

## Analysis of Suggestions for Improvement as part of the FY 2010 County's Line of Business & Schools Program Review Processes Fall 2008

**Request By:** Public

**Suggestion:** Get rid of the uniform allowance for the Police Department and the Office of the Sheriff.

**Response By:** Police Department and Office of Sheriff

**Background:** All sworn personnel in the Police Department and the Office of Sheriff are mandated to wear a uniform. Sworn personnel and selected civilian employees are provided with a uniform that remains the property of the agency. In order to ensure the upmost maintenance of this property, employees are provided an annual uniform allowance of \$400 to cover the cost of dry cleaning, tactical boots/shoes, additional related clothing and minor uniform repair/alterations. Furthermore, an allowance of \$750 is issued to detectives and other non-uniformed sworn personnel requiring other clothing in the performance of their duties in compliance with Fairfax County Personnel Regulation 4.10, which states that an allowance shall be granted to police officers required to wear civilian clothes while on duty and for the duration of their assignment.

The total amount budgeted in FY 2009 for uniform allowance in the Office of Sheriff is \$218,925 and the Police Department is \$826,400.

### **Recommendation:**

Within the Police Department, the uniform maintenance/shoe allowance is provided to all sworn employees and selected civilian employees to cover the costs in addition to those listed above such as footwear (tactical boots or shoes), replacement of buttons and custom alterations and the purchase of additional approved uniform items such as sweaters, turtlenecks, and other undergarments needed for wear during the fall and winter. Currently, there is no other funding budgeted for these recurring expenditures, and direct purchasing of the items by the Police Department would significantly increase administrative costs, as each purchase would need to be validated and customized for each individual.

The Office of Sheriff requires that the uniforms be kept in the best condition so it can be passed on to others later. The uniform is to be returned to the Office of Sheriff for redistribution upon retirement, resignation or discharge. The allowance is intended to offset the high costs associated with maintaining the uniform required by the dress code and to ensure that the property is returned in the best possible condition. The Sheriff's Office pays all sworn officers, medical staff that wear specialty uniforms, and the correctional technicians the annual uniform allowance. This amount is intended to be used to defray specific costs such as: boots not issued to the individuals because some personnel require special footwear for medical reasons; the tailoring and dry cleaning of uniforms; the purchase of mandated black undershirts which costs on average \$15; and any public safety supplies and accessories that are desired and not issued must be purchased by the individual deputies. In addition, the allowance is taxed because it is part of the income to the individual; therefore the amount received by employees is significantly less than \$400.