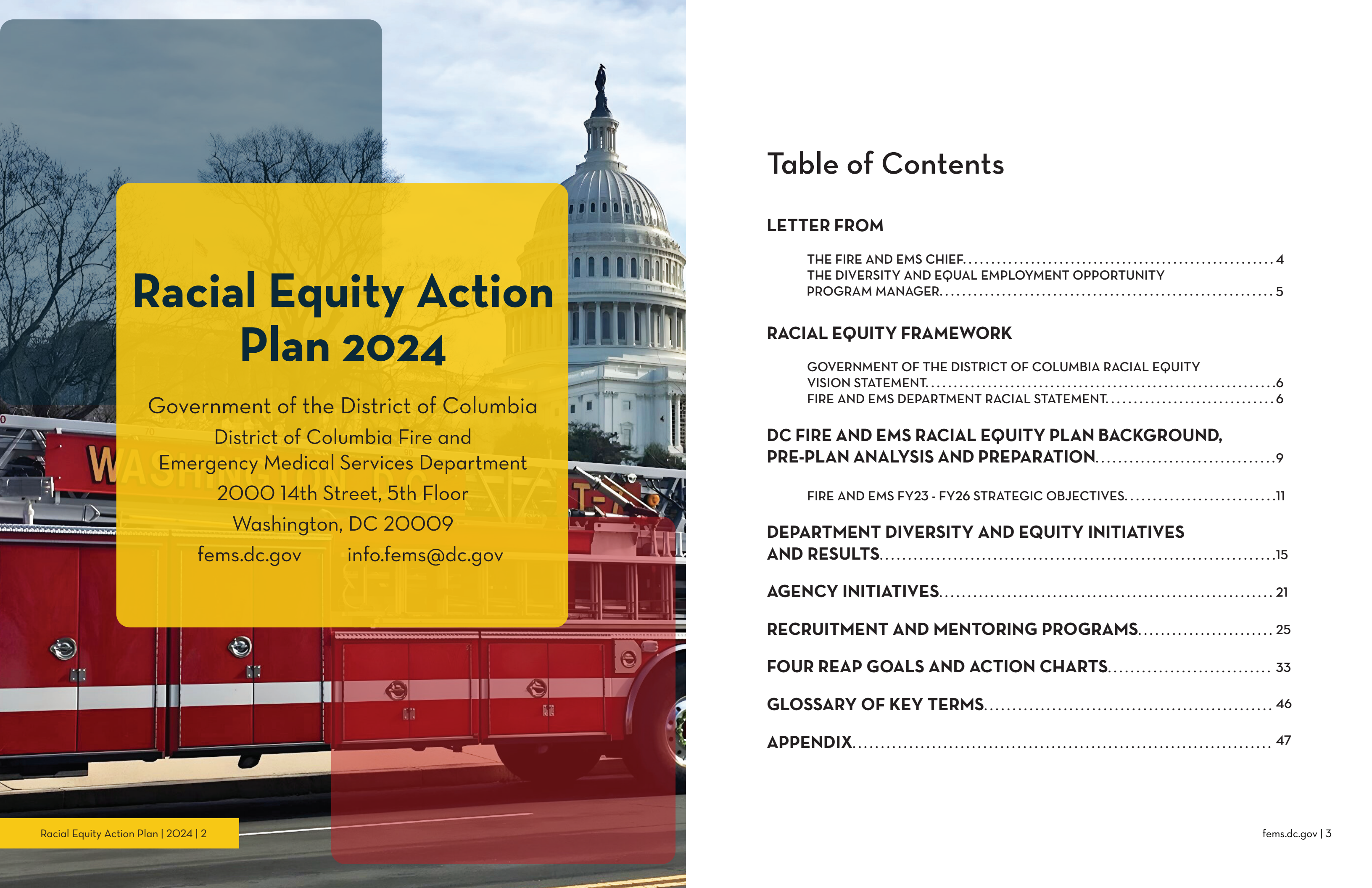


District of Columbia
Fire and Emergency Medical
Services Department

2024 RACIAL EQUITY ACTION PLAN



★ ★ ★
WE ARE
WASHINGTON
GOVERNMENT OF THE
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
DC MURIEL BOWSER, MAYOR



Racial Equity Action Plan 2024

Government of the District of Columbia
District of Columbia Fire and
Emergency Medical Services Department
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Letter from the Fire and EMS Chief



I am pleased to present the first Racial Equity Action Plan (REAP) for the District of Columbia Fire and Emergency Medical Services Department (the Department). Our plan supports the District’s REAP and the four overarching goals developed by the Mayor’s Office of Racial Equity in partnership with DC residents. These goals are:

- 1. DC Government staff understand and are committed to achieving racial equity.
- 2. DC Government is committed to eliminating racial and ethnic inequities.
- 3. DC Government is committed to meaningfully engaging community in government decision making processes and strengthening community partnerships.
- 4. DC Government is an equitable employer and engages in racially equitable hiring, promotion, and retention practices.

This plan presents the Department’s vision for embedding equity in terms of race, ethnicity, gender, and other key elements of inclusion and equality into the fabric of the Department’s culture. It also reflects a strategic initiative to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) both within the Department -- in our recruitment, training, promotion, and other practices -- and externally in our role as first responders protecting the health and safety of the residents and visitors to the District.

This REAP is a dynamic, working document that will evolve as we work as an organization to strengthen our DEI efforts – efforts that have been underway for several years. We are clearly aware of our responsibility in doing so, and the impact this effort will have on our reputation as a leader in DEI in District government, as well as nationally in the fire and EMS service. I look forward to our team’s use of our passion, our experiences, and our biggest asset – our workforce -- to execute the goals in this inaugural Racial Equity Action Plan.

Sincerely,

John A. Donnelly, Sr.
Fire and EMS Chief



Letter from the Diversity and Equal Employment Opportunity Program Manager



The success of our Department relies on how we successfully weave the key elements of Race, Equity, Inclusion, and Equality into our culture. We aim to create an environment where every individual can reach their full potential. Developing and implementing the goals contained inside this Racial Equity Action Plan (REAP) is the first step in that process.

As important as these elements are to creating a productive and supportive environment where everyone thrives, these are often hopeful goals rather than the lived realities of many people across the District. Many groups remain underrepresented and excluded, explicitly or implicitly. Advancing racial equity benefits our people and our productivity and it is our entire community’s responsibility to advance racial equity. Throughout the year, we will collect data, solicit feedback from our community, and regularly communicate our progress. Our overall aim is to empower our leadership and all our community members to become active partners and agents of change.

We see the implementation of the REAP as the beginning steps of our anti-discrimination work. Anti-discrimination and other equity work involves continual assessment, reevaluation, an ongoing openness to change and continual improvement. We are committed to the continual process of transforming our environment to truly reflect our core values of Bravery, Accountability, Safety, Integrity, Compassion, and Service (BASICS) to create a thriving and inclusive organization.

Sincerely,

Kenneth B. Hunter
Diversity and EEO Program Manager



Racial Equity Framework

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA RACIAL EQUITY VISION STATEMENT

We envision a District of Columbia where everyone can thrive with a sense of agency and where race and ethnicity will no longer predict opportunities, outcomes, or the distribution of resources.

FIRE AND EMS DEPARTMENT RACIAL EQUITY STATEMENT

In the District of Columbia Fire and Emergency Medical Services Department (the Department), our core values of Bravery, Accountability, Safety, Integrity, Compassion, and Service (BASICS) are strengthened by the diversity of our workforce. The overall human relations goal of the Department is to build an organizational climate where equity and inclusion in terms of race, ethnicity, and gender improve the culture and operations of the fire and EMS service. Our workforce is comprised of people with many different racial and cultural identities and backgrounds and our employees have unique skills, abilities, talents, and knowledge that encompass the internal and external environments of our public service influence. As a Department, we also seek diversity of thoughts, experiences, and skill sets, not only to demonstrate our leadership in equity and inclusion but also to create a vibrant, resilient Department. The diversity benchmarks that are used by DC Fire and EMS are set to create a long-term pattern for the future of the Department.



DEFINITION OF A RACIAL EQUITY ACTION PLAN

Like racial equity itself, a racial equity action plan is both an outcome and a process. As an outcome, a racial equity plan is the agency's road map and detailed itinerary for change. As a process, drafting a racial equity plan builds staff awareness of the agency's vision for change and capacity to implement that change. A successful process also includes monitoring of and accountability for the plan and communication with internal and external stakeholders on its progress.

A racial equity action plan expresses an agency's commitment to achieving racial equity. Having a clear, centralized plan can help agencies to prioritize attention and resources to build the infrastructure of a new status quo – one in which everyone can thrive, and race no longer predicts one's outcomes. District-wide, agency-level racial equity plans work in harmony by adapting and embedding the District's shared vision of racial equity through agency operations in measurable ways to create a whole-of-government response.

The following offices and roles within the Department were instrumental in creating this REAP and may be named as points of contact in the action charts below.

- Office of the Fire Chief
- Office of the General Counsel
- Office of the Medical Director
- Media and Community Relations Division
- Labor Relations Division
- Operations Division
- Diversity/Equal Employment Opportunity Office
- Recruitment Office
- Human Resources Division
- Training Academy
- Diversity Advisory Committee

**See the organizational chart attached under appendices.*



DC Fire and EMS Racial Equity Plan Background, Pre-Plan Analysis and Preparation

STRATEGIC PLANNING

At the Fire and Emergency Medical Services Department, we realize that strategic planning is an ongoing organizational process of using all available knowledge to document and develop our intended direction forward.

The Department’s annual Agency Performance Plan lays out our strategic direction and reports on the results of the agency’s progress on strategic objectives and performance goals. This five-year process is used to prioritize efforts, effectively allocate resources, align shareholders and employees with the Department’s goals,

and ensure those goals are backed by data and sound reasoning. It is supported by the agency’s budget, including the Racial Equity Budget Tool which helps to identify how the investment will assist in mitigating racial equity gaps in the District and the Department.

FIRE AND EMS FY23 - FY26 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

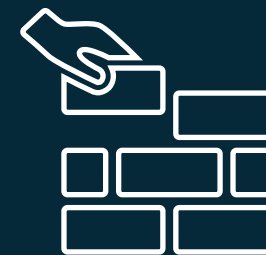
As part of Fire and EMS strategic planning, the Diversity/EEO Office establishes administrative goals which align with Fire and EMS strategic objectives while supporting citywide statutory requirements and regulatory commitments.

Two Strategic Objectives (1 and 3) from the Fire and Emergency Medical Services Department’s FY23-FY26 Strategic Plan form the foundation for the development of this Racial Equity Action Plan:



1. Embrace a supportive work environment focused on creating a safe, competent, and professional workforce team.

- a.** Attract, recruit, and retain high performing and diverse workforce team members.
- b.** Train and develop our workforce team members to become competent professionals.
- c.** Train and develop our workforce team members to become professional leaders.
- d.** Continually strengthen our organizational culture to value community involvement and public service by our workforce team members.
- e.** Continually strengthen our organizational culture to improve the safety and health of our work force team members.
- f.** Continually strengthen our organizational culture to recognize and appreciate the contributions made by our workforce team members.
- g.** Continually strengthen our labor/management partnership to collaboratively achieve organizational success.



2. Build collaborative relationships within our community to improve service delivery.

- a.** Build and improve community trust by sharing information with the public and media.
- b.** Build and improve relationships within our community to better understand service delivery expectations.
- c.** Build and improve relationships with other District agencies to better integrate services for our customers.
- d.** Build and improve relationships within the region to better share resources with our partners.

Goal 1

Enhance the Understanding of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, and Equal Opportunity to Drive Cultural Awareness

Enhance the understanding of the Diversity/EEO Office mission and responsibilities to further develop cultural awareness within the Department.

Goal 2

Deliver Meaningful Diversity and Inclusion Communication

Engage stakeholders in the Department's diversity and inclusion mission and communicate the inherent benefits and opportunities in achieving the diversity and inclusion objectives.

Goal 3

Ensure sustainability of the Diversity/EEO Office

Develop the strategic tools, policies, and services that support the long-term sustainability and effectiveness of the diversity and inclusion mission.



Fire and EMS utilized the core concepts of a strengths analysis performed as part of the racial equity cohort program to build the FY23 Strategic Objectives.

The practices were:

1. Improved recruitment focused on diversity,
2. Empowering Women to Lead and related external messaging,
3. Applying DC resident preference points in exam process,
4. New exam process, and
5. New Summer Youth Employment Program.

These objectives align with the agency's Racial Equity Action Plan and will bring us closer to achieving our internal and external goals. Links: If you'd like to read more about our performance goals and strategic initiatives see [FEMS23.pdf \(dc.gov\)](#).



Department Diversity and Equity Initiatives and Results

TO SUPPORT OUR DIVERSITY AND EQUITY INITIATIVES WE IMPLEMENTED THE FOLLOWING PRACTICES IN FY 2022:

1. Improved recruitment focused on culturally diverse groups.
2. Empowering Women to Lead and related external messaging.
3. New process for the Firefighter EMT entrance exam. Previously the entrance exams were conducted in person at the Convention Center on a single day once every 3 to 5 years. More than 3000 individuals would be seated for the entrance exam with no flexibility for the applicants in terms of date and time of the exam. The examination process was very labor intensive and expensive for the Fire and EMS Department requiring large amounts of overtime and the cost of renting the space and equipment as well as hiring a vendor to develop and validate the testing tool. Followed by an extended period for the scoring of tests. In 2022, the Fire and EMS Department introduced a new and improved testing process that included options for virtual testing as well as small group in-person testing and locations that are more convenient for the applicants. Testing is available over a two - four weeks period

with applicants being able to schedule a testing time that is convenient for them. The testing tool has been used nationally and validated for accuracy and to avoid any biases. The test scores are available in a short turnaround time and the DC Fire and EMS HR staff time is significantly reduced. It also minimizes cost, with no expenses for facility or equipment rentals. The cost for testing is on a per applicant basis with no costs for DC residents to test.

4. The DC Fire and EMS ACTION Program, a summer enrichment program for students who attend Washington, D.C. public or charter high schools. The ACTION program is a partnership through the Government of the District of Columbia's Department of Employment Services (DOES), Marion S. Barry Summer Youth Employment Program. The overall goal is to provide exposure and understanding of the Departments various missions and responsibilities in overseeing the overall safety and fire prevention for the District of Columbia residents.

IN FY22, WE INCREASED THE NUMBER OF:

District residents in our staff to 600 which is

31% of the total uniformed members.

Today, 13% of the Department’s workforce is female; 44% is African American; and 31% are District residents. The percentage of women in uniform in our ranks compares favorably to the national average of uniformed women in the fire service, which is 4%. Although our workforce compares to national trends and in some cases exceeds national averages, the Recruitment Division has established several recruitment goals that will strengthen our agency and lead to a more diverse workforce. Below is a highlight of some of our recruitment goals.

WOMEN comprise only 13% of the Fire and EMS workforce (243 female firefighters). The Recruitment Division has set a goal to increase the number of female firefighters to 300 by 2025. To accomplish this goal, recruiting efforts must be centered on attracting and mentoring qualified female applicants. The Recruitment Division will identify a member that will focus on developing programs, scheduling events, and hosting orientation sessions that welcome and encourage female applicants.

Women in our staff to 243 which is

13% of the total uniformed members.

OTHER RESPONSIBILITIES WILL INCLUDE:

LATINOS comprise only 3% of the Fire and EMS workforce (65 Latino firefighters). The Recruitment Division has set a goal to increase the number of Latino firefighters to 5% (92) by the year 2025. To accomplish this goal, recruiting efforts must be centered on attracting and mentoring qualified Latino applicants. Therefore, the Recruitment Division will identify a member that will focus on developing programs, scheduling events, and hosting orientation sessions that welcome and encourage Latino applicants.

OTHER RESPONSIBILITIES WILL INCLUDE:

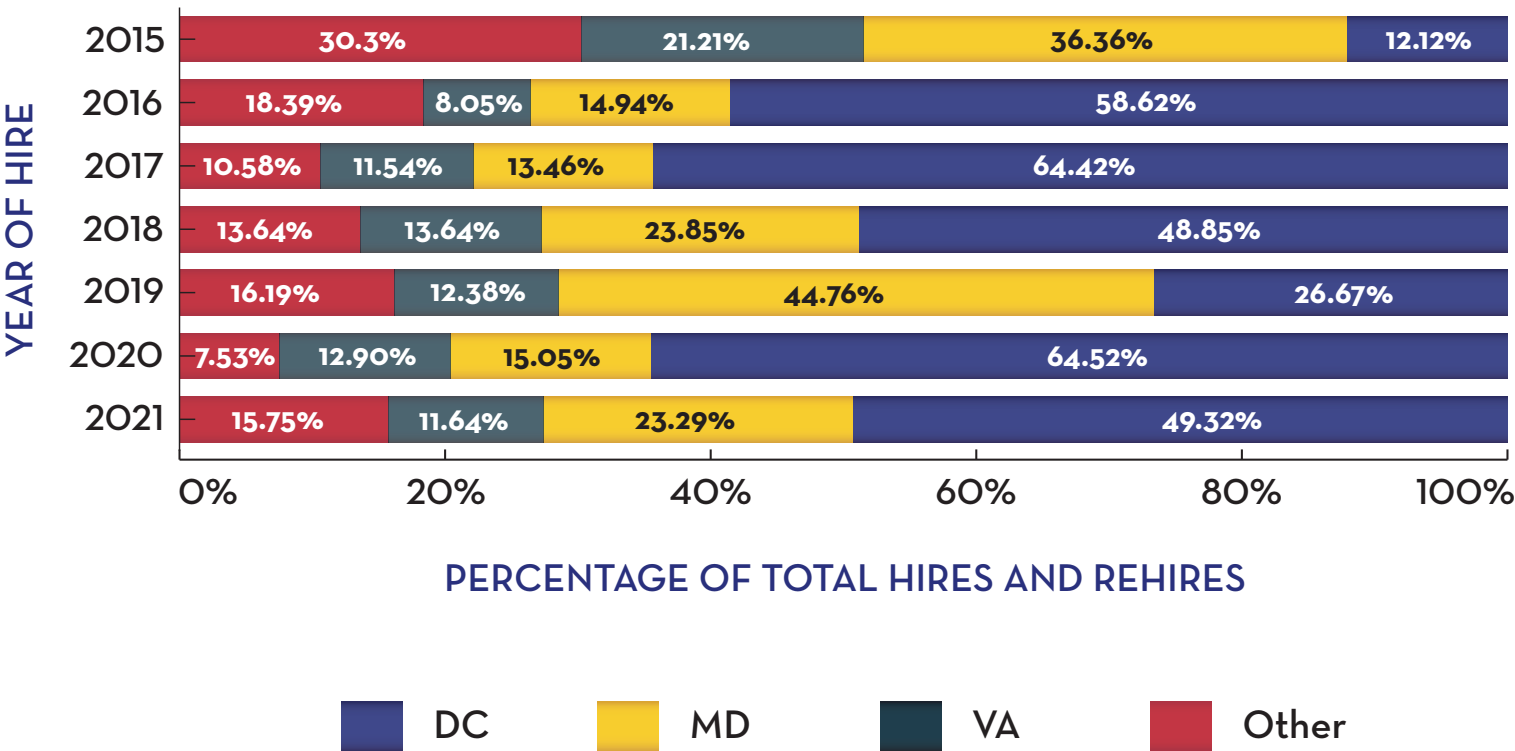
Currently, **ASIANS** make up 1% of the Fire and EMS workforce (15 Asian firefighters). The Recruitment Division has set a goal to increase the number of Asian firefighters to 2% (38) by the year 2025. To accomplish this goal, recruiting efforts must be centered on attracting and mentoring qualified Asian applicants. The

Recruitment Division will identify a member that will focus on developing programs, scheduling events, and hosting orientation sessions that welcome and encourage Asian applicants.

In recent years, our agency has witnessed a significant retirement bubble that resulted in a decrease in the proportion of African American staff at FEMS in 2023 compared to 2015. Nonetheless, most of our firefighter hires

continue to be African American, particularly District resident hires. Since 2016, most District residents hired as firefighters identified as Black or African American. In 2021, while 65.71% of District residents hired or rehired identified as Black or African American, the proportion of District residents hired or rehired as firefighters who identified as Black or African American was 88.89%.

HIRES BY STATE (FIREFIGHTERS)





Most encouraging is the significant growth in the number of female supervisors and managers. Today, there are a total of 24 women in supervisory or managerial roles:

- Four female Sergeants
- Seven female Lieutenants
- Nine female EMS Battalion Supervisors (Captains)
- Two female Battalion Fire Chiefs
- One female Deputy Fire Chief
- One female Assistant Fire Chief

We have also prioritized the career development and growth of our small civilian workforce.

OFFICE OF RACIAL EQUITY PILOT COHORT AGENCY

“In March of 2022, we celebrated Women’s History Month by highlighting our women leaders and the promotion of Queen Anunay, a native Washingtonian, as the first uniformed Assistant Fire Chief in the history of the Department. As we celebrated this milestone, we had already been selected by the Office of Racial Equity (ORE) as one of the Racial Equity Pilot Cohort agencies. As part of the cohort program, the Department received a very positive Strengths Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) analysis from the ORE. The analysis found that the Department has “robust [DEI] plans ... goals and objectives [that] map clear targets and chart a path to achieving them through a strengths-based approach, a whole-of-agency commitment, and the meaningful engagement of residents and stakeholders. The D&I/EEO strategy for FYs 2020-2023 provides a robust foundation on which to build and strengthen the agency’s racial equity work.”

The analysis noted our engaged staff and leadership, citing the Diversity Advisory Council as a model within the District for other agencies to follow, and that our strategic initiatives “identify disparate health and safety outcomes by race and ethnicity and offer programmatic solutions;” that we show “great initiative in [our] racial equity training plans and [are] encouraged to document and share its practices with other agencies as a model in coordination with ORE.” It also documented that our staff is diverse, especially compared to fire departments nationally, and that our “proposal for a community listening tour shows the agency is embracing a core tenet of racial equity which is to work directly with people who have been impacted by structural and other forms of racism to collaboratively identify policy and program gaps and to develop mutually beneficial solutions.”

At the same time, the ORE analysis revealed important areas where we have an opportunity to strengthen our work. ORE’s analysis cited the following as areas for improvement, with which we agree: staff capacity to support DEI initiatives, diversity in advancement opportunities, and post-pandemic mental health support for employees. The recent COVID-19 pandemic posed a significant challenge to emergency response workers while highlighting their value to the community. We must build on this public sentiment while supporting and sustaining our staff.





Agency Initiatives

INITIATIVES SUPPORTING EQUITY

Diversity in hiring, retention, and promotion is only one part of advancing equity, diversity, and inclusion within the Department. Internal climate and a sense of belonging are built through day-to-day experiences, professional and personal development opportunities, and discipline practices.

Diversity of thought, lived experience, and skill sets is only one component of the change Fire and EMS is working toward. Fostering a sense of inclusion and belonging in the workplace are important factors in creating an agency where staff can thrive by being themselves.

In recognizing this, all Chief Officers were required to participate in a course called “Leading With Awareness” in 2019 about implicit

bias. The course was developed in partnership with The Moss Group, a small woman-owned business in the District. The training was well received and expanded to senior management in 2021, and to over 50 percent of the Fire and EMS workforce (over 1100 employees) in 2022. The course received high praise from most participants. The remaining Fire and EMS workforce will receive it in FY 24.

Fire and EMS prioritize diversity and equity not only in our training agenda, but in our discourse. Since late 2020, our Department Chief has hosted three Department-wide town halls on equity, and inclusion in terms of race, ethnicity, and gender. Those conversations inspired many additional initiatives, including:

- The launch of the Department’s Diversity Advisory Council
- Publication of the Department’s Statement on Diversity (above)
- Two Department-wide workshops providing study tips and information to cultivate a level playing field for participation in the 2022 promotional process (officer exams)
- Multiple social media videos highlighting Department employees from backgrounds which are historically underrepresented in emergency services to emphasize the value of their perspectives (e.g., women, Asian American staff), the importance of diversity, and to encourage recruitment and retention of employees from these communities; and
- Participation in a national working group on reproductive health in the fire service, where we shared our Department’s progressive policies on lactation, pregnancy, and EEO with our peer agencies across the country.

INITIATIVES TO ENGAGE AND STRENGTHEN COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

Fire and EMS remains committed to improving the health of the communities we serve through a prevention-focused, evidence-based approach that includes partnerships with community organizations and practices informed by community feedback.

Our Community Outreach efforts are led by our internal core value of **SERVICE** and the belief that intentional community engagement is a core tenant of racial equity. The Department’s engagement with the public is critical both as a front-line agency that works in constant contact with DC residents and visitors, as well as a profession that uses a hiring model of recruiting new classes of trainees on a regular basis. Both functions have unique needs and require unique approaches.

TODAY, Fire and EMS provides a host of community engagement and feedback

opportunities for District residents. However, we recognize the need for a program that proactively seeks out community concerns, aspirations, and values. We wish to create a series of interactions where we are more focused on listening instead of deciding what the community needs to hear. Simply put, we want to create opportunities to learn. We also want to create opportunities that are intentional about ensuring we are reaching all our communities in the District, with a focus on Black and Brown communities. Community engagement plans can be found in the Four REAP Goals and Action Charts section starting on page 33.

EXISTING INITIATIVES IN SUPPORT OF WOMEN

Women serve in various roles in the fire service such as firefighter, officer, chief, paramedic, EMT, fire inspector, arson investigator, fire safety educator, and training instructor.

This is important because our leadership goal under Diversity, Equity, and Inclusive is to create a gender inclusive workforce.

We realize a gender inclusive workforce is essential for our department to achieve our full potential for the following reasons:

- A gender inclusive workforce provides diverse life experiences and ideas that can help our department craft new solutions to long-standing problems.
- With more experiences and different ideas, our department becomes more flexible, proactive and better able to adapt to new challenges.
- With the makeup of our department reflects or exceeds the makeup of our community, we can provide a higher level of service because our personnel better understand community needs.



IN 2016, the small number of women in supervisory positions in our Department was stark and unacceptable. We knew that a lack of diversity in management was a strategic weakness and worked immediately to address it. We were proud to have **Senior Advisor Beverly Perry** join us on July 19, 2016, when we launched our Empowering Women to Lead (EWTL) program. EWTL is an initiative that includes networking opportunities and career support, as well as professional development mentoring. Since 2016, three classes of EWTL mentees have rotated through each of the Department’s divisions to learn about the Department, its various channels for career growth, and strategies for how to advance in their development.

In 2019, we partnered with many of the members of the first graduating EWTL mentee class to launch the Women’s Advisory Council (WAC). The WAC advises the executive leadership team on the many issues faced by our female staff members and runs programming to support employees throughout the agency, including female recruits when they enter the Department, male officers who supervise women, and women who participate in the promotional exam process for the ranks of Sergeant,

Lieutenant, and Captain. Many of the women who have been promoted since 2016 benefited from the EWTL and the support of members of the WAC.

We have also been pleased to promote women at the most senior levels of management in the Department. In February of 2019 we received local and national media attention when then Fire Chief Gregory Dean promoted **Keisha Clemencia** and **Queen Anunay** to the rank of Battalion Fire Chief. Chief Anunay was recognized by the Ford Motor Company as one of the “Women Who Power America Forward.” In the 2019 entrance exam process, a record-breaking 25 percent of the candidates on the register were women. Each successive class since the 2019 register has included a higher number of women recruits than we have ever seen, contributing to the overall increase in female employees.



Recruitment and Mentoring Programs



The Applicant Orientation Program

is designed as an introductory program to take individuals that are identified in the recruitment process as 2nd and 3rd year high school students and introduce them to the tasks and skills taught at the Training Academy. The participants will be given an overview of firefighter duties and responsibilities, the 24-hour shift, emergency activities, and physical fitness requirements.

The program is designed to give potential candidates a look into the Fire and EMS culture and provide them with an accurate measure of the commitment, qualifications, skills, abilities, and determination required to become a Washington DC Firefighter. It is an excellent introductory program for those individuals who have never been exposed to a career in the fire service, or it can expand on the level of training for those who have participated in the Fire and EMS A.C.T.I.O.N Program.

The Fire and EMS Applicant Orientation Program will play a vital part in the recruitment process by assisting non-traditional applicants to become familiar with the career opportunity. This Program will be hosted virtually on a scheduled monthly. In the program, participants will be introduced to the various services provided by Fire and EMS, and CPAT and fitness requirements.

At the conclusion of the program, participants will be better prepared to complete the application and hiring process, in addition to learning what is expected of a Recruit Firefighter. As a result, retention rates should increase among the diverse group of candidates the Fire and EMS has recruited and mentored. Our goal is for these individuals to receive an invitation to this program well before beginning the testing process.



The vision for the Paramedic School is ambitious:

Through a partnership with a local university, DC Fire and EMS aims to tackle numerous inequities simultaneously. One aspect of this vision is to offer DC residents a pathway to the middle class by integrating the Paramedic School with an established program training EMTs. Additionally, the school seeks to enhance diversity within Fire and EMS providers, reflecting the communities they serve. Notably, becoming a firefighter-paramedic stands out as one of the few remaining middle-class careers that doesn't mandate a college degree.

There is a Paramedic shortage nationwide, and Fire and EMS is not immune to these challenges. The diversity of the emergency medical services (EMS) workforce is not reflective of the population of the United States (US) and is not projected to change significantly in the near future. A workforce that is reflective of the increasing diversity of communities in which health care professionals serve is critical to delivering high-quality, patient-centered care. As such, many areas of health care, including EMS, have embraced the call to develop more diverse and inclusive workforces.

The benefits of an inclusive and representative workforce have been demonstrated in multiple health care sectors. Clinicians from underrepresented racial and ethnic backgrounds are more likely to work in under-served communities, resulting in improved access to care, patient satisfaction, and outcomes. The racial and gender concordance of patients and their health care professionals may influence treatments, patient-clinician communication, and patient perceptions of the care they receive. Diversity and cultural competence in medicine have also been considered important in improving patient safety. Finally, diverse teams are better able to creatively approach challenges by bringing multiple perspectives to problem solving.

An article published by the National Institute of Health, “A Thousand Cuts: Racial and Ethnic Disparities in Emergency Medicine”, outlines the racial and ethnic challenges facing many healthcare organizations as the recruit of paramedics falls short of set goals. Below is an excerpt as it relates to racial equity.

An article published by the National Institute of Health, “A Thousand Cuts: Racial and Ethnic Disparities in Emergency Medicine”, outlines the racial and ethnic challenges facing many healthcare organizations as the recruit of paramedics falls short of set goals. Below is an excerpt as it relates to racial equity.

Recognizing the need to foster diversity and inclusion in the paramedic workforce, the

Recruitment Office is determined to develop a robust recruitment campaign targeting paramedics both locally and nationally. In pursuit of this goal, and with a particular focus on underrepresented groups, the Recruitment Office aims to increase the number of paramedics to 5% (10) over the Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) positions available by the year 2025.

“Despite the many advances in emergency and prehospital medicine, racial and ethnic inequities in care persist. In the emergency department, ethnic and racial minorities experience many different types of inequality, including increased wait times, less frequent pain medication administration, and decreased rates of CT and MRI imaging. Although these disparities are well established in the hospital, their extent in the prehospital setting is less certain. Emergency medical services (EMS) treat over 16 million patients annually, yet relatively little is known with regards to treatment differences based on race and ethnicity. The article by Kennel et al, explores differences in EMS pain management practices for racial and ethnic minority patients with blunt trauma injuries...”

Racial and ethnic disparities in medicine may result, in part, from implicit bias at the level of the healthcare provider. Unlike explicit, conscious acts of discrimination, implicit bias is subconscious, silently informing healthcare decisions through the influence of underlying biased attitudes and beliefs. Implicit bias is prevalent throughout society, and well-documented in medicine, especially in healthcare settings with relatively limited contact with racial and ethnic minorities. That said, the measurable effects of implicit bias on healthcare decisions are not always recognizable, and evidence suggests that implicit bias rarely overwhelms the standard of care clinical decision-making and treatment algorithms. For example, little evidence supports that discrimination or bias influence initial critical decisions involving acute trauma and surgical patients”.



To accomplish this objective, recruitment efforts will be strategically designed to attract qualified paramedic applicants from underrepresented communities. The Recruitment Office will appoint a dedicated team member to devise inclusive programs, schedule events, and host orientation sessions that resonate with individuals from these underrepresented groups. These strategies will not only welcome but actively encourage candidates from diverse backgrounds, including those who have been traditionally underrepresented in the paramedic profession.

Furthermore, the division will prioritize implementing the Prevention of Implicit Bias in Healthcare training in collaboration with the Diversity/EEO, Medical Director, and Training Division offices. This training will help ensure that the recruitment process is not only inclusive but also free from any implicit biases that may hinder the participation of underrepresented groups. These comprehensive recruitment strategies are essential to cultivating a paramedic workforce that reflects the diversity of the communities they serve.

With the pool of available Paramedics shrinking, it is imperative that the Recruitment Division develop a robust recruitment campaign targeting Paramedics from across the United States. The Recruitment Division has set a goal to increase the number of paramedics to 5% (10) over the FTE positions available by the year 2025. To accomplish this goal, recruiting efforts must be centered on attracting qualified paramedic applicants. The Recruitment Division will identify a member that will focus on developing programs, scheduling events, and hosting orientation sessions that welcome and encourage Paramedic applicants. Other responsibilities will include Prevention of Implicit Bias in Healthcare training in partnership with our Diversity/EEO, Medical Director, and Training Division offices.



Advertising and promoting Fire and EMS to attract a diverse applicant pool is critical.

Through social media platforms, the Recruitment Division can reach every racial and ethnic grouping to promote Fire and EMS. Social media allows Fire and EMS to have a presence at multiple events, share news and information, and place a face and reflection on the community in all we do. The Recruitment Division will work closely with the Media and Community Relations Division to ensure consistency of messaging.

The Recruitment Division will work with the vendor selected for our website development to determine the most effective messaging avenues for maximum branding. Print publications, television, radio, literature, and other social media efforts will be examined and analyzed for effectiveness. To generate the most exposure for the money spent, our messaging will be targeted toward those groups that are underrepresented in the process, specifically women and people of diverse backgrounds.



The Recruitment Division’s goal is to prepare the applicants to be successful every step of the way.

Before an applicant starts the selection process, they may need support and familiarization with the profession. This is accomplished by providing information, education, and training about the functions of a firefighter’s job, as well as exposing applicants to the requirements of the examination process, including minimum requirements, certifications, CPAT, written test, medical and psychological examination, and the background investigation process.



The primary goal of the Recruitment Division is to provide a sufficient applicant pool of well-qualified candidates who represent the community we serve.

The recruitment Division will utilize a “targeted recruitment” approach for underrepresented groups. The targeted recruitment is accomplished through event participation, outreach and mentoring programs, and media exposure toward groups least represented in the Fire and EMS. The Recruitment Division will be responsible for scheduling events that will achieve our goals.



Youth Development Programs provide early education and exposure into a career within Fire and EMS.

The programs are designed to enlighten high school students about the opportunities offered in the fire service and will serve as a long-term recruitment tool. For example, the Recruitment Division will support the Marion S. Barry Summer Youth Employment Program through our internal initiative titled **A.C.T.I.O.N. Program**.



The Fire and EMS Fire Safety Education Section proactively seeks out community concerns by educating citizens (of all ages and ethnic groups) in ways to help reduce the number of fire related incidents.

Our focus addresses the types of fires that occur in our city as well as the locations where those highest numbers occur. As a fire service, we use the nationally recognized Community Risk Reduction (CRR) model to identify the needs of a specific community and together with community partners such as PEPCO, American Red Cross, Department of Aging and Community Living and MPD’s Asian Liaison Unit we can pinpoint key components and work together to manage and mitigate risks within that community.



Four REAP Goals and Action Charts

THE REAP IS BUILT ON AND GUIDED BY FOUR MAJOR GOALS:

1. DC Fire and EMS staff **understand and are committed to achieving racial equity.**
2. DC Fire and EMS staff are **committed to eliminating racial, gender, and ethnic inequalities.**
3. DC Fire and EMS staff are **committed to meaningfully engaging community and strengthening community partnerships.**
4. DC Fire and EMS is an **equitable employer** and engages in racially equitable hiring, promotion, and retention practices.



DC Fire and EMS staff understand and are committed to achieving racial equity.

DESIRED OUTCOMES

Develop and implement racial equity trainings that support Fire and EMS staff understanding and commitment to racial equity in their work.

INDICATOR(S) OF DESIRED OUTCOMES

DC Fire and EMS employees will develop their knowledge of racial equity and develop strategies to advance racial equity throughout DC FEMS.

SUPPORTING ACTION 1

In a classroom environment using lecture and group discussion, Fire and EMS will implement trainings – such as the Leading with Awareness Training – to promote awareness of implicit bias in decision making and microaggressions.

Performance Measure	Timeline	Responsible Team/Role	Required Resources	Accountability Structure
Percent of agency staff who have completed the Implicit Bias and Microaggressions training	FY 2024	Diversity/EEO Office, Training Academy	Classroom space and funding	Office of the Fire Chief

SUPPORTING ACTION 2

Post training review of outcomes of performance and disciplinary processes.

Performance Measure	Timeline	Responsible Team/Role	Required Resources	Accountability Structure
Collect and analyze demographic data to include race, age, gender, and residency (High School attended for Cadets) to determine if there are trends in performance and disciplinary processes and understand how to plan strategically for future training and recruitment needs	FY 2024	Diversity/EEO Office, Training Academy	Classroom space and funding	Office of the Fire Chief



DC Fire and EMS is committed to eliminating racial, gender, and ethnic inequities.

DESIRED OUTCOMES
Provide community risk reduction to residents in need.

INDICATOR(S) OF DESIRED OUTCOMES
The number of fire deaths in occupancies that are lacking working smoke alarms will decrease.

SUPPORTING ACTION 1				
DC Fire and EMS will commit to making sure that all homes in the District have working smoke alarms by conducting smoke alarm installations and provide home safety inspections and education as a part of the Fire Prevention Division’s comprehensive home fire safety campaign.				
Performance Measure	Timeline	Responsible Team/Role	Required Resources	Accountability Structure
# of homes inspected and trained; # of alarms installed	Ongoing	Fire Prevention	Smoke alarms are currently donated by business partners (PEPCO and American Red Cross)	Fire Prevention Division
SUPPORTING ACTION 2				
The Fire and EMS Fire Safety Education Section proactively seeks out community concerns by educating citizens (of all ages and ethnic groups) in ways to help reduce the number of fire related incidents. Our focus addresses the types of fires that occur in our city as well as the locations where those highest numbers occur.				
Performance Measure	Timeline	Responsible Team/Role	Required Resources	Accountability Structure
Tracking data on fire related incidents through the nationally recognized Community Risk Reduction (CRR) model to identify the needs of a specific community	Ongoing	Fire Prevention	N/A	Fire Prevention Division



DC Fire and EMS is committed to eliminating racial, gender, and ethnic inequities.

DESIRED OUTCOMES
Improve EMS clinical and related operational processes.

INDICATOR(S) OF DESIRED OUTCOMES
In the next five years, DC Fire and EMS will have conducted improvement projects, including small scale projects led by staff. An increase in employees being trained on improvement science concepts, an increase in field-initiated improvement projects, and an increase in the number of training and education programs within the Department that incorporate improvement science concepts/principles.

SUPPORTING ACTION 1
Identify flaws, deficiencies, and inefficiencies in EMS clinical and related operational processes and systems through Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI).

Performance Measure	Timeline	Responsible Team/Role	Required Resources	Accountability Structure
# of cases reviewed; Published quarterly or yearly reports	FY 2029	CQI Manager	Two additional staff trained to teach and advise on quality improvement and principles and QI project management systems	Office of the Medical Director

SUPPORTING ACTION 2
DC FEMS offers free classes on the basics of Hands-only CPR and AED awareness. Hands-only CPR is a technique that involves chest compressions without artificial respiration. Studies indicate that Hands-only CPR performed immediately increases a cardiac arrest victim's chance of survival. The training instructs participants to focus on their hand placement, tempo and the number of compressions.

Performance Measure	Timeline	Responsible Team/Role	Required Resources	Accountability Structure
Collect the zip code of number people trained to add to event log	Ongoing and on demand	Office of the Medical Director	Personnel from Department who are CPR certified and training equipment	Office of the Medical Director



DC Fire and EMS is committed to meaningfully engaging community and strengthening community partnerships.

DESIRED OUTCOMES

Improve Fire and EMS’s understanding of the needs and priorities of the many communities in which the agency works.

INDICATOR(S) OF DESIRED OUTCOMES

Fire and EMS understands the needs of the communities they serve and brings its services and programs in line with such needs.

SUPPORTING ACTION 1 Implement “Fire and EMS Community Pulse Check” initiative to engage District communities.				
Performance Measure	Timeline	Responsible Team/Role	Required Resources	Accountability Structure
# of events hosted; # of residents participating, etc.	FY 24 - FY 25	Diversity/EEO Office, Human Resources	Facilities	Chief of Staff
SUPPORTING ACTION 2 Plan community conversations that are accessible and representative of DC’s population. We should have representation from EMS, training, recruiting, and executive staff which includes Black and Brown leadership and members. We must have Spanish and ASL interpreters on-site at every meeting making sure the conversation is accessible to all. Interpretation for other languages will be on an as-needed basis.				
Performance Measure	Timeline	Responsible Team/Role	Required Resources	Accountability Structure
Number of new initiatives or policy changes based on feedback	FY 24 - FY 25	Diversity/EEO Office	Data and/or information from community conversations	Chief of Staff
SUPPORTING ACTION 3 Need to be in all eight wards in locations that are accessible by public transportation in safe spaces and most likely in the evenings when many are home from work. We need to provide a virtual link to these “meetings” so those who can’t join in person, can still be a part of the conversation and provide feedback.				
Performance Measure	Timeline	Responsible Team/Role	Required Resources	Accountability Structure
Brief new changes or policy updates	FY 24 - FY 25	N/A	Partnerships with community organizations	Chief of Staff



DC Fire and EMS is an equitable employer and engages in racially equitable hiring, promotion, and retention practices.

DESIRED OUTCOMES

The Department will analyze Department staff data to identify any human resource trends which suggest different outcomes by staff race, ethnicity, gender, or other protected status.

INDICATOR(S) OF DESIRED OUTCOMES

Differences in staff outcomes by protected status are narrowed or eliminated.

SUPPORTING ACTION 1

The Recruitment Division will determine if an event is meeting our recruitment goals. Effective recruiting is accomplished when the Recruitment Division captures applicant information at each event, follow-up contact is made within three days and the invitation is emailed to them for the Applicant Orientation Program. These actions will assist us to track and measure the effectiveness of our efforts.

Performance Measure	Timeline	Responsible Team/Role	Required Resources	Accountability Structure
An “After-Action Report” following every event or presentation will be performed to determine if resources should be allocated to future events	Annually	Recruitment	Funding through the budget process in the Office of Resource Allocation	Human Resources, Recruitment, Diversity/EEO Office

SUPPORTING ACTION 2

Advertising and promoting Fire and EMS to attract a diverse applicant pool is critical. Through social media platforms, the Recruitment Division can reach every racial and ethnic grouping to promote Fire and EMS. Social media allows Fire and EMS to have a presence at multiple events, share news and information, and place a face and reflection on the community in all we do. The Recruitment Division will work closely with the Media and Community Relations Division to ensure consistency of messaging.

The Recruitment Division will work with the vendor selected for our website development to determine the most effective messaging avenues for maximum branding. Print publications, television, radio, literature, and other social media efforts will be examined and analyzed for effectiveness. To generate the most exposure for the money spent, our messaging will be targeted toward those groups that are underrepresented in the process, specifically women and people of diverse ethnicities. The following tactics will be used to increase awareness:

Performance Measure	Timeline	Responsible Team/Role	Required Resources	Accountability Structure
Analyzing applicant pool for number of social hits versus number of applicants	Bi-annually	Recruitment/ Human Resources	Social Media platforms, HR Applicant data	Recruitment/ Human Resources

SUPPORTING ACTION 3

Before an applicant starts the selection process, they may need support and familiarization with the profession. The Recruitment Division’s goal is to prepare the applicant to be successful every step of the way. This is accomplished by providing information, education, and training about the functions of a firefighter’s job, as well as exposing applicants to the requirements of the examination process, including minimum requirements, certifications, CPAT, written test, medical and psychological examination, and the background investigation process.

Performance Measure	Timeline	Responsible Team/Role	Required Resources	Accountability Structure
Hosting recruitment events, attending career fairs, application webinars	Ongoing	Recruitment	Social media and technology	Recruitment

SUPPORTING ACTION 4

The primary goal of the Recruitment Division is to provide a sufficient applicant pool of well-qualified candidates who represent the community we serve. The recruitment Division will utilize a “targeted recruitment” approach for underrepresented groups. The targeted recruitment is accomplished through event participation, outreach and mentoring programs, and media exposure toward groups least represented in the Fire and EMS. The Recruitment Division will be responsible for scheduling events that will achieve our goals.

Performance Measure	Timeline	Responsible Team/Role	Required Resources	Accountability Structure
Hosting recruitment events, attending career fairs, application webinars	Ongoing	Recruitment	Social media and technology	Recruitment

SUPPORTING ACTION 5

Youth Development Programs provide early education and exposure into a career within Fire and EMS. The programs are designed to enlighten high school students about the opportunities offered in the fire service and will serve as a long-term recruitment tool. For example, the Recruitment Division will support the Marion S. Barry Summer Youth Employment Program through our internal initiative titled A.C.T.I.O.N. program.

Performance Measure	Timeline	Responsible Team/Role	Required Resources	Accountability Structure
Exposing high school youth to careers in Fire and EMS	Annual (6-week program)	Office of Diversity/EEO	Staff volunteers: Firefighters, EMS providers, civilian	Human Resources and Office of the Fire Chief

SUPPORTING ACTION 6

Develop female firefighters for leadership positions within Department through programs such as Empowering Women to Lead Mentorship Program.

Performance Measure	Timeline	Responsible Team/Role	Required Resources	Accountability Structure
% of women in uniform % of women in uniform in higher ranks	Annual program consisting of a 1 week a month rotation to each Bureau in the Department	Diversity/EEO Office Women’s Advisory Council	Funding through Office of the Fire Chief, Assistant Fire Chiefs, Interagency Agreements	Office of the Fire Chief



Glossary of Key Terms

	DEFINITION
CORE VALUES	The guiding principles that define our identity and our members’ choices.
EQUALITY	Quality or state of having the same rights and opportunities.
DIVERSITY	The practice or quality of including or involving people from a range of different social and ethnic backgrounds and of different genders, sexual orientations, etc.
EQUITY	Fairness or justice in the way people are treated.
INCLUSION	The practice or policy of providing equal access to opportunities and resources for people who might otherwise be excluded or marginalized.
STRATEGIC PLANNING	The art of creating specific business strategies, implementing them, and evaluating the results of executing the plan.
RACIAL EQUITY STATEMENT	Narrative that explains internal processes to eliminate racial disparities and to improve overall outcomes for everyone.



Appendix

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA FIRE AND EMS DEPARTMENT - FIRE CHIEF
https://fems.dc.gov/biography/fire_chief
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA FIRE AND EMS DEPARTMENT - ORGANIZATIONAL CHART
https://fems.dc.gov/page/dc-fire-and-ems-organizational-chart
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA FIRE AND EMS DEPARTMENT - MISSION AND VISION
https://fems.dc.gov/page/mission-and-vision-01
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA FIRE AND EMS DEPARTMENT - FY 23 ANNUAL PERFORMANCE MEASURES
https://oca.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/oca/publication/attachments/FEMS23.pdf



 **GOVERNMENT OF THE
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
MURIEL BOWSER, MAYOR**

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