Legislative-Executive Functions/Central Services Program Area Summary

Overview

The Legislative-Executive Functions/Central Services Program Area consists of 14 agencies that are responsible for a variety of functions to ensure that County services are provided efficiently and effectively to a population that has topped the one million mark. At last count, approximately 150 different languages are spoken by County residents, of whom more than 32.5 percent speak a language other than English at home. This program area strives to meet the needs of the County's rapidly growing and extremely diverse population in a cost-effective manner. Recognition by various organizations such as the National Association of Counties (NACo), the International City/County Management Association (ICMA), the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) and others validate the County's efforts in these areas. In 2005, numerous awards and other forms of recognition were accorded to County agencies and employees, confirming that Fairfax County continues to be one of the best managed municipal governments in the country. In 2005, the County was named the number one digital county for jurisdictions over 500,000 people in a survey by the Center for Digital Government and NACo. Fairfax County also won 11 Achievement Awards and one Acts of Caring Award from NACo. For the third consecutive year, the County won Achievement Awards for its programs focused on children and youth, administration and management, and environmental protection and energy. Other recent honors for Fairfax County in 2005 included the naming of the County's Government Channel 16 as the best government access cable television station in the nation by the Alliance for Community Media; the receipt of the Gold Peak Performance Award from the National Association of Clean Water Agencies to recognize the Noman M. Cole Jr. Pollution Control Plant's outstanding accomplishments in wastewater treatment and environmental protection; and two technology awards won at the FOSE trade show for the County's advancements in electronic mapping and emergency response.

Managing in a resource-constrained environment requires a significant leadership commitment - from the elected Board of Supervisors to the County Executive and individual agencies. Fairfax County is committed to remaining a high performance organization. Despite significant budget reductions in recent years, or perhaps in part due to them, staff continually seeks ways to streamline processes and maximize technology in order to provide a high level of service with limited resources. Since FY 1992, the County's population has increased 27.9 percent; however, authorized staffing has increased only 7 percent despite the addition or expansion of over 160 facilities including police and fire stations, libraries, and School-Age Child Care (SACC) Centers, among others. This was made possible largely by the elimination of many administrative, professional, and management positions including 51 in this program area alone from FY 2002 to FY 2005. As an indication of improved productivity, Fairfax County has successfully reduced the number of positions per 1,000 citizens from 13.57 in FY 1992 to 11.18 for FY 2007, a decrease of 17.6 percent.

Strategic Direction

As part of the countywide focus on developing strategic plans during 2002-2003, the agencies in this program area developed mission, vision and values statements; performed environmental scans; and defined strategies for achieving their missions. These strategic plans are linked to the overall County Core Purpose and Vision Elements. Common themes among the agencies in the Legislative-Executive/Central Services program area include:

- Development and alignment of leadership and performance
- Accessibility to information and programs
- Strong customer service
- Effective use of resources
- Streamlined processes
- Innovative use of technology
- Partnerships and community involvement

COUNTY CORE PURPOSE

To protect and enrich the quality of life for the people, neighborhoods, and diverse communities of Fairfax County by:

- Maintaining Safe and Caring Communities
- Building Livable Spaces
- Practicing Environmental Stewardship
- Connecting People and Places
- Creating a Culture of Engagement
- Maintaining Healthy Economies
- Exercising Corporate Stewardship

Legislative-Executive Functions/Central Services Program Area Summary

This program area differs from most of the others because the majority of the Legislative-Executive/Central Services agencies are focused on internal service functions that enable other direct service providers to perform their jobs effectively. Overall leadership emanates from the Board of Supervisors and is articulated countywide by the County Executive who also assumes responsibility for coordination of initiatives that cut across agency lines. In addition, the County Executive oversees the County's leadership development efforts, particularly the High Performance Organization (HPO) model used in Fairfax County's LEAD Program (Leading, Educating and Developing). Agencies in this program area also provide human resources, financial, purchasing, legal, budget, audit and information technology support; voter registration and election administration; and mail services.

Linkage to County Vision Elements

While this program area supports all seven of the County Vision Elements, the following are emphasized:

- Exercising Corporate Stewardship
- Creating a Culture of Engagement
- Connecting People and Places
- Practicing Environmental Stewardship

By the nature of this program area, **Exercising Corporate Stewardship** is the most commonly referenced vision element by these agencies. Efforts continue to focus on the most efficient use of resources including initiatives such as the utilization of electronic deposit of checks, which will increase revenue and reduce costs; the implementation of electronic personnel action requests in order to eliminate the necessity to enter data twice, reduce data entry errors, and furnish more detailed data for internal auditing purposes; and continuing to build architecture and process supporting data security, e-government, public access sites, and implementation of required data privacy standards. During FY 2007, the County will also develop and implement a program to identify and analyze market conditions for those commercial activities currently performed by County staff that present contracting opportunities.

Overall, agencies in this program area also ensure that taxes are assessed and collected fairly, and that revenue is spent in accordance with the elected Board's direction. In recent years, there has been a concerted effort to reduce red tape in areas such as procurement, human resources and budgeting in order to provide agencies the necessary flexibility to operate with fewer resources. The need to ensure accountability places an oversight responsibility on agencies such as the Departments of Finance, Purchasing and Supply Management, Human Resources, and Management and Budget.

The second most commonly cited Vision Element for this program area is **Creating a Culture of Engagement**. Fairfax County places priority on ensuring access and participation by residents and the business community in their local government. With a highly computer-literate community, over 78 percent of whom have home computers with Internet access, agencies in this program area continue to employ a variety of means to engage residents. Examples include developing a public comment form on the Web for citizens to provide input for public hearings; establishing the Employee Volunteer Diversity Steering Committee to promote the County's diversity policy; and publicizing the availability of 324-INFO, 703-FAIRFAX, News to Use, kiosks, Access Fairfax, Channel 16, the Emergency Information Line, computers in libraries, and online newsletters. In addition, the Office of the County Attorney continues to participate in numerous community dialogues sponsored by members of the Board of Supervisors to educate County residents on the many activities of County government and the legal issues surrounding them. Finally, the multi-agency Strengthening Neighborhoods and Building Communities (SNBC) program continues to foster community involvement in the upkeep of neighborhoods in several communities in the County.

Efforts to promote the **Connecting People and Places** vision element also include the continuation of strategies to expand information online to diverse audiences for enhanced customer services such as real estate assessment information, numerous County publications including the annual budget and capital improvement program, and other information such as candidate financial reports and other election-related data, among many other types. An initiative for FY 2007 is the development of a new search engine for the County Web site to enhance search capabilities and allow easier access to information.

Legislative-Executive Functions/Central Services Program Area Summary

While, at first glance, **Practicing Environmental Stewardship** may not seem to be a major function of this program area, several agencies play critical roles in advancing the County's protection of the environment. The County Executive's Office assumes overall leadership in this area and continues to coordinate the cross-agency Environmental Coordinating Committee, which focuses on air quality, watershed protection, recycling and timely response to emerging threats. In conjunction with the Department of Human Resources, the County Executive continues to promote the County's Telework Program in order to decrease traffic and emissions. By the end of 2005, Fairfax County exceeded the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments' regional goal of having 20 percent or more of the eligible workforce teleworking at least one day-per-week—the first jurisdiction to do so. Also in FY 2005, the Office of Public Affairs created a partnership with the Health Department to develop a comprehensive campaign to promote air quality in support of the Board of Supervisors' Environmental Excellence Plan. Another countywide priority coordinated by this program area is the Department of Purchasing and Supply Management's initiative to continue developing an environmentally responsible ("green") purchasing strategy and educational model to assist customer agencies in identifying and using sustainable sources for products such as carpets and janitorial supplies. Finally, the Office of the County Attorney becomes involved in situations where other County agencies have identified environmental violations such as illegal zoning or industrial uses that require civil remedy.

Program Area Summary by Character

Category	FY 2005 Actual	FY 2006 Adopted Budget Plan	FY 2006 Revised Budget Plan	FY 2007 Advertised Budget Plan
Authorized Positions/Staff Years				
Regular	954/ 953.5	954/ 953.5	968/ 967.5	977/ 976.5
Exempt	90/ 90	90/ 90	78/ 78	78/ 78
Expenditures:				
Personnel Services	$63,036,029	$69,212,929	$69,122,929	$73,154,176
Operating Expenses	34,069,020	34,653,764	37,472,242	36,353,921
Capital Equipment	711,200	766,619	841,474	767,246
Subtotal	**$97,816,249**	**$104,633,312**	**$107,436,645**	**$110,275,343**
Less:				
Recovered Costs	($10,188,837)	($11,279,736)	($11,279,736)	($11,463,928)
Total Expenditures	**$87,627,412**	**$93,353,576**	**$96,156,909**	**$98,811,415**
Income	**$5,335,575**	**$3,582,972**	**$4,488,538**	**$4,569,844**
Net Cost to the County	**$82,291,837**	**$89,770,604**	**$91,668,371**	**$94,241,571**

Legislative-Executive Functions/Central Services Program Area Summary

Program Area Summary by Agency

Category	FY 2005 Actual	FY 2006 Adopted Budget Plan	FY 2006 Revised Budget Plan	FY 2007 Advertised Budget Plan
Board of Supervisors	$3,825,377	$4,457,350	$4,457,350	$4,728,672
Office of the County Executive	6,835,899	7,607,007	7,750,982	7,857,335
Department of Cable Communications and Consumer Protection	1,090,473	1,353,776	1,536,136	1,504,130
Department of Finance	7,678,263	8,306,428	8,328,149	8,787,172
Department of Human Resources	5,984,291	6,290,617	6,606,144	6,635,733
Department of Purchasing and Supply Management	4,006,634	4,620,740	4,690,425	4,945,863
Office of Public Affairs	1,176,580	1,120,157	1,187,660	1,406,837
Office of Elections	3,812,713	2,964,770	2,976,069	3,156,167
Office of the County Attorney	5,270,069	5,722,450	5,872,202	5,952,042
Department of Management and Budget	2,597,805	3,093,938	3,184,422	3,121,281
Office of the Financial and Program Auditor	165,092	215,851	215,851	225,310
Civil Service Commission	167,163	213,509	239,949	475,022
Department of Tax Administration	20,959,423	22,291,127	22,867,985	23,200,188
Department of Information Technology	24,057,630	25,095,856	26,243,585	26,815,663
Total Expenditures	**$87,627,412**	**$93,353,576**	**$96,156,909**	**$98,811,415**

Budget Trends

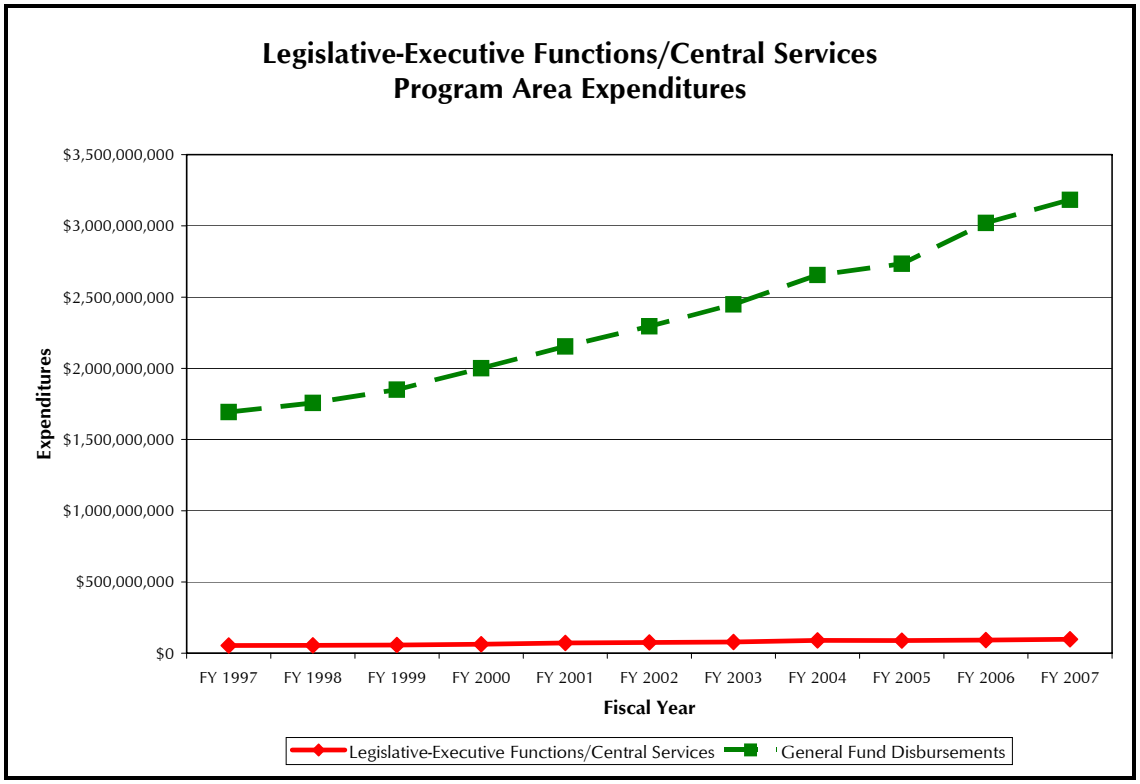
For FY 2007, the recommended funding level of $98,811,415 for the Legislative-Executive/Central Services program area comprises 8.5 percent of the total recommended General Fund Direct Expenditures of $1,166,552,092. It also includes 1,055 or 8.8 percent of total authorized positions for FY 2007. The Legislative-Executive/Central Services program area increases $2,654,506 or 2.8 percent over the *FY 2006 Revised Budget Plan*. This increase represents 6.1 percent of the Direct Expenditures increase for FY 2007, which is $43,524,441 or 3.88 percent over the *FY 2006 Revised Budget Plan*.

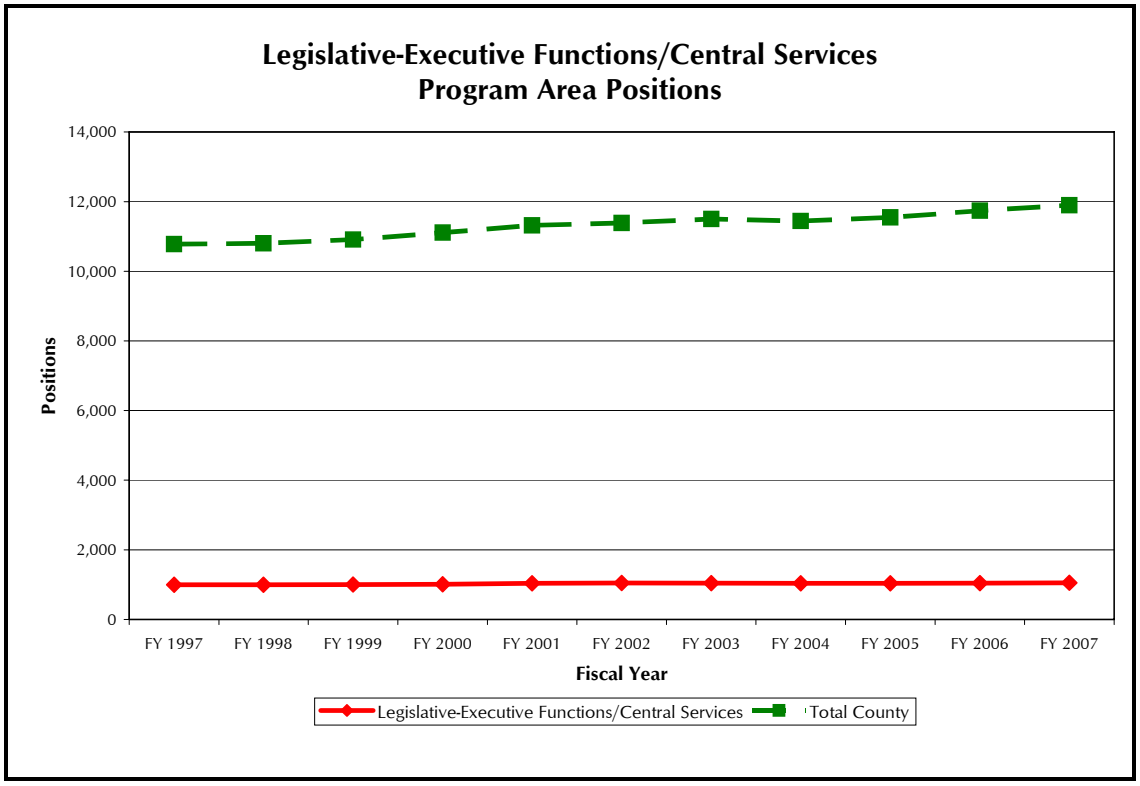
During the period of FY 2004-FY 2006, the real estate tax rate was reduced from $1.16 to $1.00 per $100 assessed value in order to provide tax relief to residents due to rising property assessments. As a part of the FY 2007 Advertised Budget Plan, the County Executive is recommending a further reduction in the real estate tax rate to $0.93. After the 7-cent reduction in the Real Estate Tax rate for FY 2007, revenues are expected to grow at a rate of 8.83 percent or $269,291,892, from $3,050,157,119 to $3,319,449,011.

The charts on the following page illustrate funding and position trends for the agencies in this program area compared to countywide expenditure and position trends. Due to the large number of agencies in the Legislative-Executive/Central Services program area, an aggregate is shown because a line graph with each shown separately is too difficult to read. In other program areas with fewer agencies, it is possible to show each agency's trends with a separate line.

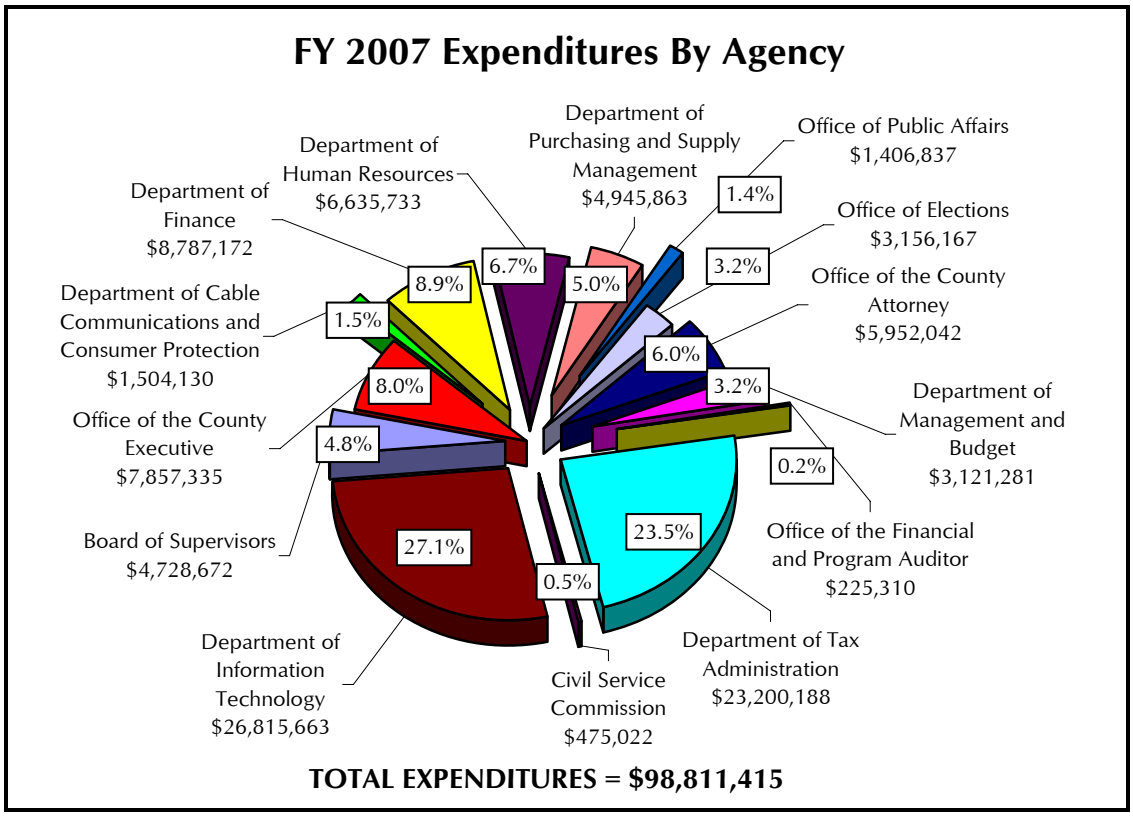
Legislative-Executive Functions/Central Services Program Area Summary

Trends in Expenditures and Positions

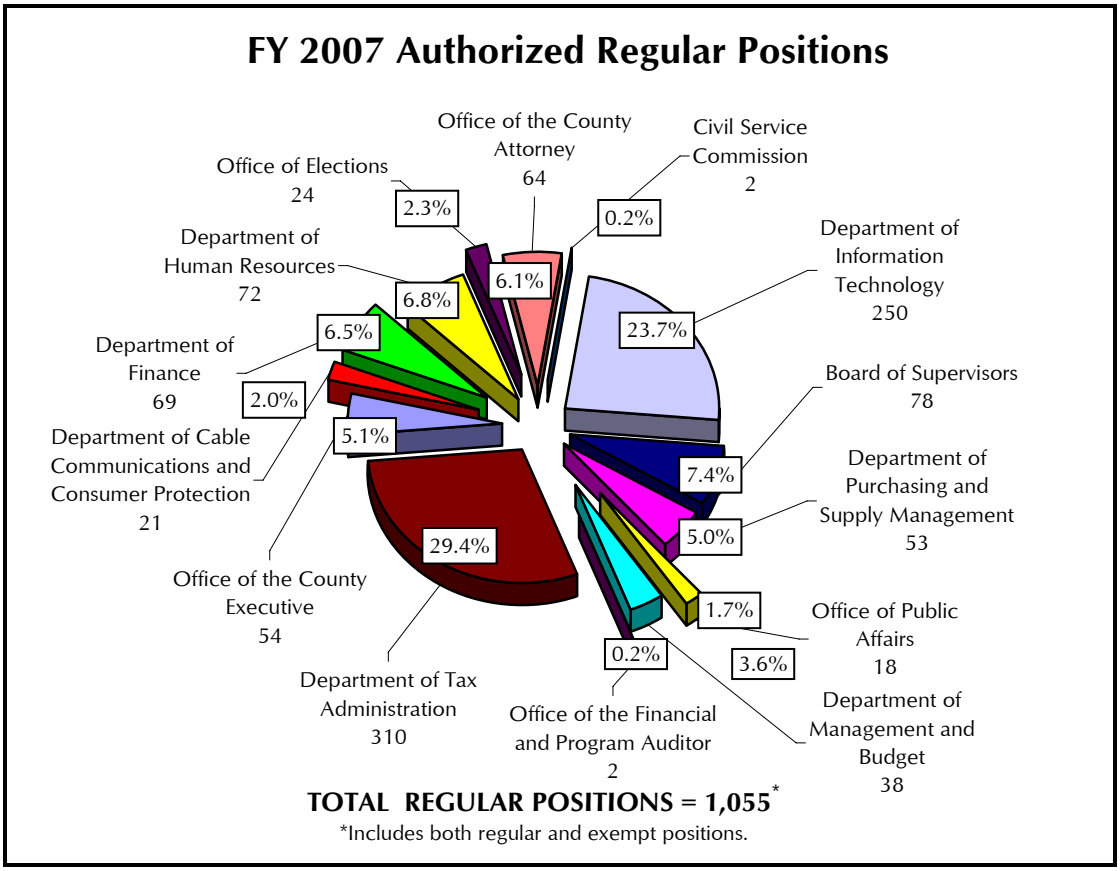




FY 2007 Expenditures and Positions by Agency



Legislative-Executive Functions/Central Services Program Area Summary



Federal and State Mandates

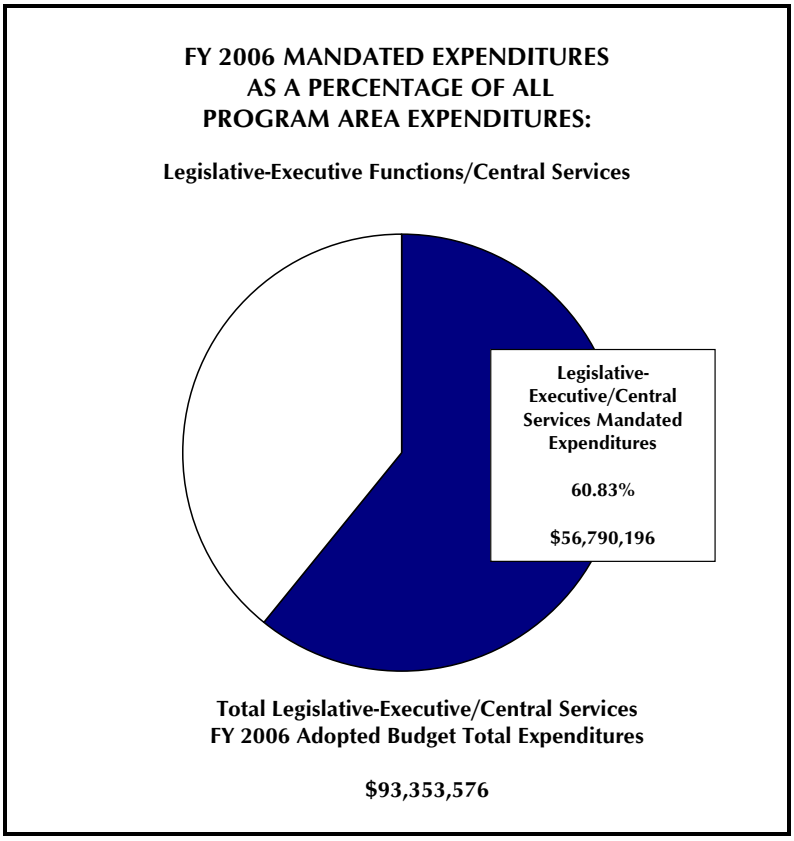
The Legislative-Executive Functions/Central Services Program Area serves as the backbone to County government and more than half of the expenditures made during the year are in support of federal and state mandated requirements. The state mandates many provisions of County government including the powers vested in the Board of Supervisors as the governing body. And, as the infrastructure from which County agencies operate, the Departments of Finance, Human Resources, and Purchasing and Supply Management are required to ensure that their functions, such as the procurement of goods and the administration of payroll, are in compliance with numerous federal and state mandates.

In some cases, entire agencies operate within Fairfax County government as a direct result of federal and state requirements. One example is the Office of Elections. This agency's mission is directly built off the constitutions of the United States and the Commonwealth of Virginia, primarily through the Voting Rights Act of 1965 and more recently by the Help America Vote Act of 2002 (HAVA), which sets minimum election administration standards and requires the replacement of outdated voting systems.

Other agencies' operations are only partially mandated by federal or state law; the remaining portions of their activities are undertaken as a matter of good business practices or as a result of prudent Fairfax County local public policy. Examples of federal and state mandates that are complied with during the daily operations of many agencies in this program area include the federal Civil Rights Act (which among other requirements, protects voting rights, prohibits discrimination in public places or federal programs, and protects equal employment), the Virginia Public Procurement Act (which outlines required procurement procedures of governments within the Commonwealth), the federal Fair Labor Standards Act, (which establishes minimum wage, overtime pay, recordkeeping, and child labor standards for workers in the private sector and government), and the Virginia Personal Property Tax Relief Act (which provides tax relief to Virginia residents on personal property taxes paid on the first $20,000 of qualifying vehicles http://www.dmv.state.va.us/webdoc/general/pptr/taxpayers.asp - dqv and the reimbursement is administered

through the local governments). Agencies are required to meet these and many other mandates on a daily basis.

In FY 2006, the agencies in this program area anticipated spending $56.8 million to comply with federal and state mandates, receiving $3.2 million in revenue (to include federal, state, and user fee/other revenue), for a net cost to the County of $53.6 million.



Benchmarking

Since the FY 2005 Budget, benchmarking data have been included in the annual budget as a means of demonstrating accountability to the public for results achieved. These data are included in each of the Program Area Summaries in Volume 1 and now in Other Funds (Volume 2) as available. As part of an effort to identify additional performance benchmarks, data collected by the Auditor of Public Accounts (APA) for the Commonwealth of Virginia that show cost per capita in each of the seven program areas (Legislative-Executive/Central Services; Judicial; Public Safety; Public Works; Health and Welfare; Parks, Recreation and Libraries; and Community Development) were included for the first time in the FY 2006 Budget. Due to the time necessary for data collection and cleaning, FY 2004 represents the most recent year for which data are available. In Virginia, local governments follow stringent guidelines regarding the classification of program area expenses; therefore, the data are very comparable. Cost data are provided annually to the APA for review and compilation in an annual report. Since these data are not prepared by any one jurisdiction, their objectivity is less questionable than they would be if collected by one of the participants. In addition, a standard methodology is consistently followed, allowing comparison over time. For each of the program areas, these comparisons of cost per capita are the first benchmarks shown in these sections.

Legislative-Executive Functions/Central Services Program Area Summary

Since 2000, Fairfax County has participated in the International City/County Management Association's (ICMA) benchmarking effort. Approximately 100 cities, counties and towns provide comparable data annually in 15 service areas. Not all jurisdictions provide data for every service area, however. The only one for which Fairfax County does not provide data is Roads and Highways because the Commonwealth maintains primary responsibility for that function for counties in Virginia. The agencies in this program area that provide data for benchmarking include the Department of Human Resources, the Department of Purchasing and Supply Management, and the Department of Information Technology. While not an exhaustive presentation of all agencies in this program area, the benchmarks shown provide a snapshot of how Fairfax County compares to others in these service areas. It should be noted that it is sometimes difficult to compare various administrative functions due to variation among local governments regarding structure and provision of service. It should also be noted that there are approximately 1,900 program-level performance indicators found throughout Volumes 1 and 2 for those seeking additional performance measurement data by agency.

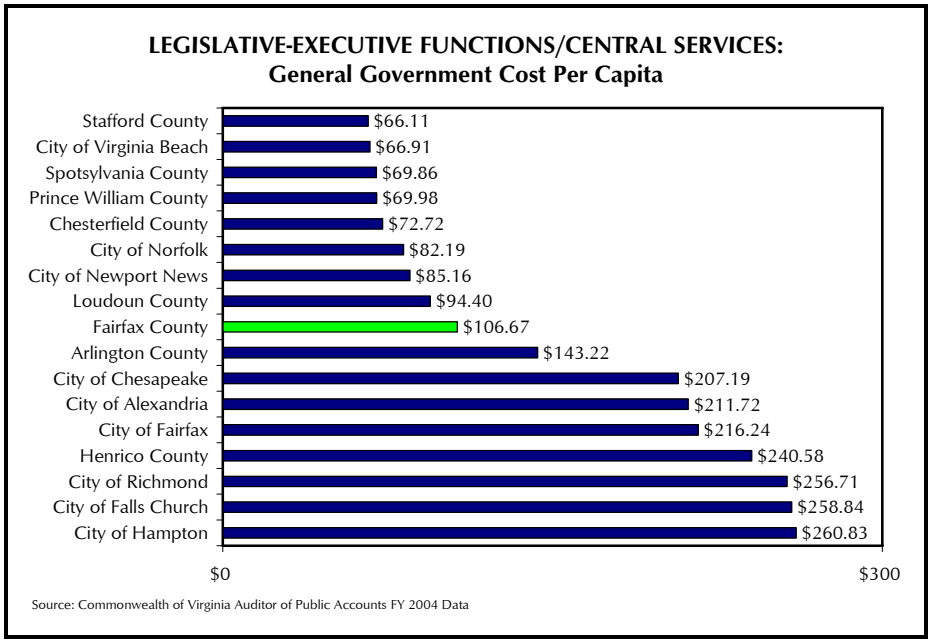
As part of the ICMA benchmarking effort, participating local governments (cities, counties and towns) provide data on standard templates provided by ICMA in order to ensure consistency. ICMA then performs extensive checking and data cleaning to ensure the greatest accuracy and comparability of data. As a result of the time to collect the data and undergo ICMA's rigorous data cleaning processes, information is always available with a one-year delay. FY 2004 data represent the latest available information. The jurisdictions presented in the graphs on the following pages generally show how Fairfax County compares to other large jurisdictions (population over 500,000). In cases where other Virginia localities provided data, they are shown as well.

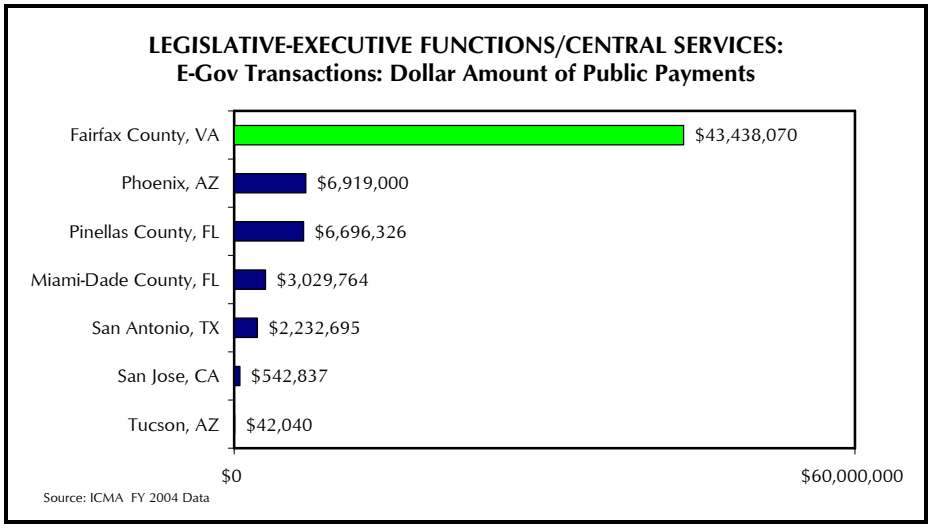
In terms of information technology efficiency and effectiveness, Fairfax County compares favorably to other large jurisdictions. Likewise in the human resources and purchasing service areas, the County's performance is very competitive with the other benchmarked jurisdictions. One area that bears watching is the Permanent Employee Turnover Rate, which was 9.2 percent for Fairfax County in FY 2004, among the highest of the large jurisdictions. This is likely a function of the competitive job market in the Northern Virginia area. The County's challenge will be to find ways to attract and retain highly qualified staff in such a competitive market.

An important point to note about the ICMA comparative data effort is that since participation is voluntary, the jurisdictions that provide data have demonstrated that they are committed to becoming/remaining high performance organizations. Therefore, comparisons made through this program should be considered in the context that the participants have self-selected and are inclined to be among the higher performers than a random sample among local governments nationwide. It is also important to note that not all jurisdictions respond to all questions. In some cases, the question or process is not applicable to a particular locality or data are not available. For those reasons, the universe of jurisdictions with which Fairfax County is compared is not always the same for each benchmark.

Agencies use this ICMA benchmarking data in order to determine how County performance compares to other peer jurisdictions. Where other high performers are identified, the challenge is to learn what processes, systems or methods they use that contribute to their high level of performance. This is an ongoing process that is continually evolving and improving.

Legislative-Executive Functions/Central Services Program Area Summary





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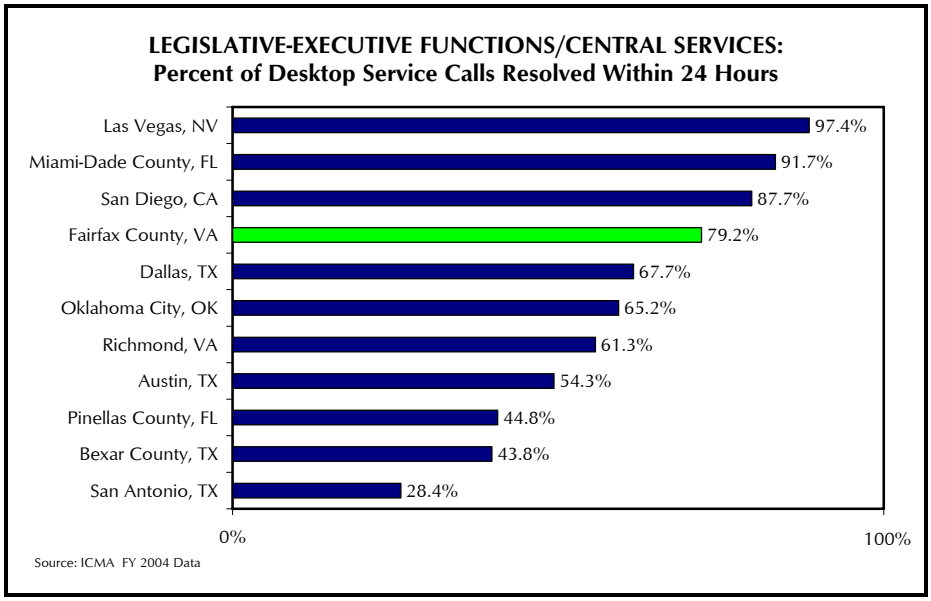

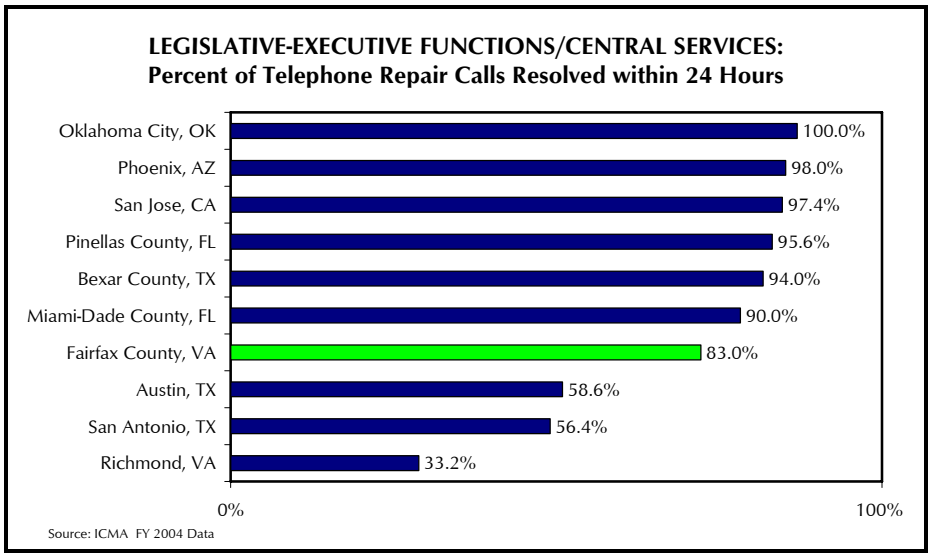

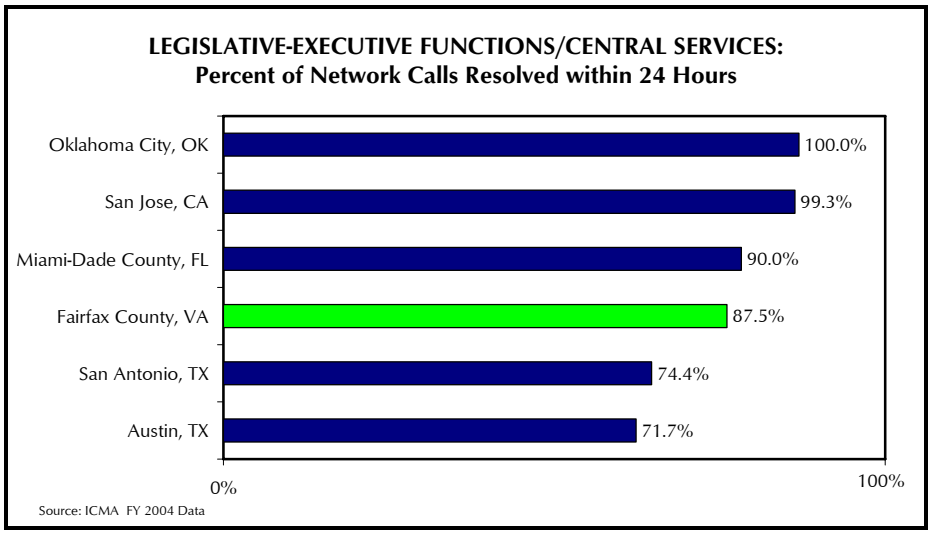

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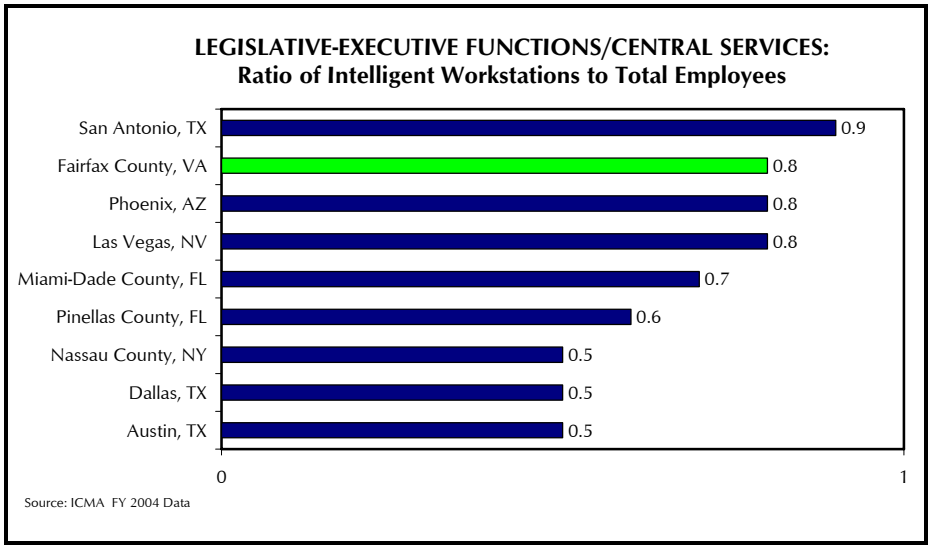

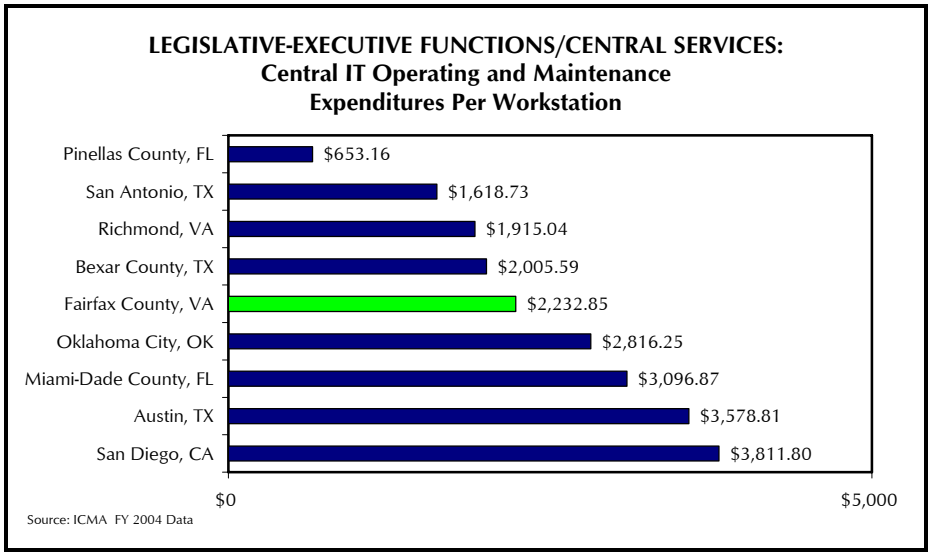

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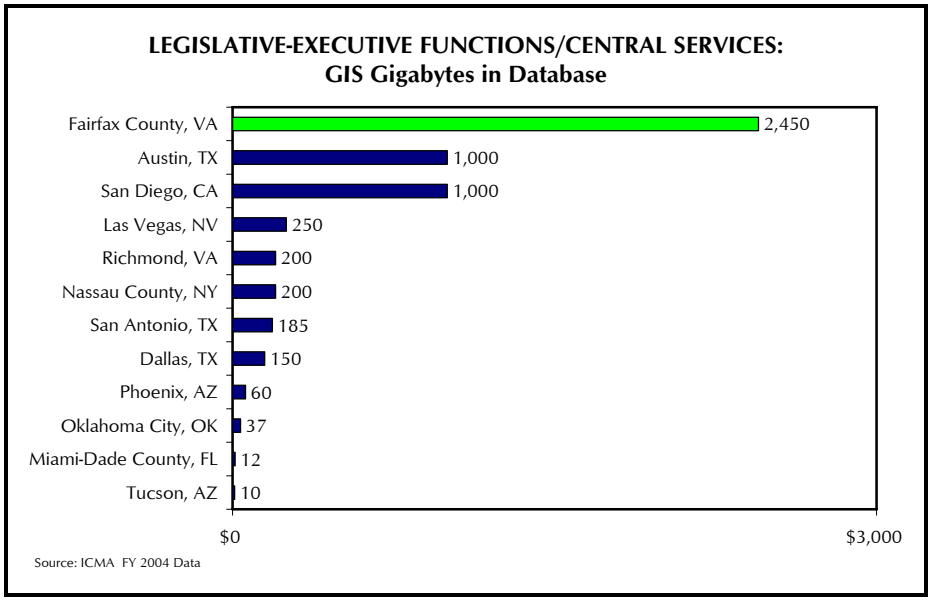

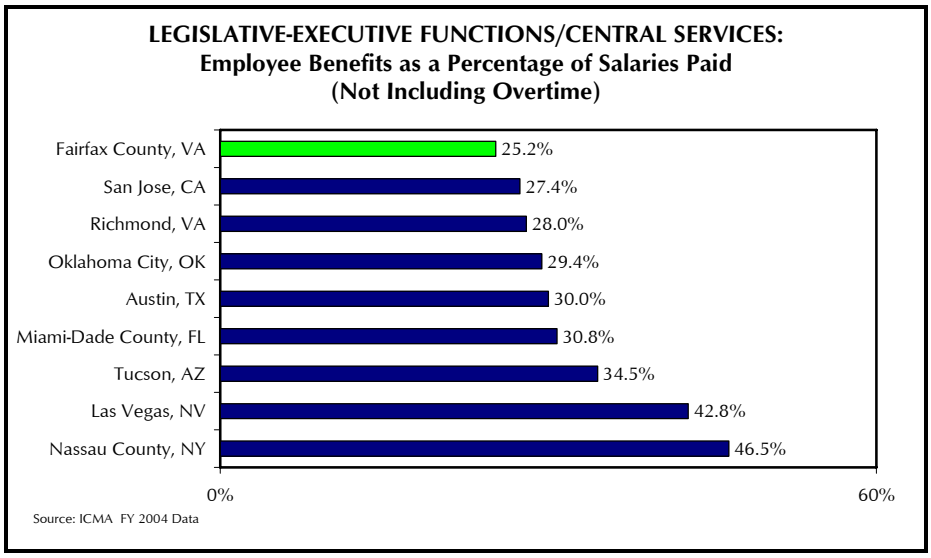

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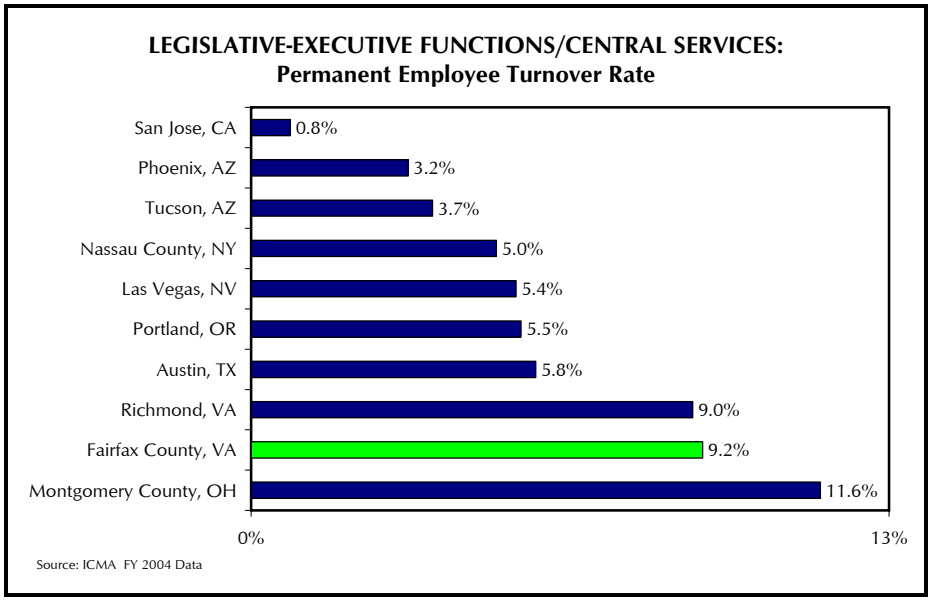

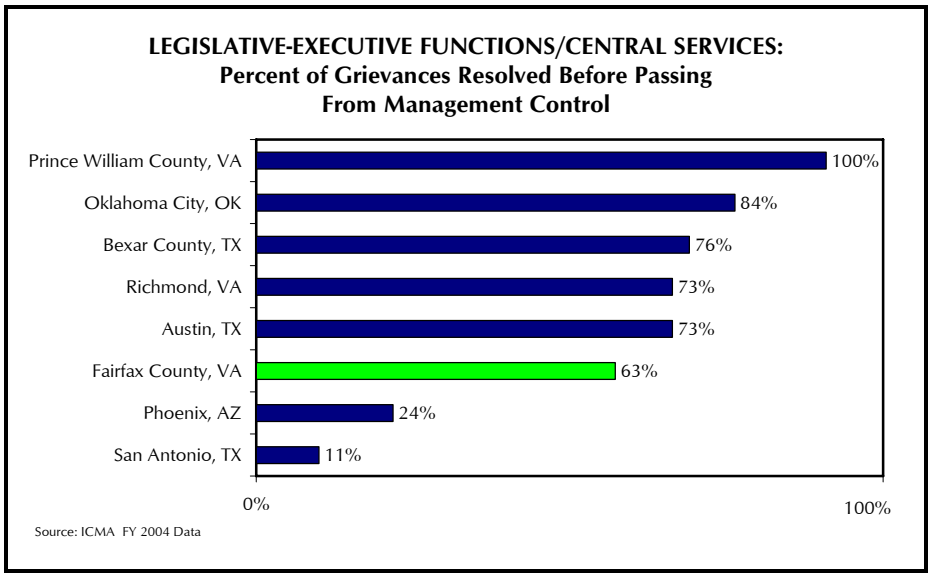
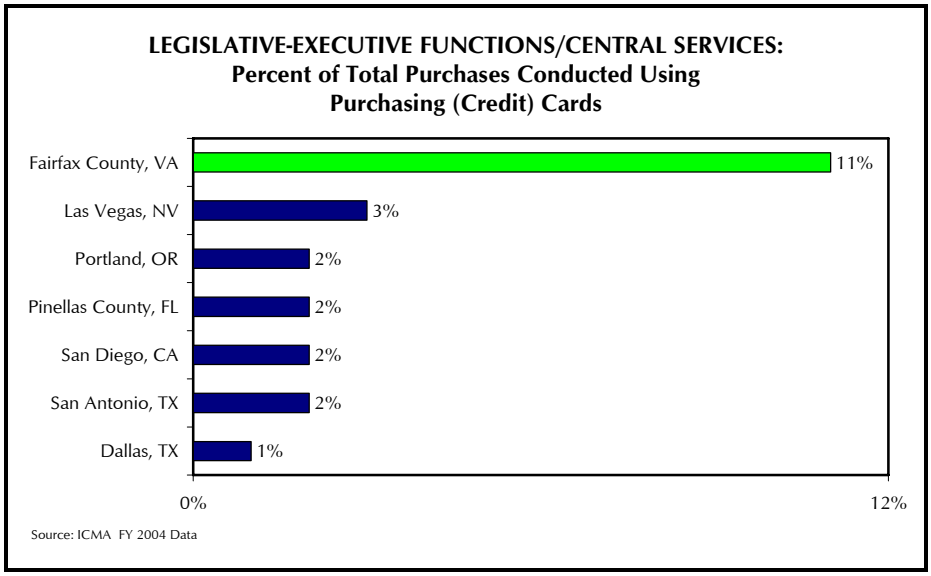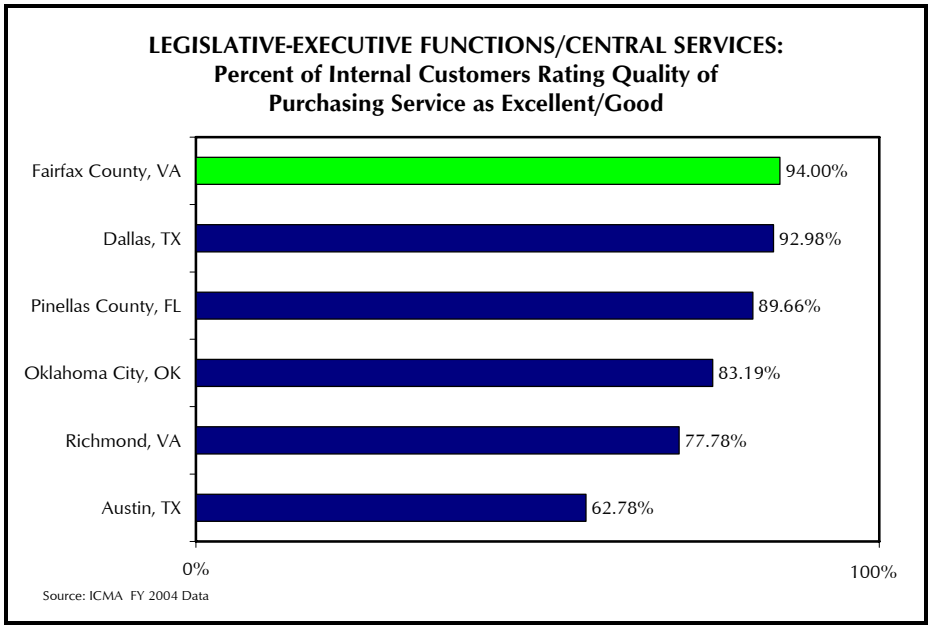
Legislative-Executive Functions/Central Services Program Area Summary