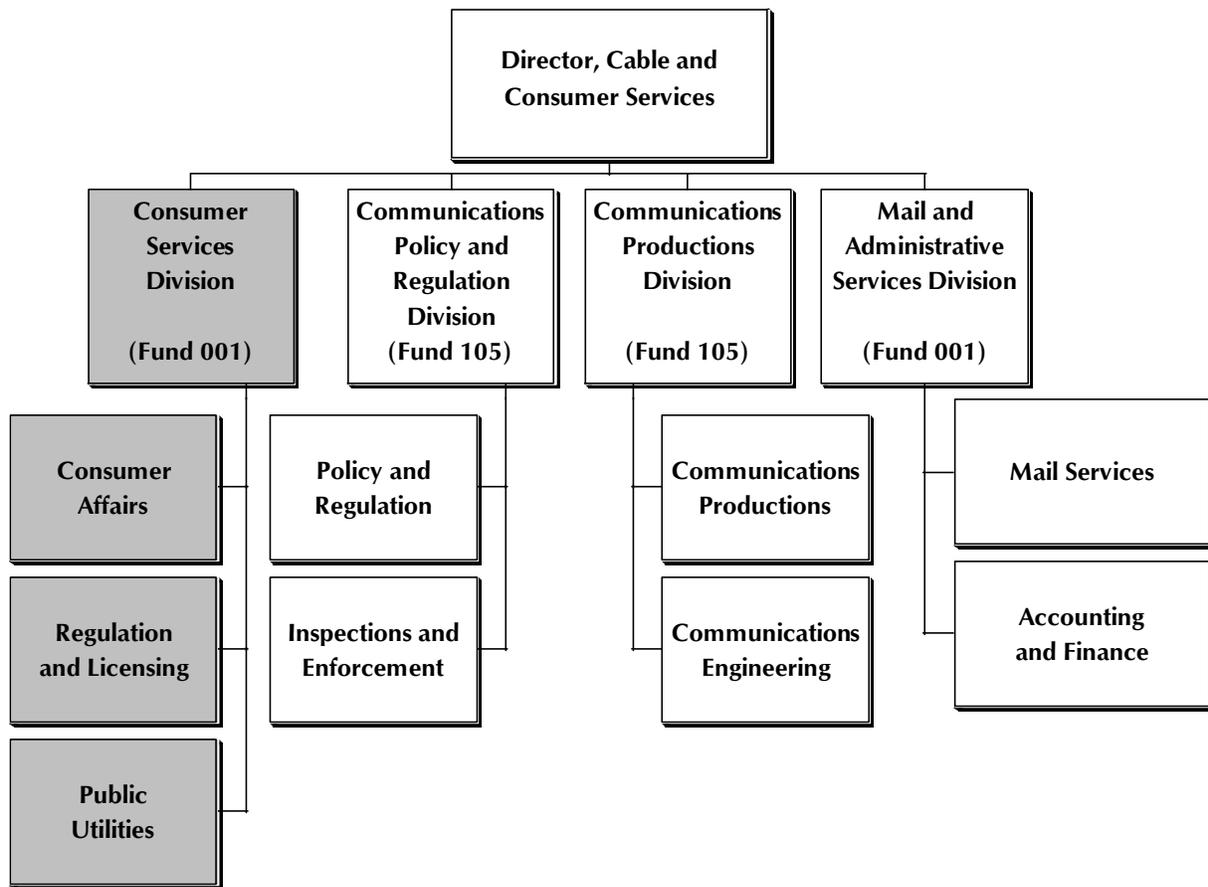


Department of Cable and Consumer Services



Mission

To mediate consumer and tenant-landlord issues, provide consumer educational information, regulate taxi and towing industries, issue licenses for certain business activities, and provide utility rate case intervention on behalf of the public. To protect and maintain the fiscal integrity and financial solvency of the department. To provide mail and inter-office distribution services to County agencies.

Focus

The Public Safety component of the Department of Cable and Consumer Services (DCCS) includes Consumer Affairs, Regulation and Licensing, and Public Utilities.

The Consumer Affairs Branch mediates and investigates consumer complaints, tenant- landlord disputes, and cable television issues. Staff works with businesses and consumers to resolve complaints to the satisfaction of both parties. In addition to mediation, staff develops conciliation agreements to resolve complex disputes, offers binding arbitration when mediation efforts are exhausted, and provides an advice line for consumers to speak directly to staff about consumer issues. The branch also provides education to the community by conducting presentations and distributing educational information on a variety of consumer topics. Educational meetings are conducted with the public to provide information about current consumer trends and ways to avoid consumer scams, fraud, and other problems. During FY 2010, staff published the quarterly *Informed Consumer* e-Newsletter and podcast. The branch also provides staff support to the Consumer Protection Commission and the Tenant-Landlord Commission. The Consumer Affairs Branch educates and supports the combined total of 1,700 homeowners' associations, condominium unit owners' associations, and civic associations that represent approximately 80 percent of the County population. The branch publishes a detailed Community Association Supplement Guide with information on current laws and community services and hosts the *Your Community Your Call* television program shown on Fairfax County Government Channel 16.

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The Regulation and Licensing Branch regulates the operation of taxicabs for hire within the County by issuing certificates to taxicab operators and licenses to taxicab drivers and conducting inspections to ensure vehicle safety and accuracy of taximeters. In coordination with the Public Utilities Branch, the branch biennially reviews new taxicab certificate applications and recommends to the Board of Supervisors the appropriate number of taxicabs required to service transportation needs in the County. The Regulation and Licensing Branch is also responsible for issuing licenses, permits, or registrations to canvassers, peddlers, solicitors, vendors, promoters, massage establishments and technicians, pawn brokers, precious metal and gem dealers, going out-of-business sales, solicitors representing charitable organizations, and trespass towers. The branch investigates taxicab and trespass towing complaints, and with the Public Utilities Branch, develops rate recommendations for taxicab and trespass towing within the County. In addition, the branch provides staff support to the Trespass Towing Advisory Board which makes recommendations to the Board of Supervisors on towing industry regulations and rates.

The Public Utilities Branch protects and advances the interests of both County residents and the County government in matters involving public utility, taxicab, and trespass towing. The branch monitors and intervenes in regulatory proceedings before the State Corporation Commission involving utilities serving Fairfax County and also works directly with these utilities to encourage the development of policies and practices that benefit and safeguard consumer interests. In addition, the branch meets with utilities, taxicab companies, and drivers to resolve service issues; provides staff support for the County's Energy Efficiency and Conservation Coordinating Committee; and serves in a leadership capacity in the Virginia Energy Purchasing Governmental Association (VEPGA). The branch conducts negotiations for electric service with both Dominion Virginia Power and Northern Virginia Electric Cooperative, which has resulted in favorable contract terms at the lowest cost for all County government agencies. Branch staff develops and presents expert testimony before federal, state, and local governmental bodies on behalf of the Board of Supervisors and the public. Staff saved Fairfax County residents a cumulative total of over \$87 million through FY 2010 on the basis of recurring utility cost savings achieved over the past 18 years.

Department of Cable and Consumer Services

Budget and Staff Resources

Agency Summary				
Category	FY 2010 Actual	FY 2011 Adopted Budget Plan	FY 2011 Revised Budget Plan	FY 2012 Advertised Budget Plan
Authorized Positions/Staff Years				
Legislative-Exec. Regular	19/ 19	16/ 16	16/ 16	15/ 15
Public Safety Regular	13/ 13	12/ 12	12/ 12	12/ 12
Expenditures:				
Legislative-Executive				
Personnel Services	\$910,780	\$749,086	\$749,086	\$671,086
Operating Expenses	2,603,803	3,358,978	3,470,603	3,350,191
Recovered Costs	(2,353,963)	(3,110,987)	(3,110,987)	(3,110,987)
Capital Equipment	0	0	0	0
Subtotal	\$1,160,620	\$997,077	\$1,108,702	\$910,290
Public Safety				
Personnel Services	\$811,709	\$659,278	\$659,278	\$659,278
Operating Expenses	116,951	131,641	131,684	129,178
Capital Equipment	0	0	0	0
Subtotal	\$928,660	\$790,919	\$790,962	\$788,456
Total General Fund Expenditures	\$2,089,280	\$1,787,996	\$1,899,664	\$1,698,746
Income:				
Legislative-Executive				
Commemorative Gifts	\$30	\$0	\$0	\$0
Subtotal	\$30	\$0	\$0	\$0
Public Safety				
Massage Therapy Permits	\$31,050	\$29,350	\$33,925	\$33,925
Precious Metal Dealers Licenses	7,850	6,775	7,850	7,850
Solicitors Licenses	10,060	10,000	10,000	10,000
Taxicab Licenses	136,995	156,550	138,195	138,195
Going Out of Business Fees	780	780	780	780
Subtotal	\$186,735	\$203,455	\$190,750	\$190,750
Total General Fund Income	\$186,765	\$203,455	\$190,750	\$190,750
Net Cost to the County	\$1,902,515	\$1,584,541	\$1,708,914	\$1,507,996

FY 2012 Funding Adjustments

The following funding adjustments from the FY 2011 Adopted Budget Plan are necessary to support the FY 2012 program:

- ◆ **Employee Compensation** **\$0**
It should be noted that no funding is included for pay for performance, merit increments, or market rate adjustments in FY 2012.

Department of Cable and Consumer Services

- ◆ **Reductions** (\$2,463)
A decrease of \$2,463 reflects the following reduction utilized to balance the FY 2012 budget:

Title	Impact	Posn	SYE	Reduction
Reduce Printing Costs	Consumer Affairs will reduce printing by eliminating the printing of Your Community Your Call flyers for distribution to homeowners' associations (HOAs). During FY 2011, the branch will launch a campaign to enroll HOAs in a listserv to be used for distribution of the flyers and all information will be made available to the public on the County's website. Regulation and Licensing will reduce printing by eliminating the printing of the taxicab code that is currently distributed to taxicab applicants. Alternate distribution means will be used including the County website. These actions should result in no impact to the public.	0	0.0	\$2,463

Changes to FY 2011 Adopted Budget Plan

The following funding adjustments reflect all approved changes in the FY 2011 Revised Budget Plan since passage of the FY 2011 Adopted Budget Plan. Included are all adjustments made as part of the FY 2010 Carryover Review, and all other approved changes through December 31, 2010:

- ◆ **Carryover Adjustments** \$43
As part of the FY 2010 Carryover Review, the Board of Supervisors approved encumbered funding of \$43 in Operating Expenses.

Cost Centers

The public safety function of the Department of Cable and Consumer Services has one cost center, Consumer Services, which works to fulfill the mission of the department and to carry out the key initiatives for the fiscal year.

Consumer Services

Funding Summary				
Category	FY 2010 Actual	FY 2011 Adopted Budget Plan	FY 2011 Revised Budget Plan	FY 2012 Advertised Budget Plan
Authorized Positions/Staff Years				
Regular	13/ 13	12/ 12	12/ 12	12/ 12
Total Expenditures	\$928,660	\$790,919	\$790,962	\$788,456

Position Summary		
<u>Public Utilities</u>	<u>Regulation and Licensing</u>	<u>Consumer Affairs</u>
1 Senior Utilities Analyst	1 Consumer Specialist III	1 Consumer Specialist III
1 Utilities Analyst	1 Consumer Specialist II	2 Consumer Specialists II
1 Utilities Analyst	2 Administrative Assistants III	3 Consumer Specialists I
		1 Administrative Assistant IV
		1 Administrative Assistant II
		1 Consumer Specialist II
		1 Consumer Specialist I
		2 Administrative Assistants II
TOTAL POSITIONS		
12 Positions/ 12.0 Staff Years		

* Positions in bold are supported by Fund 105, Cable Communications

Department of Cable and Consumer Services

Key Performance Measures

Goal

To provide consumer services and educational outreach, to issue licenses for certain businesses and provide utility rate case intervention.

Objectives

- ◆ To close 90 percent of all case inquiries.
- ◆ To meet 100 percent of consumer educational seminar objectives.
- ◆ To maintain a 98 percent completion rate for issuing permanent licenses within 60 days of application.
- ◆ To intervene in rate and service provision utility cases before the State Corporation Commission to ensure quality utility service at the lowest possible rates, to reach an estimated \$89 million in curtailed or limited rate increases, up from \$87 million in FY 2010.

Indicator	Prior Year Actuals			Current Estimate	Future Estimate
	FY 2008 Actual	FY 2009 Actual	FY 2010 Estimate/Actual	FY 2011	FY 2012
Output:					
Case inquiries (complaints, advice, walk-ins)	6,964	7,732	7,172 / 7,259	7,172	7,172
Consumer educational seminars conducted	120	148	115 / 141	135	135
Licenses issued	1,762	1,857	1,750 / 1,844	1,750	1,750
Utility rate and service cases before SCC/contract negotiations with utility companies	31	34	35 / 58	35	35
Efficiency:					
Staff hours per case inquiry	2.4	2.1	2.4 / 2.3	2.4	2.4
Staff hours per consumer educational seminar	3.7	5.3	4.5 / 2.2	2.2	2.2
Staff hours per license application	2.1	2.1	2.2 / 2.1	2.2	2.2
Utility cases per analyst	31	34	35 / 58	35	35
Service Quality:					
Percent of case inquiries responded to within 48 hours of receipt	100%	100%	100% / 100%	100%	100%
Percent of respondents satisfied with consumer educational seminars	97%	98%	97% / 100%	97%	97%
Temporary licenses issued within 10 working days of application	99%	98%	98% / 99%	98%	98%
Percent of utility case interventions completed within required time frame	100%	100%	100% / 100%	100%	100%

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Indicator	Prior Year Actuals			Current Estimate	Future Estimate
	FY 2008 Actual	FY 2009 Actual	FY 2010 Estimate/Actual	FY 2011	FY 2012
Outcome:					
Percent of case inquiries closed	98%	100%	90% / 99%	90%	90%
Percent of consumer educational seminars meeting objectives	100%	100%	100% / 100%	100%	100%
Percent of permanent licenses issued within 60 calendar days of application	99%	99%	98% / 99%	98%	98%
Cumulative County savings due to intervention (in millions)	\$54	\$60	\$60 / \$87	\$88	\$89

Performance Measurement Results

In FY 2010, staff responded to 7,259 case inquiries within 48 hours, closing 99 percent by year end. This level of case inquiries reflects an anticipated return to more normal levels compared to the FY 2009 actual. As a result, no adjustments are required to the FY 2011 and FY 2012 estimates.

The Regulation and Licensing Branch issued 1,844 permanent licenses in FY 2010, due to sustained increases in both peddler and solicitor license applications. It is anticipated that license applications may return to pre-FY 2009 levels; therefore, no adjustments have been made to the FY 2011 and FY 2012 estimates.

The Public Utilities Branch (PUB) will continue participating with other local governments in seeking the lowest electric rates possible and in securing favorable energy efficiency and conservation programs through the Virginia Energy Purchasing Governmental Association (VEPGA), which negotiates rates on behalf of local governments. These negotiations were successfully completed in FY 2007, to be effective through mid FY 2011. PUB staff serves as one of two VEPGA board members that will participate in direct negotiations for a new contract with Dominion Virginia Power. In FY 2010, staff participated in two regulatory proceedings at the State Corporation Commission (SCC), including the submission of testimony in the Virginia Power rate case that resulted in a March 2010 order that included a savings of over \$25 million per year to Fairfax County residents, and a stipulation that there would be no new rate cases until 2013. A second regulatory proceeding at the SCC involved a rate increase by Reston Lake Anne Air Conditioning Corporation (RELAC). In this capacity PUB served as an advocate for ratepayers questioning the adequacy of the services received. PUB directed the comprehensive Consumer Protection Commission (CPC) report on rates of water utilities in Fairfax County. PUB also prepared a report evaluating the adequacy of the existing number of taxicab certificates in 2009, and successfully defended that report and its recommendations to the CPC.