixtures allow. We investigated the feasibility of installing waste cans in all public bathroom stalls. The addition of the waste cans in all public men’s room was both prohibitively expensive and would have jeopardized ADA compliance. We have noted this action in the Library Design Manual, the facilities guidelines for new and renovated library spaces, which is due to be reviewed soon. Our action to provide disposable water cups in restrooms was intended to serve as a *lota*. However, further discussions indicated our proposed solution was inadequate and potentially confusing. We are deferring this action until a more suitable solution is identified.

**Goal 4:** Target areas of improvement and education identified by the Government Alliance on Race and Equity Employee survey and increase staff awareness of racial equity initiatives in FCPL and the County.

**Goal 4 Progress:** FCPL surveyed staff regarding their knowledge of the agency’s equity efforts. The results showed staff could identify examples of institutional racism, 92% found racial equity training and workshops helpful, and 84% overall believed the agency was committed to racial equity. It also reveals some areas for improvement, especially in communicating agency efforts and how the daily work of staff ties into those efforts. FCPL organized an agency-wide DEI committee consisting of 30 self-nominated staff members, with representatives from each branch and agency unit. Committee membership coincides with a cross-section of diverse identities and experiences, as well as the full spectrum of agency roles, including front-line, administrative, management, and part-time staff. As a whole, this team meets monthly to share relevant news and updates, with members serving as communication channels between their locale and the DEI committee. The work of the DEI committee has been organized into four

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areas of focus: Equity Impact, Training and Education, Partnership and Outreach, and Programming and Customer Service. Each of the four work groups meet as needed to maintain progress on its initiatives, reporting back to the DEI committee on a regular basis.

DEI committee work included discussion and structured feedback regarding the implementation of the 2024 Equity Impact Plan as well as the draft of the 2025 Plan. Members of the DEI committee created trainings to address the topics “What is Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging (DEIB)”, “Microaggressions”, and “Cultural Intelligence”—members also presented these sessions at branch staff meetings during the year. The DEI committee participated in the library’s first-ever designation of a system-wide calendar of history and heritage month celebrations, with each branch empowered to tailor programming events and displays that best meet the needs of their local community.

**Goal 5:** Increase opportunities for Fairfax County residents to participate and engage in a connected community.

Goal 5 Progress: FCPL planned to increase the size of the Connect Kit fleet, to redistribute public PCs to maximize access to locations with greatest demand, to expand its collection of Early Literacy tablets (LaunchPads) by 20%, and to translate and post technology help flyers in languages other than English. In September of 2024, an additional 100 Chromebooks and MiFis were added to the collection. Further, a Fairfax Library Foundation Grant in the amount of \$15,000 was applied for and received to help expand the Early Literacy Tablets. That amount, combined with \$15,000 from the collection budget will expand the Library’s tablet holdings by an additional 198 tablets by the end of the year. This sub-collection of about 900 tablets circulated over 10,200 times January-October 2024 and has a lifetime circulation of just under 24,000 in two years. In addition to expanding access by expanding holdings, FCPL analyzed usage patterns for Public PC sessions to concurrently right-size its public PC fleet and make deployment adjustments. Based on this analysis, FCPL IT staff determined the overall fleet could be reduced by about 25% overall. Deployment of the remaining public PC fleet is being aligned with current demand versus overall branch usage information. Thus, a location such as Culmore community library may have more public PCs than a larger, busier branch like Pohick regional library.

## COUNTYWIDE GOALS

*Not applicable*

## OTHER EQUITY-RELATED WORK

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Expanded branch programming and highlighted collection materials to coincide with seasonal observances:

- February: Black History Month
- March: Women's History Month
- May: Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander Heritage Month
- June: LGBTQ Pride Month
- September/October: Hispanic Heritage Month
- November: Military Families Month
- November: Native American History Month

Coordinated translations for expanded promotions and offerings in languages other than English:

- 1000 Books Before Kindergarten half sheet - Nepali
- English Language Learning Print-on-Demand (POD) - Spanish and Korean
- Light Pollution Monitoring Kit instructions - Spanish
- Summer Reading Adventure collateral (posters, reading logs) - Spanish, Korean, Arabic
- Where We Belong Art Contest POD - Spanish and Korean
- Access Services Talking Books application - Spanish
- English Empowerment Center Learning Series POD - Spanish and Korean
- Hispanic Heritage Month POD - Spanish
- Family History Kits - Getting Started Guide handbook - Spanish and Korean
- Winter Reading Adventure Collateral (posters, reading logs) – Spanish

Members of the system-wide DEI committee developed internal training resources on (1) **What is DEIB and Why It Is Important** ; (2) **Microaggressions** ; and (3) **Cultural Intelligence (CQ)**.

Members of the committee also developed a branch survey to identify existing DEI-related partnerships and programs, and to increase awareness of such resources.

Signed by:

  
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Eric Carzon

3/21/2025