

PRINCE WILLIAM COUNTY EQUITY AND INCLUSION POLICY

Please review the policy below and provide [comment](#) here.

I. Prince William County is an equitable and inclusive community. As such, Prince William County Government assesses its policies, programs, and practices through performance measures and an equity lens of intersectionality. We are a county where every individual has equal access and equitable opportunity to enjoy all the social and economic benefits of community life by joining their voices, reducing, and mitigating any disparities, and reforming conditions that hinder progress toward equity.

II. Equity tools shall be included in all facets of planning to avoid disproportionate impacts on our community members. Equity and inclusion are threads that will be woven through all plans, regulations, developments, policies, and procedures.

This policy statement recognizes the need to define these expectations to operationalize opportunity for equitable and inclusive outcomes. This policy will serve as a framework to inform all other policies, planning, practices, and programs and apply to the delivery of all County government services.

III. DEFINITIONS:

Behavioral and Social Biases: Refers to the conscious and unconscious thinking structures that operate from an assumption level to influence (positive, negative, neutral) how we interpret and respond to the behaviors, actions, and intentions of a person, group, or given situation.

Cultural competence: The process of learning that leads to an ability to understand your dimensions of culture and effectively respond to the challenges and opportunities presented within a social culture of diversity in a defined social system.

Diversity: Describes the various combinations of similar and different qualities (e.g., affiliations, self-identities, personality, learning style, and life experiences) providing diverse perspectives of thought.

Equity: A commitment to action to promote justice and fairness when developing public policy, resource allocations, programs, regulations, enforcement of laws, and institutional cultures resulting in access and equitable opportunities for all residents, businesses, visitors, and employees.

Equity Tools: Information and processes enable public officials to make better decisions by identifying who benefits and who is burdened by a decision, policy, plan, or practice, who participated, and who was missing in the decision making process. Applying equity tools with an intersectional equity lens will lead to informed recommendations and decisions, eliminating or mitigating potential negative impacts to any one group in the community.

Inclusion: The active, intentional, and ongoing engagement of organizational improvements to understand the complex ways individuals interact with and within systems and organizations resulting in engagement to assure equal access to opportunities and resources for all County's residents, businesses, visitors, and employees.

Inclusiveness Index: A diagnostic tool to measure the degree of marginalization experienced by different groups across different societal settings.

Intersectionality: An analytical framework for understanding how identity aspects of a person's lived experiences overlap and combine to create multiple factors of advantage and disadvantages.

Justice: The fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people concerning the development, implementation, and enforcement of laws, regulations, and policies.

Performance Measures: Performance measures operate from the County, department, or program level and function as monitors to gauge implemented actions' success. Performance measures respond to three different levels: 1) Quantity – How much did we do? 2) Quality – How well did we do? 3) Who did it positively impact?

Race: A social construct that categorizes and differentiates humans based on physical characteristics, ancestry, historical affiliation, or shared culture.

Racial Equity: When race can no longer be used to predict life outcomes, and life outcomes for all groups are improved.

Individual Racism: Individual acts of intentional or unintentional discrimination based on race by an individual.

Institutional Racism: Policies, practices, and procedures across institutions that produce outcomes that chronically favor or place one racial/ethnic group(s) at a disadvantage.

Structural Racism: The complex, cumulative, and compounding reality of institutional racism across all institutions that reinforce outcomes (unintentionally or intentionally) negatively impacting one or more racial/ethnic groups.

Sphere of Influence: A process of understanding what we have control over, what we can influence, and everything else outside of your power and influence.

Social and Economic Factors: Factors such as income, education, employment, community safety, access to technology, and social supports can affect how well and how long we live. These factors can affect our ability to make healthy choices, afford medical care and housing, manage stress, and more.

Social Equity: The elimination or mitigation of barriers can impede opportunities and results based on societal factors other than race, including being a member of a legally protected class, socio-economic status, or neighborhood of residence.

IV. PRIORITY AREAS FOR THE PROMOTION OF EQUITY:

Community Engagement

All outreach and public participation efforts should be inclusive of residents, businesses, visitors, and employees. Public officials will do their best to overcome any barrier(s) to achieve an inclusive engagement.

Criminal Justice

A criminal justice system implements and supports policies, programs, and best practices that are fair, just, and equitable to all persons.

Digital Access/Technology Inclusion

Create partnerships and programs that result in access to broadband internet services for all residents, schools, businesses, visitors, and employees.

County Workforce and Provision of Services

Intentional recruitment, promotion, and retention efforts to encourage a diverse applicant pool and diversity in hiring, promotion, and employee retention. Equitable recruitment, promotion, and retention efforts will ensure that our practices provide fair and inclusive treatment of our diverse workforce, customers, contractors, community partners, residents, and businesses.

Economic Development

Economic development policies, practices, and programs promote wealth and fair access to all residents. Workforce development initiatives should provide all individuals opportunities to develop skills that will allow them to participate in and earn an income to enjoy the benefits from a diverse and sustainable economy.

Environment

Environmentally sustainable growth protects our natural resources and open spaces, promotes quality of life, and preserves clean water and clean air for all people's enjoyment.

Health

A health system supports healthy families and individuals through access to affordable quality health services.

Human Services

A person centered approach within the human services system provides diverse opportunities for individuals and families to be safe, healthy, realize their potential, and help achieve optimal health, recovery and live full and satisfying lives in the community. To the extent possible, individuals are empowered to be independent and self-sufficient.

Housing

Housing policies help provide a full range of housing opportunities across the County to persons of different income levels and abilities, particularly in areas with access to multi-modal transportation options.

Parks and Recreation

Parks and recreation system provides facilities, programs, and services that are equitable and inclusive countywide, accessible, and affordable to all residents, visitors, businesses, and employees.

Planning and Development

A planning and development philosophy and system is equitable and inclusive, which uses equity lenses or tools to mitigate any impacts for the good of the County.

Public Safety

The provision offers emergency medical, police, public health, and emergency management services that are responsive to the needs of all residents, visitors, businesses, and employees, in a way that all people feel safe.

Transportation

A transportation system is multi-modal, supports economic and neighborhood development, provides residents access to job centers, public services, shopping centers, parks, and recreation, leading to a healthier community.

IV. METHODOLOGY:

To arrive at a culture of equity and inclusion, all Prince William County departments, offices, and agencies must work together. When appropriate and per Board action, create partnerships with other organizations to increase and leverage resources to address challenges and opportunities more effectively and efficiently. Developing capacity within our government in the following areas will allow for the operationalization of policies, programs, practices, and plans to advance equity and inclusion in the County.

Leadership and Workforce Training

Build cultural competency capacity within the county government by developing the workforce's and leadership's knowledge and skills in equity and inclusion. This learning will be individual and collective and should emphasize areas that increase the skills and competencies needed to develop strategies that advance equity and inclusion. The foundational training includes understanding the dimensions of our cultural self, the sphere of influence, equity tools, normalizing terms and definitions, and performance measures to disaggregating relevant and actionable data. Other specific subject matter area-related training should be provided as needed.

Application of Equity Tools

When assessing plans, programs, practices, and policies through equity tools, consideration should be given to the benefits and burdens on the whole community, identifying strategies that eliminate or mitigate adverse impacts, and promoting planning and decision-making. All residents have a voice. Equity tools may include but are not limited to disparate impact analysis, inclusiveness index, data collection and disaggregation, structured questions,

resident, business, and employee engagement, surveys, focus groups, and structured interviews to intentionally consider equity in the decision-making process.

Community Engagement

An equitable and inclusive community encourages, involves, and engages all its residents in all decision-making processes. In this way, public officials receive a breadth of concerns, ideas, and information from all community sectors that will allow them to make the most informed decisions possible. All outreach and public participation efforts should be inclusive of all its residents. Public officials will do their best to overcome any barrier(s) to achieve an inclusive engagement.

Racial and Social Equity Action Planning

All agencies will plan, assess, analyze, establish goals, collect data, and make decisions within their purview in a manner consistent with advancing this policy's purpose.

Defined Roles

The County Executive will assign staff to oversee the implementation of this policy. The Board of County Supervisors, the County Executive, and Department, Agency, and Office Directors will work with staff to provide strategic direction and leadership to support this policy's purpose. Equity teams will be formed in every department, agency, office, and across departments to facilitate this policy's implementation. These teams will plan, assess, and coordinate specific actions that advance equity and inclusion. All County-appointed Boards, Committees, Commissions, Advisory Boards, Task Forces, and other advisory bodies are expected to execute functions within their purview in a manner that is consistent with this policy.

Appendix: Engaged Partnership Organizations and Resources

Prince William County equity and inclusion efforts include best practices from these organizations, other organizations, universities, and experts in the field of social sciences, and PWC agencies. All aspects of the equity and inclusion framework will include ongoing community outreach and collaboration.

- [Fairfax County, Virginia](#): One Fairfax Resolution is a public resolution committing a local government to the mission of actively promoting and advancing equity in the community.
- [American Planning Association](#): Equity Policy Guide identifies policy recommendations for planners to advocate for policies that support equity in all aspects of planning at local, state, and federal levels.
- [The Government Alliance on Race and Equity](#): A national network of governments working to achieve racial equity and advance opportunities for all.
- [The Haas Institute for a Fair & Inclusive Society at UC Berkeley](#): Provides researchers, organizers, stakeholders, communicators, and policymakers to identify and eliminate the barriers to an inclusive, just, and sustainable society and to create transformative change toward a more equitable nation.
- [House Bill 1993 and the One Virginia Plan](#): A statewide strategy to advance Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in services, systems, and operations. The framework supports collective impact, sustainable change, innovation, and productivity across state government and other sectors of the Commonwealth.