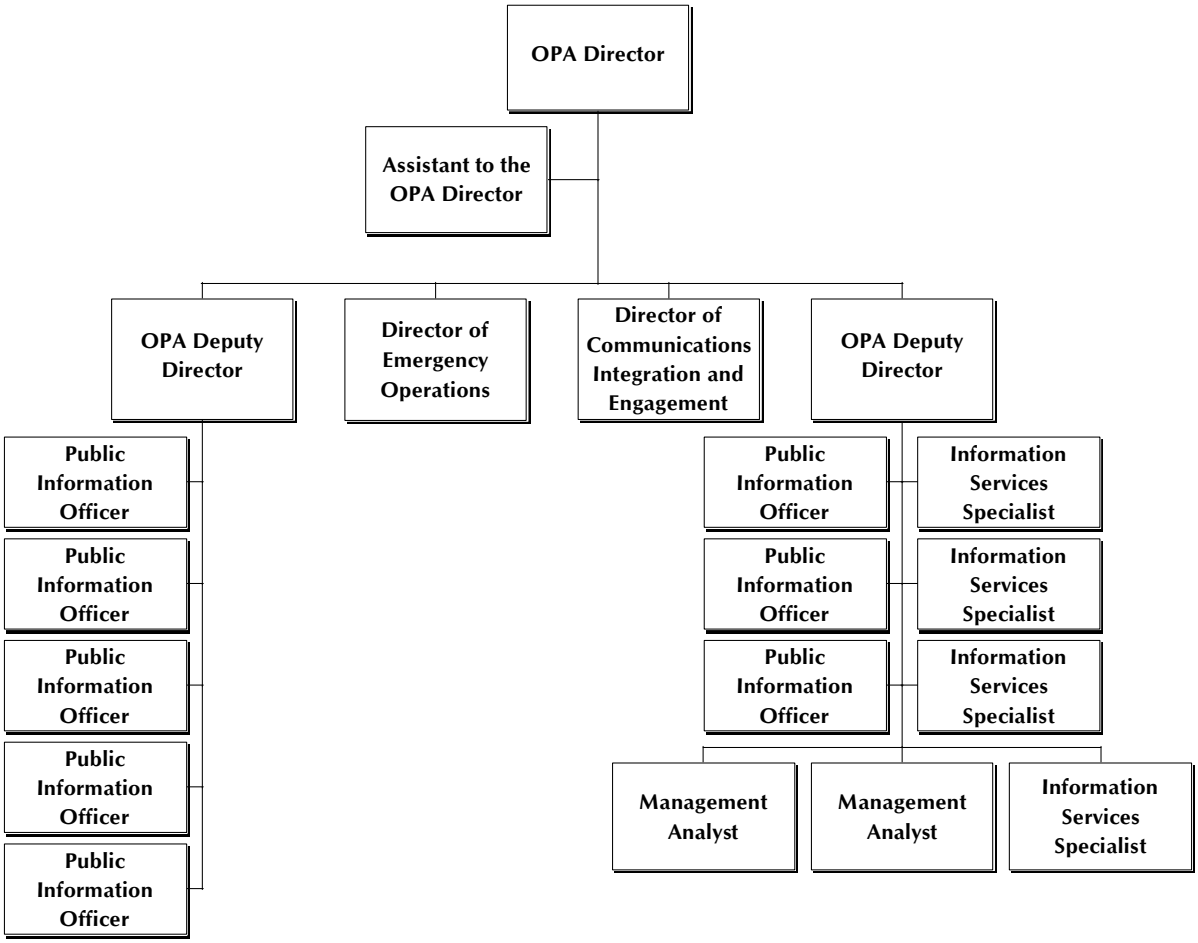
Office of Public Affairs



Mission

To set parameters, give guidance, model behavior and provide leadership to ensure a common look, feel and message for countywide information.

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 communications 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.

OPA coordinates a comprehensive, centralized public affairs program for the County and also provides communications consulting to County agencies. Employee internal communications and countywide Web content management are also part of the portfolio.

Operational responsibilities include planning, training and administration of the agency as well as the development and implementation of policies and procedures for the agency. They encompass the day-to-day management of the agency's information services staff, technical operations and financial management staff, and provide leadership for the agency's workforce planning.

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OPA is organized to provide focus in three main areas for County staff and the public: emergency information, traditional and online communications and information service. This structure facilitates the best use of OPA staffing to provide for the strategic issues that need to be addressed during the next five years: improve crisis/emergency communications; publish content through many tools and engage the public; enhance access to information; provide information proactively to the media; and 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 County's intranet; and exploring resources for reaching diverse audiences.

In FY 2011, interaction between OPA information services staff and the public continued to increase. This is mainly due to the relocation of courts and other agencies to the Fairfax County Courthouse. With the Juvenile and Domestic Relations General District Court relocating to the Courthouse, OPA employees staffing the information desk have seen a significant increase in traffic because they are the first point of information within the facility. In response to changing information requirements of the courthouse environment, collaboration was formed between the courthouse stakeholders, OPA, the Department of Information Technology, the Facilities Management Department, and the Department of Public Works and Environmental Services, resulting in a new information hub with advanced technology, implemented during FY 2011.

During FY 2011, Access Fairfax, the multi-purpose e-government and telework facility located in the South County Government Center transitioned to the Department of Neighborhood and Community Services (DNCS). The center, the first of its kind in Fairfax County, which provides access to government information and services for residents and visitors in the Richmond Highway corridor, has seen a continued increase in visitation. OPA staff is on hand to resolve problems and connect patrons with the information they need.

In FY 2011, OPA continued to recognize the need for increased emphasis on emergency communications, dissemination of information to the public and County employees and communications consulting services for other County agencies. OPA remains proactive in anticipating the media's needs and providing timely information. OPA maintains the County's presence on several social media sites, including Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and Flickr, allowing the County to directly communicate with the public. These tools enhance emergency communications in the Joint Information Center (JIC) of the McConnell Public Safety and Transportation Operations Center (MPSTOC).

During FY 2011, Fairfax County implemented a new intranet, FairfaxNET, which is driven by Microsoft SharePoint. FairfaxNET is an "intelligent portal" designed to connect County employees, teams and knowledge so that Fairfax County Government can leverage relevant information across business processes to help employees work more efficiently. OPA has collaborated with DIT throughout the development of FairfaxNET and is responsible for all content in the system. FairfaxNET offers new tools and features, which OPA is responsible for managing as additional channels for communicating with County employees.

The attributes of the new system include: two-way communication among employees and between employees and management and forums for the County's large and diverse workforce to identify and collaborate on new ideas. FairfaxNET includes "Web 2.0" information-sharing tools such as wikis, blogs and RSS feeds, which are not currently available to Fairfax County employees through the Infoweb.

Additionally, in FY 2011, OPA launched NewsWire, which serves as a central location for daily news and information about the County, as well as key opportunities to connect and engage the community. NewsWire delivers news and information on a variety of topics in a variety of formats from all County agencies during business hours, or, if emergencies warrant, during non-business hours.

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				
Regular	18/ 18	18/ 18	20/ 20	20/ 20
Expenditures:				
Personnel Services	$1,360,981	$1,254,996	$1,254,996	$1,187,206
Operating Expenses	86,301	155,781	253,869	155,781
Capital Equipment	0	0	0	0
Subtotal	**$1,447,282**	**$1,410,777**	**$1,508,865**	**$1,342,987**
Less:				
Recovered Costs	($193,470)	($256,603)	($256,603)	($256,603)
Total Expenditures	**$1,253,812**	**$1,154,174**	**$1,252,262**	**$1,086,384**

Position Summary					
1	Director	2	Information Officers IV	2	Administrative Assistants V
2	Assistant Directors	5	Information Officers III	2	Administrative Assistants III
1	Management Analyst II	2	Information Officers II	1	Administrative Assistant II
1	Management Analyst I	1	Information Officer I		
TOTAL POSITIONS					
20 Positions / 20.0 Staff Years					

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 or market rate adjustments in FY 2012.

- **Access Fairfax Program** **($67,790)**
  Funding of $67,790 is being transferred from OPA to the Department of Neighborhood and Community Services for staff providing services to visitors and clients at the South County Government Center.

- **Reductions** **$0**
  It should be noted that no reductions to balance the FY 2012 budget are included in this agency based on the limited ability to generate additional savings.

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** **$98,088**
  As part of the *FY 2010 Carryover Review*, the Board of Supervisors approved encumbered funding of $98,088 in Operating Expenses.

- **Position Changes** **$0**
  As part of the FY 2011 review of County position categories, a conversion of 2/2.0 SYE positions has been made. The status of limited term positions was reviewed in light of recent changes to federal

regulations related to health care and other federal tax requirements. As a result of this review a number of existing limited term positions have been converted to Merit Regular status.

- **Access Fairfax Program** **$0**
  Two positions including 1/1.0 SYE Administrative Assistant III and 1/1.0 SYE Administrative Assistant II are to be converted to Merit Regular and are being transferred from OPA to the Department of Neighborhood and Community Services (DNCS) for the services provided to visitors and clients at the South County Government Center. The vast majority of visits to South County are for human services and the relocation of staff to DNCS, within the Access Division, will provide a more focused link to the programs best suited for the client. Funding will be absorbed in FY 2011.

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 a 90 percent or higher satisfaction rating.

Indicator	Prior Year Actuals			Current Estimate	Future Estimate
	FY 2008 Actual	FY 2009 Actual	FY 2010 Estimate/Actual	FY 2011	FY 2012
Output:					
Hours spent in support of communication consulting services to other agencies	6,598	5,757	6,000 / 6,045	6,000	6,000
Customer service interactions with the general public	332,028	348,629	325,000 / 366,060	340,000	340,000
New/existing webpages created, reviewed or updated (1)	4,382	4,825	3,500 / 5,548	5,000	5,000
Publication issues (print and electronic)	400	393	325 / 347	325	325
News releases produced (2)	259	253	300 / 240	200	50
Number of special events/ceremonies (3)	NA	10	8 / 0	2	2
Number of media interactions (3)	NA	515	500 / 383	400	400
Efficiency:					
Hours spent consulting and issues management per agency	254	231	200 / 202	225	225
Total staff hours per media interaction (hours) (3)	NA	0.30	0.25 / 0.25	0.25	0.25
Total staff time per special event/ ceremony (days) (3)	NA	17.00	15.00 / 0.00	15.00	15.00
Percent of time spent planning, creating, editing and updating web content (3)	NA	84.6%	70.0% / 88.0%	70.0%	70.0%
Total staff hours to produce each news release (hours) (3)	NA	2.50	3.00 / 2.50	3.00	3.00

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Indicator	Prior Year Actuals FY 2008 Actual	FY 2009 Actual	FY 2010 Estimate/Actual	Current Estimate FY 2011	Future Estimate FY 2012
Service Quality:					
Average satisfaction with OPA's services support as assessed by customers (agencies, general public, media)	95%	93%	90% / 95%	90%	90%
Percent of information requests from the general public answered within a day	95%	95%	95% / 97%	95%	95%
Percent information requests from the media answered within a day	97%	97%	95% / 97%	95%	95%
Percent of PIOs and Communication Specialists that conduct an annual strategy meeting with their respective consulting agencies (3)	NA	80%	90% / 90%	90%	90%
Outcome:					
Percentage rating of user satisfaction for consulting services	95%	95%	90% / 95%	90%	90%
Percentage rating of user satisfaction for information provided to the general public	94%	93%	90% / 95%	90%	90%
Average satisfaction rating of news releases produced, publications, planning of special events & ceremonies, media interactions, web content, social media, and emergency communications	95%	96%	90% / 95%	90%	90%

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

(1) New/existing web pages include the County's many social media sites such as Facebook, Twitter and Flickr.

(2) News Releases will only be generated for significant events. Information contained in News Releases will be published as updates through NewsWire.

(3) The Office of Public Affairs will track these newly added performance indicators to be more consistent with its revised organizational structure with regards to online and agency consulting and media relations.

Performance Measurement Results

There was a 5.0 percent increase in customer service interaction in FY 2009 and an additional 5.0 percent increase in FY 2010 primarily due to the relocation of courts and other agencies to the Fairfax County Courthouse. OPA employees, staffing the information desk, are the first point of contact for more than 4,000 people who frequent the courthouse on a daily basis.

As a result of FY 2010 budget reductions, OPA restructured the method used to circulate external and internal information. The print version of The Courier was eliminated and electronic publications were consolidated resulting in an increase of 15 percent for new/existing web pages that were either created, reviewed and/or updated.