

# Office of Environmental and Energy Coordination (OEEC) CY 2022 Equity Impact Plan



**Leadership Sponsor:** Susan Hafeli

**Equity Lead(s):** Kate Daley

## **Departmental Equity Guiding Statement:**

The Office of Environmental and Energy Coordination (OEEC) develops and implements environmental, energy and climate policies, plans and programs to ensure a sustainable environment for current and future generations. The OEEC's work is guided by the Fairfax County Environmental Vision, which states that everyone living and working in Fairfax County, "no matter what income, age, gender, ethnicity, or address... has a need and right to breathe clean air, to drink clean water, and to live and work in a quality environment." The OEEC coordinates with other county agencies, authorities, businesses and residents to carry out the objectives of the Environmental Vision as well as other policies and priorities identified by the Board of Supervisors.

To ensure a healthy environment for all, the OEEC advances solutions to environmental issues that threaten quality of life, particularly issues related to climate and energy. The OEEC directly helps to mitigate environmental and climate hazards by reducing the impact of county operations. For instance, the OEEC coordinates implementation of the 2021 Operational Energy Strategy, manages an employee engagement group (FEEE) to foster a culture of sustainability within the county, and oversees other green initiatives pertaining to government operations.

In addition, the OEEC engages with members of the community to address climate and energy issues and empowers them with the knowledge and tools needed to take action on these issues. The office works with the public to oversee and implement major climate planning initiatives, including the Community-wide Energy and Climate Action Plan (CECAP), focused on climate mitigation, and Resilient Fairfax, focused on climate adaptation and resilience. These plans aim to reduce the impact of climate change on Fairfax County, particularly for the county's most vulnerable populations. This focus on vulnerable populations carries over to other community outreach initiatives the office oversees, such as HomeWise, which educates and enables low-income residents to reduce energy use, water use and associated costs in their homes.

## **Context:**

The OEEC is aware that, at the national level, industrial, governmental and commercial practices have significantly impacted the climate and overall environment. It is also aware that low-income communities and communities of color have historically been disproportionately exposed to climate and environmental impacts through the implementation of unjust social, economic and environmental policies. Exposure to such impacts has often contributed to or exacerbated economic and public health concerns within these communities.

In order to understand how national trends may be playing out in Fairfax County, the OEEC continues to collect and analyze pertinent data. The need for data on climate and environmental hazards (examined in conjunction with social and economic indicators) was first identified in our 2021 Equity Impact Plan. Over the past year, the office made important headway in this area through the Resilient Fairfax planning initiative. Launched in early 2021, Resilient Fairfax has

brought together 19 county agencies, numerous stakeholders, and the general public to review and provide input on localized climate projections and a climate vulnerability and risk assessment. However, the OEEC needs to continue to drill down on this data to identify which specific communities or neighborhoods in Fairfax County are most vulnerable to climate impacts. Further coordination with county agencies and other stakeholders is needed to determine the root causes of these vulnerabilities.

**Long-term Outcome(s):**

- Cultural and Recreational Opportunities
- Economic Opportunity
- Efficient and Effective Government
- Empowerment and Support for Residents Facing Vulnerability
- Environment
- Health
- Housing and Neighborhood Livability
- Lifelong Education and Learning
- Mobility and Transportation
- Safety and Security

**System-Level Infrastructure:**

As alluded to above, the OEEC has been working closely with county agencies and stakeholders to collect and analyze data on climate and environmental hazards. As part of its Resilient Fairfax planning initiative, the OEEC regularly engages with several county departments and agencies through the [Planning Team](#), which include CEX, DCSC, DEMS, DFS, DIT, DPD, DPWES, DVS, FCDOT, FCHD, FCPA, FCPS, FMD, HCD, LDS, NCS, and NVSWCD. The Planning Team guides the Resilient Fairfax planning process and provides feedback on deliverables, such as a climate projections report, vulnerability and risk assessment, audit of existing policies, plans and programs, climate adaptation and resilience strategies and an implementation roadmap. An [Infrastructure Advisory Group](#), including representatives from local utilities, authorities and commissions, and a [Community Advisory Group](#), with representatives from environmental, religious, nonprofit, civil rights, residential and business communities provide additional guidance and feedback on deliverables. As this work continues in 2022, the OEEC requires ongoing cooperation from its internal and external partners to identify which specific communities or neighborhoods in Fairfax County are most vulnerable to climate impacts as well as the root causes of those vulnerabilities.

As data on environmental and climate hazards is being collected and analyzed, the OEEC understands that local government has a role to play in advancing equitable solutions to climate and environmental injustices. However, as climate and environmental issues are often intertwined with social and economic concerns, effective solutions are likely to require the development of cross-cutting policies, programs and initiatives, involving individuals and organizations beyond the OEEC. Development and implementation of these solutions will require ongoing coordination and buy-in from other county agencies and stakeholders.

Furthermore, the OEEC cannot implement effective solutions without buy-in from the greater community. Through public outreach initiatives undertaken in its first two years of operation, the office has recognized a need to expand engagement opportunities in low-income communities and communities of color. To do so, the office needs to continue to develop and leverage partnerships both within and outside of county government to identify best practices, coordinate on existing opportunities and build trust within the community. The development and use of countywide resources and partners are an important component to this work.

## OEEC CALENDAR YEAR 2022 EQUITY IMPACT PLAN

Goals	One Fairfax Area of Focus	Actions	Stakeholders	Timeline	Resources and Supports	Responsible Parties	Performance Measures
<b>1. Increase and promote language access to OEEC resources</b>	11, 12	1a. Explore and evaluate options for translated public meetings	OEEC staff, OPA, other county agencies with best practices	January – July 2022	Staff time	OEEC to conduct; Equity Lead can help consolidate and report on progress	\$ spent on translation services, # of community members engaged (tracked with demographic information whenever possible), ability to accommodate reasonable requests for translation services
		1b. Explore and evaluate promotional tools for translated resources	See above	July – December 2022	Staff time	See above	
		1c. Incorporate budgets and timelines for language access services and promotion into planning processes	OEEC staff	January-December 2022	Funding for translation services and utilization of promotional tools	See above	
<b>2. Develop and leverage partnerships to expand community engagement opportunities</b>	11, 12	2a. Enhance cross-organizational connections across partnerships	OEEC staff; county agencies; organizations in HomeWise Advisory Councils, Resilient Fairfax Advisory Groups; other OEEC partners	January – December 2022	Staff time	OEEC to conduct; Equity Lead can help consolidate and report on progress	# of partners engaged (including # of individuals engaged within organization)
		2b. Conduct conversations with partners on evolving community engagement best practices	See above	January – December 2022	Staff time	See above	
		2c. Evaluate and develop metrics to assess partner satisfaction	See above	January – December 2022	Staff time	OEEC staff	

		2d. Explore and evaluate existing community engagement opportunities in county to coordinate on future endeavors	See above	January – December 2022	Staff time	See above	
<b>3. Compile and analyze data on climate risks and vulnerabilities</b>	11, 12	3a. Continue to collect and analyze data to determine climate vulnerabilities in specific neighborhoods, communities	OEEC staff, consultants, Resilient Fairfax Planning Team and Advisory Groups	January – July 2022	Staff time, consultant fees	OEEC – Climate Planning Division	# of county agencies involved in data collection and analysis, # of resulting strategies that address equity implications
		3b. Evaluate equity implications of Resilient Fairfax Vulnerability and Risk Assessment	See above	January – July 2022	See above	OEEC – Climate Planning Division	
<b>4. Integrate equity considerations into Fairfax Employees for Environmental Excellence (FEEE)</b>	11, 12	4a. Explore ways to increase engagement across the county for all employees (particularly frontline employees and those without environmental backgrounds)	FEEE members, county agencies	January – July 2022	Staff time to research and evaluate engagement opportunities	FEEE co-chairs	# of employees engaged, # of resources developed, # of activities completed
		4b. Increase FEEE resources on environmental literacy, environmental justice to help establish baseline knowledge of environmental issues among county employees	FEEE members with assistance from OEEC PIO	January – July 2022	Staff time to develop and promote resources	FEEE co-chairs	
		4c. Challenge FEEE to develop and host an event in 2022 focused on equity and/or environmental justice	FEEE members	July – December 2022	Staff time to develop event	FEEE co-chairs	

Director’s Signature: \_\_\_\_\_