

FES Quarterly Report

Facilities & Environmental Services, Albemarle County

United Way Day of Caring



Senior PM Montie Breeden lending a helping hand

On October 9th, 2024, team members of the FES Facilities Planning and Construction Division partnered with Therapeutic Adventures, Inc., and Thomas Jefferson Trout Unlimited to participate in the Greater Charlottesville Area, United Way Day of Caring.

County Staff joined like-minded volunteer teams from the University of Virginia (UVA) and Trout Unlimited for a wonderful day of service in the Moorman's River Trout Management Area. This is a beautiful stretch of the Moorman's River in western Albemarle County, which encompasses a ½-mile section of water just below the dam at Sugar Hollow Reservoir.

The main goal for the day was to reinforce Therapeutic Adventures' mission for the improvement of trails, simple stream restoration and to further plan and execute eco-stewardship projects that provide access to the natural environment for individuals with disabilities or those that have experienced traumatic or catastrophic life events.

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Resilient Together Progress Report

It's been one year since our launch of the Resilient Together collaboration, led by Albemarle County, the City of Charlottesville, and the University of Virginia. A recently published progress report shared with staff and the community summarizes the themes, guiding principles, and goals that emerged from our first two project phases, as well as an update on the Climate Resilience Cohort and next steps in the project.

At the end of May, we completed the Discover phase, having held workshops with staff from the County, City, UVA, partner agencies, and community organizations. Additionally, we reviewed extensive notes from community engagement conducted during other recent planning processes like AC44 and Cville Plans Together.

In June, we received a competitive Environmental Justice Government-to-Government (EJG2G) grant of just over \$460,000 from the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). This grant enabled us to create the Climate Resilience Cohort, through which we will provide subgrants to 10 community-based organizations (CBOs) that serve disadvantaged community members. CBO grantees will help center the needs of our most vulnerable community members in the Resilient Together strategies. (See the previous quarterly report for a fuller description of this grant and how it fits into the umbrella Resilient Together project.) The selected organizations are the Community Climate Collaborative (C3), Cultivate Charlottesville, Habitat for Humanity Virginia, International Rescue Committee (IRC) New Roots, Jefferson Area Board for Aging (JABA), Local Energy Alliance Program (LEAP), Market Central, Piedmont Housing Alliance (PHA), The Haven, and Virginia Clinicians for Climate Action (VCCA).

Over the summer, we completed the Define phase, which included three steps: First, we identified themes from the information we gathered during the Discover phase. Second, we used these themes to draft guiding principles and long-term goals for Resilient Together, which will continue to be refined during next steps. Third, we researched over a thousand strategy options from around the country and curated a list of the most locally relevant for consideration in the Design phase. In the coming months, we will look to staff and the community to help us identify and refine the best resilience strategies to pursue in the years ahead.

Download and read the Resilient Together Progress Report here: https://engage.albemarle.org/resilient-together/news_feed/its-been-one-year

County Office Building Automation Systems Upgrade

The county office buildings Building Automation Systems (BAS) have received a much-needed upgrade. The BAS is an automatic centralized control system that FES uses to manage various building functions, including HVAC and some lighting. It aims to improve energy efficiency, occupant comfort, safety, and maintenance while achieving cost savings. The existing systems had become obsolete and were no longer supported. The replacement systems have increased capabilities compared to the previous versions. Some of the included features include:

- Remote notification and troubleshooting capabilities, allowing for decreased reaction time for maintenance and reduced equipment downtime.
- Remote control of scheduling and set points so that necessary changes can be implemented in near real time.

Community Climate Action Grants

Albemarle County's Climate Action Plan states that it is "crucial for the County to... facilitate action by organizations, businesses, and individuals throughout the community." The Community Climate Action Grant Program is intended to do just that.

In the spring of 2024, the Climate Action Program announced another round of the Community Climate Action Grants for FY25. The County is investing \$100,000 to support creative local projects that build capacity to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and help make local climate action a more inclusive, participatory process.

Funds have been awarded to projects that address four program goals:

1. Reduce greenhouse gas emissions
2. Advance equity and inclusion
3. Build community
4. Support thoughtful and achievable projects

Community-based organizations applied through a competitive process. Eligible projects can contribute to reducing greenhouse gas emissions in transportation, buildings, waste, agriculture, and natural areas. Projects can also contribute to increasing carbon sequestration in agriculture or natural systems.

In FY25, the County awarded \$100,000 in grants to five fantastic projects:

1. Charlottesville Community Bikes (CCB) - \$25,000 | This project expands CCB's bicycle recycling, refurbishment, and redistribution programs, providing refurbished bicycles, free repairs through mobile clinics, a kids' bike program, and equipment to underserved communities in Albemarle County.
2. Community Climate Collaborative (C3) - \$20,000 | C3 will conduct climate action workshops for leadership of places of community gathering, including energy efficiency, solar power, waste management, and electrification of both buildings and vehicles.
3. International Rescue Committee (IRC) - \$25,000 | IRC's New Roots farm is expanding its operations, supporting critical staff, and further electrifying its fossil-fuel powered equipment supported by solar-powered charging.
4. Local Energy Alliance Program (LEAP) - \$25,000 | LEAP will provide roof repairs and energy efficiency upgrades to low-income households to make them eligible for Dominion Energy's Income- and Age-Qualifying Solar Program.
5. Wildrock - \$5,000 | Wildrock is installing a compost system to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from food waste generated by visitors and developing educational curricula on composting, soil health and nutrient cycling.

In the Foreword to the Climate Action Plan, then Board of Supervisors Chair Ned Gallaway wrote, "We cannot achieve these goals without the partnership of our residents, business community, and institutional partners." The FY25 grants reflect the spirit of that charge. The FES Climate Action Program is thrilled to support these projects and looks forward to providing another update at the end of the grant period.

