

OFFICE OF ENVIRONMENTAL AND ENERGY COORDINATION CALENDAR YEAR 2024 EQUITY IMPACT PLAN



Leadership Sponsor: John Morrill, Acting Director, OEEC

Equity Lead(s): Kate Daley, Environmental Analyst, OEEC

Departmental Equity Guiding Statement:

The Office of Environmental and Energy Coordination (OEEC) develops and implements climate and energy policies, plans and programs to ensure a resilient, sustainable environment for current and future generations of Fairfax County. The OEEC's work is guided by the One Fairfax Policy and Environmental Vision, which states that everyone living and working in the 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." To carry out these objectives, the OEEC strives to design and implement initiatives that reflect the diverse needs of the community and reduce disparities within vulnerable and historically underserved populations.

Context:

The OEEC was formed in FY2020 to lead the cross-organizational development and implementation of the county's climate and energy policies and plans. The office oversaw development of the Community-wide Energy and Climate Action Plan (CECAP, accepted in 2021), Operational Energy Strategy (OES, 2021), and Resilient Fairfax (2022), and now leads implementation of the climate mitigation goals and resilience strategies included therein. Widespread adoption of these goals will result in cross-cutting environmental, economic, and social benefits for those living and working in the county. Those who stand to benefit the most include populations (e.g., low-income, elderly, communities of color) that are disproportionately impacted by climate hazards, such as extreme heat, flooding, and severe storms. Ensuring all community members, particularly our most climate vulnerable, can participate in and benefit from climate action implementation drives much of the OEEC's equity work. The OEEC engages with a wide variety of agencies, authorities, businesses, organizations, and residents to carry out this work.

In 2023, the OEEC established a Climate Interagency Team to facilitate and streamline coordination with over 25 county agencies on climate action implementation. The team is organized into groups to address funding and legislation, development codes and plans, community services, natural resources, facilities and operations, and data and research. Equity is integrated into all group work and is already helping to advance countywide goals: Team members have begun to assess gaps in climate-related services, build on One Fairfax mapping tools to identify climate and socioeconomic vulnerable areas of the county, and develop partnerships to leverage community connections. Continuation of this work in 2024 and beyond is needed to target climate programming in areas where it will have the most impact and increase participation from those living and working in target areas.

To increase its reach within targeted communities, the OEEC made a concerted effort in 2023 to increase language access to its climate action resources. Going forward, the OEEC wants to take this one step further, and work directly with communities to develop resources that meet their unique concerns and needs (which may include language access), as they relate to or intersect with climate and energy issues. In 2024, the OEEC will be exploring strategies and mechanisms by which to do this.

Also, as a continuation of last year's equity work, the OEEC continues to explore ways to integrate equity considerations into Fairfax Employees for Environmental Excellence (FEEE). This group, overseen by the OEEC, educates and engages with county employees to foster a culture of sustainability in Fairfax County Government. In 2023, the office made headway in expanding and diversifying the reach of FEEE; it plans to continue these efforts in 2024. In addition, the office will explore ways to integrate equity and environmental justice issues into the educational and engagement resources offered by FEEE.

System-Level Infrastructure:

- Implementation of the cross-sector goals and strategies included in CECAP, OES and Resilient Fairfax requires coordination with county agencies that work within the buildings and energy, transportation, waste, natural resources, health and human services, and public safety sectors, and more. The OEEC will continue to facilitate the Climate Interagency Team to share knowledge and resources, identify teaming opportunities, and work collaboratively toward climate goals. Continued participation and buy-in from other county agencies are vital to its success.
- As the OEEC continues to implement climate action programs and initiatives, it is likely to identify barriers to action that will require legislative fixes in the Virginia General Assembly. As barriers are identified, the OEEC will work with the Government Relations team within the Office of the County Executive and other relevant county agencies to discuss paths forward.

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DEPARTMENT GOALS

Goal 1: Leverage partnerships to advance climate goals within vulnerable communities

One Fairfax Area(s) of Focus: 12. A healthy and quality environment to live and work in that acknowledges the need to breathe clean air, to drink clean water now and for future generations.

Countywide Strategic Plan Community Outcome Area(s): Empowerment and Support for Residents Facing Vulnerability (ESRFV), Environment and Energy (EE)

Relationship to Countywide Strategic Plan Strategies/Metric(s):

Strategy ESRFV 4. Use all available sources of data to identify and understand emerging and existing vulnerabilities, in order to proactively engage impacted residents, identify service gaps and efficiently allocate resources.

ESRFV 10. Build upon the existing framework and county agency cross-collaboration efforts in order to ensure a comprehensive system that connects residents facing vulnerability to the information and services they are seeking regardless of which organizational door they enter.

EE 1. Reduce the county's contribution to greenhouse gases through better coordination of energy and climate best management practices throughout all county agencies, including items such as environmental stewardship and biodiversity of landscaping at county facilities, vehicle selections, building design, utilities and energy consumption.

EE 7. Promote county policies, practices and regulatory programs to protect, conserve, establish and rehabilitate natural resources (e.g., tree cover, open green spaces, parkland) that provide ecological and health benefits.

EE 8. Promote the use of solar and other green building technology through incentives and resources to encourage homeowners and commercial building owners to maximize energy efficiency.

EE 9. Develop a climate action plan to improve community health and resilience, and to prepare for anticipated changes in weather patterns, rainfall intensities, residential and river flooding and tidal impacts. Improve community resilience through better planning, mitigation and response to increasing severity of weather events.

Actions	Stakeholders	Resources/ Supports	Responsible Parties	Timeline	Performance Measures
<p>1a. In coordination with the Interagency Climate Team, Group 3 – Community Services and other stakeholders, identify gaps in critical services (e.g., heating and cooling assistance, energy efficiency services and incentives, flooding services, and general wrap-around services), as they relate to climate mitigation and resilience. Coordinate interagency review and evaluation of these services to identify gaps.</p>	<p>OEEC, DEI, DEMS, DFS, DMB, DPSC, DPWES, FCDOT, FCHD, FCPA, FCPL, FCPS, HCD, NCS, NVSWCD, One Fairfax, OPA, RCC, MCC</p>	<p>Staff time</p>	<p>Fairfax Climate Interagency Team (led by OEEC)</p>	<p>Jan. – Dec., 2024</p>	<p>% of service gaps to be addressed from total # identified</p>

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<p>1b. Develop resources to address service gaps, including infographics, handouts, and other resources as necessary. Coordinate review and facilitate buy-in from the Interagency Climate Team and other stakeholders.</p>	<p>OEEC, DEI, DEMS, DFS, DMB, DPSC, DPWES, FCDOT, FCHD, FCPA, FCPL, FCPS, HCD, NCS, NVSWCD, One Fairfax, OPA, RCC, MCC</p>	<p>Staff time</p>	<p>Fairfax Climate Interagency Team (led by OEEC)</p>	<p>Jan. – Dec., 2024</p>	<p>% of service gaps addressed from total # identified, # of resources developed, % of community members who will benefit</p>
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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.

One Fairfax Area(s) of Focus: 12. A healthy and quality environment to live and work in that acknowledges the need to breathe clean air, to drink clean water now and for future generations.

Countywide Strategic Plan Community Outcome Area(s): Efficient and Effective Government (EEG), Empowerment and Support for Residents Facing Vulnerability (ESRFV), Environment and Energy (EE)

Relationship to Countywide Strategic Plan Strategies/Metric(s):

Strategy EEG 3. Enhance communication and outreach to the community by using all available communication methods and tailoring messaging to individual needs.

EEG 4. Improve public participation and engagement opportunities to ensure all facets of the community are represented and have the physical, technological, and language access necessary to engage and participate in community discussions and decisions.

EEG 6. Expand capacity to meaningfully engage the community in places that are accessible and in ways that consider needs, traditions, and values of diverse ethnic, racial, and cultural groups.

ESRFV 1. Develop targeted marketing and outreach strategies, in coordination with community-based partners, to proactively engage residents facing vulnerability.

EE 7. Promote county policies, practices and regulatory programs to protect, conserve, establish and rehabilitate natural resources (e.g., tree cover, open green spaces, parkland) that provide ecological and health benefits.

EE 8. Promote the use of solar and other green building technology through incentives and resources to encourage homeowners and commercial building owners to maximize energy efficiency.

EE 9. Develop a climate action plan to improve community health and resilience, and to prepare for anticipated changes in weather patterns, rainfall intensities, residential and river flooding and tidal impacts. Improve community resilience through better planning, mitigation and response to increasing severity of weather events.

Actions	Stakeholders	Resources/ Supports	Responsible Parties	Timeline	Performance Measures
2a. Explore what other jurisdictions have done to increase inclusive community engagement with climate vulnerable populations	GARE Network, Virginia Energy & Sustainability Peer Network (VESPN)/ Southeast Sustainability Directors Network (SSDN)	OEEC staff time, GARE Network Portal, VESPN Member Network, SSDN support staff	OEEC equity team	Jan. – Mar., 2024	Pending
2b. Explore use of multicultural advisory committees and other approaches county	OEEC outreach team, Equity Lead network, Fairfax Climate	OEEC staff time, One Fairfax staff support, Equity	OEEC equity team	Apr. - June, 2024	Pending

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agencies have taken to increase inclusive community engagement	Interagency Team, NCS	Lead/Community of Practice meetings			
2c. Identify teaming opportunities with existing committees/groups and/or identify gaps	OEEC outreach team, Fairfax Climate Interagency Team	OEEC staff time, One Fairfax staff support, Equity Lead/Community of Practice meetings	OEEC equity team	July – Sept., 2024	Pending
2d. Based on findings, explore paths forward	OEEC outreach team, Fairfax Climate Interagency Team	OEEC staff time, One Fairfax staff support, Equity Lead/Community of Practice meetings	OEEC equity team	Oct. – Dec., 2024	Pending

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

One Fairfax Area(s) of Focus: 12. A healthy and quality environment to live and work in that acknowledges the need to breathe clean air, to drink clean water now and for future generations.

Countywide Strategic Plan Community Outcome Area(s): Effective and Efficient Government (EEG), Environment and Energy (EE)

Relationship to Countywide Strategic Plan Strategies/Metric(s):

Strategy EEG 11. Expand employee learning opportunities to increase staff competencies and experience in the areas of leadership, equity, cultural proficiency, use of technology and innovation to meet the needs of a changing environment.

EE 1. Reduce the county's contribution to greenhouse gases through better coordination of energy and climate best management practices throughout all county agencies, including items such as environmental stewardship and biodiversity of landscaping at county facilities, vehicle selections, building design, utilities and energy consumption.

Actions	Stakeholders	Resources/ Supports	Responsible Parties	Timeline	Performance Measures
3a. Continue to identify opportunities to promote FEEE to increase reach and membership diversity	OD&T, OPA, OEEC outreach team, FEEE	Staff time	FEEE Chair/Equity Lead	Jan. – June, 2024	Member size, retention and representation: # of employees, types of agencies represented in membership at beginning vs. end of year
3b. Explore ways to integrate equity and environmental justice issues into FEEE resources and learning opportunities. Through research and peer networking, identify what other organizations and jurisdictions have accomplished in this space.	GARE Network, Virginia Energy & Sustainability Peer Network (VESPN)/ Southeast Sustainability Directors Network (SSDN)	Staff time, GARE Network Portal, VESPN Member Network, SSDN support staff	FEEE Chair/Equity Lead	July – Dec., 2024	Short-term: # of jurisdictions consulted, #of strategies/opportunities developed Long-term: % of members with increased understanding of equity and environmental justice issues

Department Director's Signature: John Morrill 03 / 20 / 24