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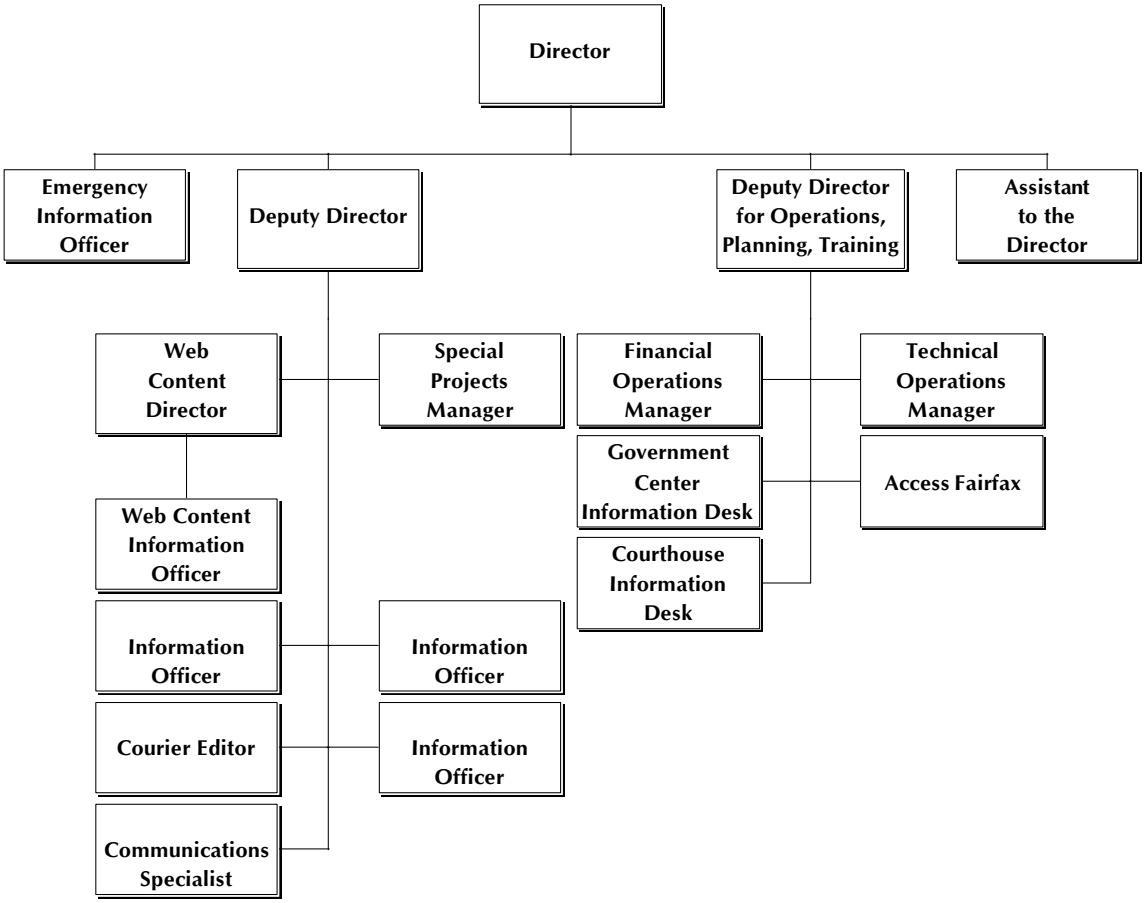

Mission

To deliver effective, timely communication and information services to the public, elected and appointed officials, county agencies and the media with integrity and sensitivity.

Focus

The Office of Public Affairs (OPA) provides essential information to the public, elected and appointed officials, county departments and the media concerning county programs and services and is the central communication office for the county. OPA is structured to allow for flexibility in staffing, providing opportunities for teamwork, cross training and collaboration.

The Director serves as the county media spokesperson, as a liaison with the County Executive and the Board of Supervisors and as the Employee Communication Board Chair.

The Communications Section of OPA is responsible for the coordination of a comprehensive, centralized public affairs program for the County which also provides communication consulting to county agencies. Additionally, the Deputy Director serves as County spokesperson in the absence of the director and assists with emergency communications.

THINKING STRATEGICALLY

Strategic issues for the department include:

- Expanding crisis/emergency communications.
- Managing the county's Web content.
- Enhancing access to information through customer service, technology and communication.
- Providing information proactively to the media.
- Providing communication consulting services to other county agencies.

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The Customer Service Section of OPA is responsible for the planning, direction and administration of the agency as well as developing policy and procedures for the agency. This section will also manage the day-to-day operations of the agency's customer service and financial management staff, and providing leadership to the agency's workforce planning.

OPA is organized to provide focus in four main areas: emergency information, Web content, communications and customer service. This structure facilitates the best use of OPA staffing to provide for the strategic issues that need to be addressed over the next five years: improve crisis/emergency communications; manage Web content; enhance access to information; provide information proactively to the media; provide communication consulting services to agencies without public information officers. Strategies to address these critical issues include increasing collaboration with agencies, enhancing information on the Infoweb and exploring resources for reaching diverse audiences. OPA's initiatives will support the county's vision elements and sustain the OPA vision: To be the information connection to the Fairfax County government, empowering our residents to make informed choices and improve the quality of their lives.

New Initiatives and Recent Accomplishments in Support of the Fairfax County Vision

Maintaining Safe and Caring Communities	Recent Success	FY 2009 Initiative
Continue to participate in the establishment of the Public Safety and Transportation Operations Center to ensure that the resources required to support the Public Information Officer (PIO) function of the Fairfax County Emergency Operation Plan are included and adequately funded.	☑	☑
Continue to assist and lead an emergency communications plan for the National Capital Region that not only introduces the region's coordinated planning efforts to the public, but also highlights the integrated emergency preparedness and management efforts across the region.	☑	☑
Activate and maintain Emergency Radio for Fairfax County, a highway advisory radio AM broadcast system across the county to improve emergency communications. In past fiscal years, OPA obtained state grant funding to begin purchasing these highway advisory radio transmitters. OPA used agency funding to complete the project and will continue to operate and maintain the system.	☑	☑
Developed a more aggressive marketing plan to encourage increased Fairfax County Community Emergency Alert Network (CEAN) subscription by residents. Continue to develop a regional marketing campaign for the free emergency alert and notification systems offered by most local jurisdictions in the National Capital Region.	☑	☑
Continue to provide communication support to the county's gang prevention efforts, including the creation of gang prevention outreach initiatives.	☑	☑

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Maintaining Safe and Caring Communities	Recent Success	FY 2009 Initiative
Continue to manage emergency communications for incidences including severe weather conditions, acts of terrorism, and county government closings, as well as emergency exercises that test staff readiness and resources to deal with these incidences.	☑	☑
Continue to plan and implement the communication efforts for the County's 10-year plan to end homelessness, which includes serving on county and community committees.	☑	☑
Continue to coordinate with the Health Department on the communication efforts for pandemic flu planning.	☑	☑
Continue to support the county's Enhanced Code Enforcement Strike Team, which is focused on combating overcrowded, illegal boarding houses. OPA will lend its support by providing the communication efforts of this new countywide initiative.	☑	☑
Connecting People and Places	**Recent Success**	**FY 2009 Initiative**
Continue efforts to better serve the residents in the South County area by partnering with county agencies and community organizations to market the Access Fairfax telework center, satellite office and e-services opportunities.	☑	☑
Continue to serve as communication consultants for county agencies, providing support in the area of issues management that may address emergency preparedness, land use, environmental protection, transportation matters, gang prevention, pedestrian safety, homelessness, Tyson's land use, immigration issues, and mental health concerns, Virginia Commemorative activities and County Bond Referenda.	☑	☑
Continue to work collaboratively with DIT in the redesign of the county's Web site in order to make information more user-friendly to the general public.	☑	☑
Serve on the county's Continuity of Operations Planning (COOP) group. This committee serves as a resource to county agencies in completing their COOP plans to ensure county government can function during an emergency and that agency expectations for services needed from other county agencies are coordinated.	☑	☑
Establish new information desk in the expanded Courthouse. Partner with all Courthouse Complex agencies and the public to understand and meet their needs. Coordinate with Government Center and South County Center information desks to pilot the Customer Service Call Center Model.		☑
Continue to provide communication support regarding tax information for Fairfax County residents, including ads in local newspapers and online publications mailed to all County residents and news releases distributed to the media.	☑	☑

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Creating a Culture of Engagement	Recent Success	FY 2009 Initiative
Initiated the 'Get Fairfax County' campaign, which provides a one-stop shop online to keep residents, businesses, and visitors connected with the county. The campaign includes the creation and distribution of printed materials and giveaways, in addition to paid search advertising with Google.	☑	☑
Take the lead on keeping county employees informed through the recent redesign of Courier and the continuation of the daily online publication of NewsLink. The redesign of Courier created a more user-friendly newsletter, and will include annual supplements providing information on open enrollment for benefits and leave of service milestones.	☑	☑
Undertook a reorganization of the agency to facilitate efficiency of agency services.	☑	
Exercising Corporate Stewardship	**Recent Success**	**FY 2009 Initiative**
Continue to administer the Fairfax County Communication Strategy to provide a cohesive look, feel and message regarding the county's services, programs and activities. OPA is leading an effort to clarify the responsibilities of the roles of county PIO's in media relations and issues management.	☑	☑
Introduce channels of communication in the social media area, including RSS, pod casting, and Internet communication tools such as blogs and social networking sites, while creating appropriate policy to govern use.	☑	☑
Led PIO review that reclassified County communications positions and created the Communications Specialist class.	☑	
Practicing Environmental Stewardship	**Recent Success**	**FY 2009 Initiative**
Continue our partnership with the Health Department to develop a comprehensive campaign to promote air quality in support of the Board of Supervisors' 20 year Environmental Excellence Plan.	☑	☑
Partner with the Board of Supervisors and the County's Environmental Coordinator to promote Cool Counties via the Fairfax County Web site and educational outreach activities such as Cool Counties Day.	☑	☑

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Budget and Staff Resources

Agency Summary					
Category	FY 2007 Actual	FY 2008 Adopted Budget Plan	FY 2008 Revised Budget Plan	FY 2009 Advertised Budget Plan	FY 2009 Adopted Budget Plan
Authorized Positions/Staff Years					
Regular	18/ 18	18/ 18	18/ 18	18/ 18	18/ 18
Expenditures:					
Personnel Services	$1,123,108	$1,377,228	$1,363,598	$1,390,663	$1,377,041
Operating Expenses	353,335	316,158	573,206	316,158	316,158
Capital Equipment	0	0	0	0	0
Subtotal	**$1,476,443**	**$1,693,386**	**$1,936,804**	**$1,706,821**	**$1,693,199**
Less:					
Recovered Costs	($152,552)	($191,652)	($191,652)	($197,670)	($197,670)
Total Expenditures	**$1,323,891**	**$1,501,734**	**$1,745,152**	**$1,509,151**	**$1,495,529**

Position Summary

		Communications		Customer Service
1	Director	1 Deputy Director	1	Deputy Director
1	Information Officer IV	4 Information Officers III	1	Communications Specialist I
1	Administrative Assistant V	1 Information Officer II	1	Management Analyst II
		1 Information Officer I	1	Administrative Assistant IV
		1 Communications Specialist II	2	Administrative Assistants III
		1 Communications Specialist I		

TOTAL POSITIONS
18 Positions / 18.0 Staff Years

FY 2009 Funding Adjustments

The following funding adjustments from the FY 2008 Revised Budget Plan are necessary to support the FY 2009 program:

- **Employee Compensation** **$42,144**
  An increase of $42,144 associated with salary adjustments necessary to support the County's compensation program. As a result of budget constraints, compensation adjustments for County employees have been reduced. For FY 2009, employee increases as part of the pay for performance system have been discounted by 50 percent and the impact of the lower pay for performance funding is reflected above.

- **Personnel Services Reduction** **($28,709)**
  A decrease of $28,709 in Personnel Services as part of an across-the-board reduction to meet budget limitations based on available revenues as a result of a continued softening of the residential real estate market.

- **Other Adjustments** **($257,048)**
  A decrease of $257,048 in Operating Expenses for one-time requirements carried forward at the *FY 2007 Carryover Review*.

- **Recovered Costs** **($6,018)**
  An increase of $6,018 in Recovered Costs is based on projected salary and operating requirements.

Board of Supervisors' Adjustments

The following funding adjustments reflect all changes to the FY 2009 Advertised Budget Plan, as approved by the Board of Supervisors on April 28, 2008:

- **Pay for Performance** **$16,083**
  An increase of $16,083 in Personnel Services is associated with the decision by the Board of Supervisors to eliminate the 50 percent reduction to employee increases as part of the pay for performance system. A reduction to pay for performance increases had been proposed in the FY 2009 Advertised Budget Plan due to budget constraints. However, as a result of the Board's decision, employees will be eligible for the full compensation increase for which they qualify based on performance.

- **Reduction in Limited-Term Funding** **($29,705)**
  A decrease of $29,705 in Personnel Services is associated with a reduction in funding for limited-term support based on budget limitations.

Changes to FY 2008 Adopted Budget Plan

The following funding adjustments reflect all approved changes in the FY 2008 Revised Budget Plan since passage of the FY 2008 Adopted Budget Plan. Included are all adjustments made as part of the FY 2007 Carryover Review and all other approved changes through December 31, 2007:

- **Carryover Adjustments** **$257,048**
  As part of the *FY 2007 Carryover Review,* the Board of Supervisors approved encumbered funding of $257,048 in Operating Expenses primarily for the procurement of four Highway Advisory Radio Antennas, professional and consulting contracts, advertisements and repairs and maintenance.

The following funding adjustments reflect all approved changes to the FY 2008 Revised Budget Plan from January 1, 2008 through April 21, 2008. Included are all adjustments made as part of the FY 2008 Third Quarter Review:

- **Third Quarter Adjustments** **($13,630)**
  As part of the *FY 2008 Third Quarter Review*, the Board of Supervisors approved a decrease of $13,630 in Personnel Services as part of an across-the-board reduction necessary to address budget limitations resulting from declining revenues. This adjustment accelerated the Personnel Services reduction included for FY 2009 in the FY 2009 Adopted Budget Plan.

Key Performance Measures

Objectives

- To provide communications consulting services to county agencies without public information officers while maintaining 90 percent or higher satisfaction rating.

- To provide requested information to residents contacting customer service staff and to disseminate useful information to the general public, while maintaining 90 percent or higher satisfaction rating.

- To disseminate useful information to the media that earns an 90 percent or higher satisfaction rating.

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Indicator	Prior Year Actuals FY 2005 Actual	FY 2006 Actual	FY 2007 Estimate/Actual	Current Estimate FY 2008	Future Estimate FY 2009
Output:					
Project hours in support of communication consulting services to other agencies	4,404	5,141	5,300 / 5,998	5,350	5,500
Customer service interactions with the general public	135,812	118,998	140,000 / 172,105	175,000	175,000
New/existing Web pages created, reviewed or updated	2,032	2,848	3,200 / 3,987	3,200	3,200
Publication issues (print and electronic)	360	373	358 / 352	358	360
News releases produced	314	328	350 / 331	360	400
Efficiency:					
Consulting hours per agency assisted	152	177	183 / 207	184	190
Customer service hours per customer assisted	0.04	0.05	0.05 / 0.06	0.05	0.05
Visitors to the OPA Web pages per hour spent maintaining the site	672.81	1,457.97	1,406.25 / 1,496.57	1,406.25	1,406.25
Printed/online news articles generated by the media about Fairfax County as the result of dissemination of information by OPA per news release.	NA	1.6	1.5 / 1.0	1.5	1.5
Service Quality:					
Average satisfaction with OPA's services support as assessed by customers (agencies, general public, media)	98%	92%	90% / 93%	90%	90%
Percent of information requests from the general public answered within a day	97%	95%	95% / 96%	95%	95%
Percent information requests from the media answered within a day	97%	97%	95% / 96%	95%	95%
Outcome:					
Percentage rating of user satisfaction for consulting services	100%	94%	90% / 93%	90%	90%
Percentage rating of user satisfaction for information provided to the general public	95%	94%	90% / 93%	90%	90%
Percentage rating of user satisfaction for services to the media	95%	90%	90% / 93%	90%	90%

Note: The Director's time is not included in any of the performance indicators.

Performance Measurement Results

In FY 2007 the number of hours of communication consulting support provided to agencies without designated public information officers continued to grow. Agencies rely on the support OPA provides in areas such as external and internal dissemination of information, event planning, and assistance with publications and communication plans.

In FY 2007, customer service interaction increased by 45 percent as OPA recognized the need for increased emphasis on emergency communications, dissemination of information and communications consulting services.

OPA continues to be proactive in anticipating the media's needs and providing information promptly, which consistently results in high satisfaction ratings from the media. It is anticipated that the number of media interactions will increase since OPA now interacts with both traditional and social media.

In FY 2008 the number of general public contacts is expected to increase when OPA assumes the management of the Information Desk at the Jennings Judicial Center. OPA will continue its outreach to the business and residential communities by providing important information about County issues, such as emergency preparedness, air quality and homelessness.

OPA will revise the agency's Strategic Plan in line with the County's adoption of the Balanced Scorecard approach in order to arrive at targeted measurable outcomes. Performance indicators will be revisited in an endeavor to provide a more accurate means and tools for measuring performance. The agency is exploring methods in addition to surveys in order to measure the quality of service provided to the general public, the media and County agencies.