
EQUITY IMPACT PLAN ANNUAL REPORT

CALENDAR YEAR 2024

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Department Name: Office of Environmental and Energy Coordination (OEEC)

Equity Lead(s): Kate Daley

Date: November 27, 2024

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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: Leverage partnerships to advance climate goals within vulnerable communities

Goal 1 Progress: Last year, the Office of Environmental and Energy Coordination (OEEC) established an Interagency Climate Team to implement the consolidated climate mitigation and resilience goals and strategies included in the Community-wide Energy and Climate Action Plan (CECAP), Operational Energy Strategy (OES), and Resilient Fairfax. This team includes over 150 staff from 25 county agencies divided into 6 groups, by topic area. In 2024, OEEC, in coordination with its partners in the Interagency Climate Team, began to assess critical programs and services for climate-vulnerable residents (e.g., heating and cooling assistance, energy efficiency services, flooding services, and general wrap-around services) and began to identify and address gaps.

Progress made in 2024 includes:

- The development of climate resilience games, to increase education and engagement with county residents at outreach events.
- The development of a one-page list of key contacts that residents can consult when they have general service needs, including environmental and energy concerns (flooding, power, waste, sewer, hazardous trees), access to basic needs and health services, emergency services, and more. The one-pager is intended to better connect residents to existing climate and resilience-related programming and consolidate information from different county agencies into one resource.
- The provision of 31 air conditioning (AC) units to 29 homes in Harmony Place Mobile Home Park, a community facing extreme heat, flooding and other severe impacts from climate change. Several of the residents at Harmony Place lacked access to AC equipment and did not qualify for equipment from the Cooling Assistance program administered by

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Department of Family Services (DFS) due to income limitations established at the federal and state levels. OEEC was able to quickly mobilize a large number of volunteers, community organizations and interagency partners to install donated window and portable AC units and supplies, conduct electric assessments, and implement critical health and safety repairs to the homes. Community partners included Tenants and Workers United, Faith Alliance for Climate Solutions, Hybla Valley Community Center, Daniels Run Peace Church, Rebuilding Together, Coordinated Service Planning, United Community; interagency partners included the Franconia District office, DFS, Housing and Community Development (HCD), Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Department (FCFRD), Department of Emergency Management (DEMS), Department of Public Works and Emergency Services (DPWES), Fairfax County Health Department (FCHD), One Fairfax, and Office of Public Affairs (OPA). Lessons learned will be used to scale up programming in 2025 to address remaining gaps in extreme heat services in Fairfax County.

Goal 2: Explore targeted outreach strategies to increase engagement with climate vulnerable communities to 1) ensure the needs of those most impacted by climate change are addressed by county programs and initiatives and 2) empower climate vulnerable communities to take an active role in the development and implementation of climate solutions.

Goal 2 Progress: In 2024, OEEC engaged with a marketing and communications firm to increase public awareness and engage county residents on climate action, with a focus on reaching diverse and underserved communities. OEEC and the consultant developed a Strategic Communications and Outreach Plan that supports the integration of digital outreach, community partnerships, and innovative experiential campaigns to drive behavior change and foster long-term engagement. The plan establishes objectives and strategies to reach the diverse populations of Fairfax County through the development of audience-centric, culturally relevant and multilingual content and messaging. In addition, the plan envisions the development of a community partner and/or ambassador program, using trusted voices within the community to share content and messaging. Messaging is to be adjusted as needed, based on audience and stakeholder feedback. These strategic objectives and strategies will be used by OEEC as it implements components of the plan in 2025 and beyond.

In addition, OEEC has been exploring new partnerships to increase engagement with residents in underserved communities and within Fairfax County Opportunity Neighborhoods. OEEC partnered with Second Story this fall to provide a presentation series to residents in the Culmore and Bailey's Crossroads areas on climate action initiatives. Presentations covered energy efficiency upgrades residents could make to save energy and increase comfort in their homes as well as flooding and storm resilience tips and services. OEEC coordinated with the Department of Public Works and Environmental Services (DPWES), Northern Virginia Soil and Water Conservation District

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(NVSWCD), and Department of Emergency Management (DEMS) on the latter. Using feedback and lessons learned from its work with Second Story, OEEC is planning to develop a similar presentation series in the Reston area, in partnership with Cornerstones, and will look into expanding work within other Opportunity Neighborhoods in 2025. OEEC is simultaneously coordinating with the Health Department and its Multicultural Advisory Council to share climate action content and messaging and seek feedback to improve community outreach and engagement efforts.

Goal 3: Continue to integrate equity considerations into Fairfax Employees for Environmental Excellence (FEEE)

Goal 3 Progress: Fairfax Employees for Environmental Excellence (FEEE) is an employee engagement group for county employees overseen by OEEC and established to foster a culture of sustainability in the workplace. Historically, the group has largely included members from environmental service organizations, with low participation from other county agencies. One of OEEC's multi-year goals has been to identify opportunities to promote FEEE to increase reach and membership diversity. Throughout 2024, OEEC built off last year's efforts to increase total membership and membership diversity by looking for new ways to advertise and reach county employees. FEEE leadership tabled at employee events, such as the Administrative Resource Team (ART) Conference; continued to broadcast meetings on countywide channels, such as FairfaxNet and NewsLink; and included information about the group in an employee training module that OEEC developed to encourage Fairfax County employees to learn about and take climate action.

FEEE added over 50 members in 2024, bringing its total membership to just under 140. Member additions in 2024 included staff from 24 different county agencies, many of which fall outside of the environmental services field (e.g., Neighborhood and Community Services (NCS), Department of Family Services (DFS), and Fairfax County Public Library (FCPL)). OEEC is continuing to explore promotion opportunities for FEEE and continues to explore the development of educational and engagement opportunities for members that focus on the intersection of equity and sustainability.

COUNTYWIDE GOALS

Not applicable

OTHER EQUITY-RELATED WORK

Was other equity-related work completed in addition to the goals above? If so, please describe.

- **Charge Up Fairfax:** OEEC continues to implement the Charge Up Fairfax program, launched as a pilot in 2023, to expand access to electric vehicle charging for residents and guests of homeowners and community associations. The program provides technical and

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financial assistance to successful applicants, with added incentives for associations located in high and highly vulnerable areas of the county, as identified through Fairfax County's Vulnerability Index. In 2024, four of the six applicants accepted into the Charge Up Fairfax program qualified for these added incentives. In total, the Charge Up Fairfax program includes 16 participating communities, half of which are located within vulnerable and highly vulnerable areas of the county.

- **Energy Conservation Assistance Program:** Last year, the OEEC, in partnership with the Northern Virginia Soil and Water Conservation District (NVSWCD), expanded and re-launched the Energy Conservation Assistance Program, a cost-share program that provides technical and financial assistance to property owners implementing energy efficiency updates, installing energy solutions, or enhancing the resilience of structures and property to withstand the impacts of climate change. Qualifying organizations include common-interest communities, places of worship, and nonprofit or community or charitable organizations. As part of the re-launch, the county increased overall reimbursement levels for eligible projects and created added incentives for organizations located in vulnerable or highly vulnerable areas of the county, as identified through the Vulnerability Index. Projects funded in 2024 include:
 - **Mount Vernon Unitarian Church, Mount Vernon District:** A reimbursement grant helped offset the cost of an energy audit in 2024. The church is moving ahead with a recommendation to remediate insulation and improve air ducts in one of their buildings. The cost-savings are estimated at \$600 per year for the insulation alone.
 - **Parkwood Baptist Church, Braddock District:** A reimbursement grant helped fund the conversion of 290 light fixtures in 2024. Parkwood Baptist Church will see a reduction in their utility bills by reducing their light energy use by 75 percent.
 - **Lutheran Church of the Abiding Presence, Springfield District:** A reimbursement grant helped fund two high efficiency condensing natural gas furnaces that will provide an annual savings of \$429 per year.