
CALENDAR YEAR 2023 EQUITY IMPACT PLAN

ANNUAL REPORT

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Department Name: Land Development Services (LDS)

Equity Lead(s): Helman Castro and Ellen Gray

Date: November 30, 2023

EQUITY IMPACT PLAN REPORT

Review your department's Equity Impact Plan for CY 2023 at [Equity Impact Plans | Topics \(fairfaxcounty.gov\)](#). Using that plan, fill in each 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 in your CY 2023 Equity Impact Plan, report them. Add more goals as needed.

Goal 1: Outreach – Provide outreach and education on permitting, plan review and inspections that reach all communities within Fairfax and consider race when developing communication channels.

Goal 1 Progress

1a. Training our staff on racial and social equity. Equity training for LDS management and staff was conducted in the fall of 2023. Two sessions of “Equity in Managing and Leading” were held for all managers; 72% of the management staff attended. A make up session is scheduled for January 10, 2024. Ten sessions of “Equity in Customer Service” were held for LDS staff (one session will be held December 5, 2023); 85% of LDS staff attended a training session. The equity curriculum was developed and delivered by the Fitzpatrick Group. The LDS-wide equity training reverberates into the outreach and education we provide to the community by ensuring that equitable customer service is standard practice.

1b. Promote community education by reaching out to customers from underrepresented populations. LDS completed seven educational outreach sessions for the community regarding the permitting process and deck details bootcamps. Sessions were conducted in the Herrity Building and Pohick Regional Library. In calendar year 2023 (CY23), 179 community members attended outreach sessions. Three in-person sessions with bilingual assistance were held in CY23 to help with filing permits in manufactured home communities. We have created permit construction detail documents for common residential projects including decks, retaining walls, carport enclosures and finished basements and have translated them into Spanish, Korean, Vietnamese, Urdu, Arabic, Amharic, and Chinese.

CALENDAR YEAR 2023 EQUITY IMPACT PLAN

ANNUAL REPORT

Goal 2: Access to Services – Provide access to services in a fair and equitable manner to accomplish safe and sustainable development in Fairfax County for all community members.

Goal 2 Progress

2a. Enhance customer access to the Customer Information Center (CIC) to better serve our customers. With the launch of PLUS (technology platform) LDS provided a customer one-stop approach that allowed our customers to access “all things” related to land use – both in person and digitally. A new phone system, Twilio, was launched that provided a better way to answer calls and provided the capability of voicemail. A more comfortable in-person setting was created by the expansion of the Customer Experience Team in the Herry Building on the third floor. Accomplishments to assist customers in navigating the PLUS system include building a permit library and developing PLUS You Tube videos. Videos are available in multiple languages with translated voiceovers and easy to find “Translation buttons” on the PLUS website. Additionally, planning is underway to create a customer service center on the first floor of the Herry Building to include partner agencies and is intended to be operational in early 2025.

2b. Evaluate need and feasibility for income-based fee rate. A feasibility study of charged fees was launched in late spring and continues to date.

Goal 3: Workforce Development – Increase staff diversity through recruitment and promotion.

Goal 3 Progress

3a. Conduct trend analysis of underrepresented populations in recruitment and hiring. Due to management changes in Human Resource leadership, this action has not begun.

3b. Review and obtain additional candidate sources to increase the diversity of our hiring pools, particularly with professional and trades associations targeted to underrepresented populations. LDS Human Resource recruitment efforts to increase the diversity of our underrepresented candidate hiring pools have been aligned with similar efforts in the Department of Human Resources.

3c. Develop internship programs with educational institutions. A limited co-op program has been established between Northern Virginia Community College Annandale campus and the Building Division Outreach has begun with the George Mason University civil engineering program to develop a similar partnership.

3d. Pursue bridge class for promotional opportunities; establish career maps. LDS Human Resources pursued the possibility of building bridge classes with the Department of Human Resources; the discovery and conclusion of this action is that it is not feasible. Through workforce analysis and planning, career mapping continues to be identified.

3e. Conduct a workforce survey to collect staff’s perspective on the recruitment process and satisfaction assessment (employee engagement survey). In June, LDS launched an employee engagement survey conducted by Second Way Learning. The survey resulted in an 85% participation rate. Survey outcomes are currently being addressed with staff by respective Division Directors and their management teams.

CALENDAR YEAR 2023 EQUITY IMPACT PLAN

ANNUAL REPORT

Goal 4: Policies and Practices – Internal business operations policies and practices are equitable.

Goal 4 Progress

4a. Equity Impact Assessment included in BOS Agenda Items. An LDS procedural guiding template was created for writing Equity Impact Statements for board items; training was provided to the five staff members who primarily write Board Items. Equity Impact Statements have been included in the Parking Reimagined board item, the Electric Vehicle Charger Fee Waiver board item, and the Site Inspection Fees for Bond Agreement Extensions board item.

4b. Review data collection processes, analyses and reporting through an equity lens. LDS will be conducting a plan/permit process evaluation in 2024. The review of data collection processes will take place either with this effort or as a subsequent effort as certain processes are remapped.

4c. Review SOPs on handling complaints to establish consistency and identify inequities in current complaint process. Vendor proposals are currently being reviewed for the evaluation of LDS business processes and handling of the complaint process.

4d. Remove gendered language from all LDS publications. A process has been put in place to remove gendered language for all existing LDS public-facing documentation.

4e. Require equity impact assessment for applicable current and future agency policies developed. The customer service equity training for staff has referenced our established Equity Toolkit, which provides the lens for creation of agency policies.

Describe other equity-related work completed in CY 2023 (efforts that advance racial and social equity that your department was involved in within the department or countywide) not in the department's Equity Impact Plan.

LDS expanded the core Equity Team to include representation from all divisions within the agency. In New Employee Orientation, an equity component has been added.

Each LDS division has created a standard comment policy to help provide continuity, standardization of language, and readability of review comments.