

# FAIRFAX COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY

## CALENDAR YEAR 2024 EQUITY IMPACT PLAN



**Leadership Sponsor:** Jessica Hudson, Library Director

**Equity Lead(s):** Kevin Osborne, Deputy Library Director

**Departmental Equity Guiding Statement:** The Fairfax County Public Library (FCPL) demonstrates its commitment to racial and social equity by building community and promoting literacies for all through programming, community spaces, technologies, and collections of educational and recreational resources; and making all policy decisions within an equity framework.

**Context:** In the recent past, public libraries across the US have worked to promote equity in many ways, including reviewing policies through an equity lens to reduce barriers to service and better serve traditionally marginalized communities, eliminating overdue fines to reduce barriers to services, auditing fiction collections to improve representation of traditionally marginalized communities, and recruiting and hiring staff who mirror the communities served. As part of the larger public library community, FCPL has modified its policies and launched new initiatives to increase equity.

Throughout 2020, FCPL held virtual racial justice programs for the public and FCPL staff. Past celebrations of cultural and heritage months in FCPL have been branch decisions. In late 2020, a staff-led Diversity and Inclusion in Programming work group identified celebrations of traditionally marginalized communities that would be celebrated throughout FCPL in 2021: Black History, Pride, Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage, and Hispanic Heritage months. FCPL received some complaints about Pride displays as well as significant complaints about a drag story time that was presented in partnership with the McLean Community Center during Pride month.

In September 2021, the Fairfax County Library Board of Trustees voted to eliminate overdue fines on most library materials. This decision, which was implemented in January 2022, had a significant equity impact by encouraging people who had stopped using FCPL for fear of accruing fines to return to FCPL.

In 2022, in support of our community and aligned with the county's One Fairfax policy, FCPL continued to expand its collection to better reflect the community's demographics. The collection includes more world languages and books by authors who reflect the county's rich diversity of ancestry, traditions, and lived experiences.

Offering a broad collection is a challenge. Curators have long faced a dearth of published materials that reflect our nation's population. Between 1950 and 2000, Black and other novelists of color represented only 10% of all book reviews, less than 2% of U.S. best-sellers and 9% of U.S. literary prize winners.

In 2022 and 2023, anti-library political rhetoric pulled public libraries into the spotlight. Throughout this time, libraries across the commonwealth faced hostile takeovers of Boards of Trustees by - activists in favor of censoring materials, while others confronted the threat of complete defunding. Political and religious groups demanded radical changes in policy, the banning of books, and the ousting of library leaders in an effort to limit the public's free and unhindered access to materials and information the groups deemed "inappropriate." Librarians faced an unprecedented number of book challenges in 2022. Across the U.S. and in Virginia, the most targeted books were by or about Black or LGBTQ+ people. Opponents of freedom of access in Virginia recently went so far as to propose book burnings. Several library systems nationwide have been defunded and effectively shuttered by censors.

One such instance wherein FCPL was targeted by this rhetoric was in the winter of 2022 and early 2023 when FCPL hosted two world-famous award-winning black authors for separate speaking engagements: Nikole Hannah Jones and Ibram X. Kendi. Both events were spotlighted by partisan media and unfairly presented as divisive and inappropriate expenditures of tax dollars. A disagreement with the authors' discussion of race-related issues and the conclusions their work drew about many of Virginia's historical narratives led to the library being targeted for several months.

### **System-Level Infrastructure:**

FCPL may require help from the Department of Procurement and Material Management to work with small vendors/publishers to increase collection diversity.

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### DEPARTMENT GOALS

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

**One Fairfax Area(s) of Focus:** 16. Intentional, focused recruitment efforts that bolster a diverse applicant pool; hiring and evaluation practices, and processes for employee feedback, to achieve and preserve a culture of equity and fairness or all employees.

**Countywide Strategic Plan Community Outcome Area(s):** Lifelong Education and Learning (LEL); Effective and Efficient Government (EEG)

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

Strategy LEL 14. Promote career and technical education and associated career paths — including apprenticeship and internship programs — across schools, postsecondary institutions, and workforce development organizations, ensuring accessibility and alignment with projected areas of job demand, and identifying and addressing common barriers.

Strategy EEG 8. Improve the county’s competitiveness as an employer to recruit, hire and retain a diverse, highly qualified workforce utilizing data to determine barriers and target strategies for marginalized group

EEG Metric: Difference between the demographics of the county government workforce and the demographics of the community

Actions	Stakeholders	Resources/ Supports	Responsible Parties	Timeline	Performance Measures
<b>1a.</b> Mentor current staff for management and leadership positions.	FCPL frontline staff, FCPL managers, FCPL’s Organizational Development office	FCPL staff and time	Branch managers	ongoing	# additional staff prepared for management and leadership positions;
<b>1b.</b> Encourage staff to obtain MLS, including accommodations in work schedules.	FCPL frontline staff, FCPL managers	FCPL staff and time	Branch managers	ongoing	# staff enrolled in MLS programs
<b>1c.</b> Publicize available scholarship funds.	FCPLEA members, Fairfax Library Foundation (FLF) staff, FLF Board, FCPL’s Organizational Development office	FCPL & FLF staff and time	FCPL leadership, FLF Scholarship committee, FCPL’s Organizational Development office	ongoing	#scholarships received by FCPL staff
<b>1d.</b> Attend University of Maryland, Catholic University, and Old Dominion University career fairs.	Library Human Resources, FCPL staff	FCPL staff and time	Library Human Resources staff	ongoing	# students spoken to at career fairs

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<p><b>1e.</b> Expand outreach to include local university career counseling offices as well as North Carolina Central University (an Historically Black College or University - HBCU) Master of Library and Information Science program.</p>	<p>Library Human Resources, FCPL staff</p>	<p>FCPL staff and time</p>	<p>Library Human Resources staff</p>	<p>ongoing</p>	<p># job applications from names schools received by FCPL HR</p>
<p><b>1f.</b> Expand vacancy advertisements to include job boards that directly target Black, Indigenous, and People of Color Library and Information Science students and professionals.</p>	<p>Library Human Resources, FCPL staff</p>	<p>FCPL staff and time</p>	<p>Library Human Resources staff</p>	<p>ongoing</p>	<p># job applications from names schools received by FCPL HR</p>

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

**One Fairfax Area(s) of Focus:** 18. Other

**Countywide Strategic Plan Community Outcome Area(s):** Lifelong Education and Learning (LEL)

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

Strategy LEL 8. Expand year-round literacy and science, technology, engineering, arts and math (STEAM) programs, with a focus on widening the interest and participation of underrepresented students.

Actions	Stakeholders	Resources/ Supports	Responsible Parties	Timeline	Performance Measures
<b>2a.</b> Continue building tools to evaluate the diversity of FCPL’s material collection.	FCPL Collection Services staff, Ebsco and Gale staff	FCPL, Ebsco, and Gale staff time. Money if/when Ebsco and Gale tools are available for purchase.	FCPL Collection Services staff	Ongoing	% BIPOC titles in Picture Book collection
<b>2b.</b> Conduct audits of FCPL’s collection, section by section.	FCPL Collection Services staff, FCPL staff, Ebsco and Gale staff	FCPL staff and time, Ebsco and Gale tools	FCPL Collection Services staff	when reliable tools are available	Baseline % diverse books in measured collection areas
<b>2c.</b> Continue to purchase quality materials to fill identified deficiencies, as available.	FCPL Collection Services staff	FCPL staff time and FCPL Collection money; Services staff access to Ebsco and Gale tools	FCPL Collection Services staff	ongoing	Baseline % diverse books in measured collection areas
<b>2d.</b> Continue to review selection criteria for implicit biases and correct as needed.	FCPL Collection Services staff, Branch staff	FCPL staff and time	FCPL Collection Services staff, Branch staff	ongoing	Baseline % diverse books in measured collection areas

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

**One Fairfax Area(s) of Focus:**

- 8. Neighborhoods that support all communities and individuals through strong social networks, trust among neighbors, and the ability to work together to achieve common goals that improve the quality of life for everyone in the neighborhood.
- 10. A health and human services system where opportunities exist for all individuals and families to be safe, be healthy and realize their potential through the provision of accessible, high quality, affordable and culturally appropriate services.
- 13. A parks and recreation system that is equitable and inclusive by providing quality facilities, programs, and services to all communities; balancing the distribution of parks, programs and facilities; and providing accessible and affordable facilities and programs.
- 17. Policies that prohibit all forms of discrimination under Federal and State law in county and school system activities, and ensure that all practices provide fair treatment for all employees, contractors, clients, community partners, residents, and other sectors who interact with Fairfax County including higher education, business, nonprofit, faith, philanthropy, and civic.

**Countywide Strategic Plan Community Outcome Area(s):** Healthy Communities (HC)

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

Strategy HC 11. Create healthier environments on county properties through health-promoting policies and encouraging the use of county properties for active recreational use.

Actions	Stakeholders	Resources/ Supports	Responsible Parties	Timeline	Performance Measures
<b>3a.</b> Provide free menstrual products in all public restrooms.	FCPL staff	FCPL staff and time	FCPL leadership, FCPL’s Facilities staff, FCPL’s FSD	ongoing	# menstrual products in public restrooms
<b>3b.</b> Ensure a waste can in all public restroom stalls.	FCPL staff	FCPL staff and time	FCPL staff, FCPL’s Facilities staff, FCPL’s FSD	ongoing	# waste cans in public restrooms
<b>3c.</b> Provide disposable water cups in restrooms.	FCPL staff	FCPL staff and time	FCPL staff, FCPL’s Facilities staff, FCPL’s FSD	ongoing	# water cups in public restrooms

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**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.

**One Fairfax Area(s) of Focus:**

10. A health and human services system where opportunities exist for all individuals and families to be safe, be healthy and realize their potential through the provision of accessible, high quality, affordable and culturally appropriate services.

17. Policies that prohibit all forms of discrimination under Federal and State law in county and school system activities, and ensure that all practices provide fair treatment for all employees, contractors, clients, community partners, residents, and other sectors who interact with Fairfax County including higher education, business, nonprofit, faith, philanthropy, and civic.

**Countywide Strategic Plan Community Outcome Area(s):** Effective and Efficient Government (EEG)

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

Strategy EEG 12. Initiate a regular, countywide process for conducting organizational assessments and employee surveys and then implementing identified changes that will lead to improved employee engagement.

Actions	Stakeholders	Resources/ Supports	Responsible Parties	Timeline	Performance Measures
<b>4a.</b> Analyze staff responses by job class and identify areas for improvement.	FCPL frontline staff, FCPL managers, FCPL Administration	FCPL staff and time	FCPL administration	ongoing	# Areas for improvement and education identified
<b>4b.</b> All staff to complete One Fairfax training on EmployeeU.	FCPL frontline staff, FCPL managers, FCPL Administration	FCPL staff and time	FCPL managers, FCPL Administration	ongoing	# Staff awareness of racial equity initiatives in the library and in the county increases
<b>4c.</b> Implement training targeting specific knowledge gaps.	FCPL frontline staff, FCPL managers, FCPL Administration	FCPL staff and time	FCPL Administration	ongoing	# staff identified for and who complete targeted training
<b>4d.</b> Implement staff wide awareness campaign focusing on racial equity initiatives across the county.	FCPL frontline staff, FCPL managers, FCPL Administration	FCPL staff and time	FCPL Administration	ongoing	# equity initiatives identified and communicated to all staff

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

**One Fairfax Area(s) of Focus:**

15. Digital access and literacy for all residents.

**Countywide Strategic Plan Community Outcome Area(s):** Empowerment and Support for Residents Facing Vulnerability.

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

**Lifelong learning: expand digital access with partnerships.**

Vulnerable communities: facilitate better access and utilization of services for those facing vulnerability through use of access points of technology.

Actions	Stakeholders	Resources/ Supports	Responsible Parties	Timeline	Performance Measures
<b>5a.</b> Increase the size of the Connect Kit fleet by buying additional chrome books and wireless hotspots for customers to borrow	FCPL Collection Services staff, FCPL Administration	FCPL staff and time	FCPL administration	ongoing	# Increased circulation statistics.
<b>5b.</b> Redistribute public PCs to maximize access where most in demand	FCPL IT Department, FCPL Administration	FCPL staff and time	FCPL Administration	6 months	# Public PC use statistics match the available devices
<b>5c.</b> Apply for Library Foundation grant to purchase additional Early Literacy Tablets (LaunchPads) expanding the collection by 20%	FCPL Collection Services staff, FCPL Administration	FCPL staff and time	FCPL Administration	6 months	# Grant awarded and devices purchased
<b>5d.</b> Translate and post Technology help flyers in languages other than English	FCPL frontline staff, FCPL managers, FCPL Administration	FCPL staff and time	FCPL Administration	ongoing	# Increase usage of technology resources by non-English speakers

Department Director's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

