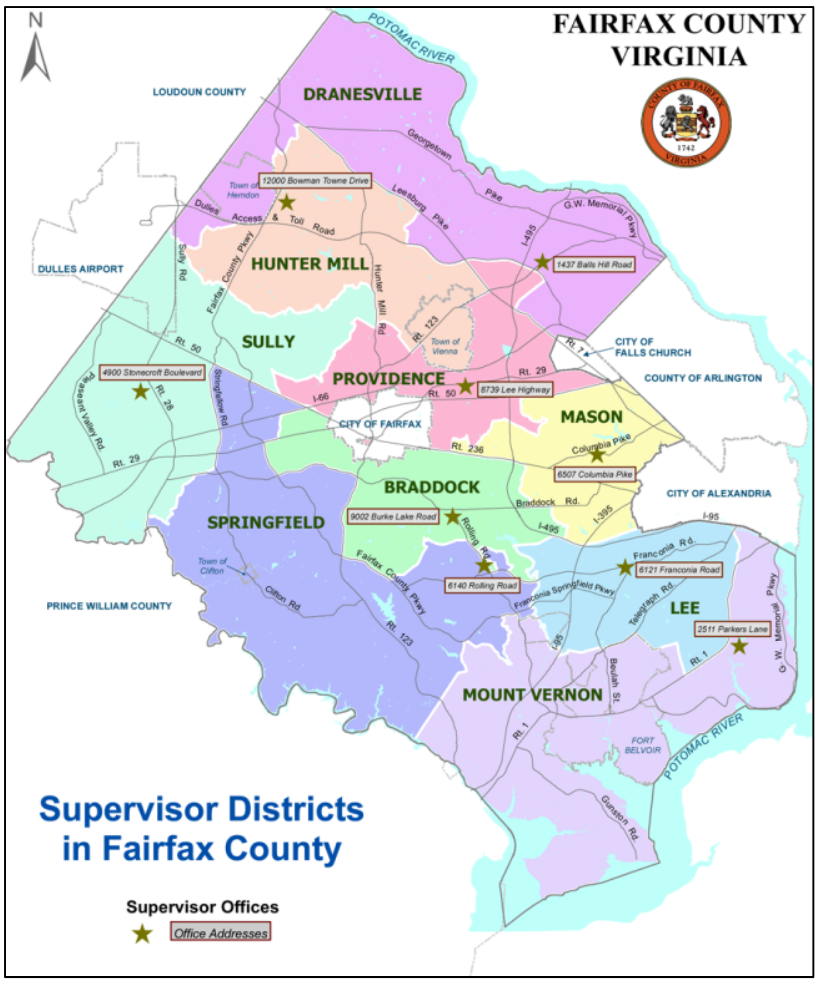
## *Fairfax County Government*

In Virginia, cities and counties are distinct units of government and do not overlap. Fairfax County completely surrounds the City of Fairfax and is adjacent to the City of Falls Church and the City of Alexandria. Property within these cities is not subject to taxation by Fairfax County, and the County generally is not required to provide governmental services to their residents. However, pursuant to agreements with these cities, the County does provide certain services to their residents.

In Fairfax County, there are three incorporated towns - Clifton, Herndon and Vienna - which are overlapping units of government within the County. With certain limitations prescribed by the Code of Virginia, the ordinances and regulations of the County are generally effective in them. Property in these towns is subject to County taxation and the County provides certain services to their residents. These towns may incur general obligation bonded indebtedness without the prior approval of the County.




The Fairfax County government is organized under the Urban County Executive form of government as defined under the Code of Virginia. The governing body of the County is the Board of Supervisors, which makes policies for the administration of the County.

# County Organization

The Board of Supervisors consists of ten members: the Chairman, elected at large, and one member from each of nine supervisory districts, elected for four year terms by the voters of the district in which the member resides.

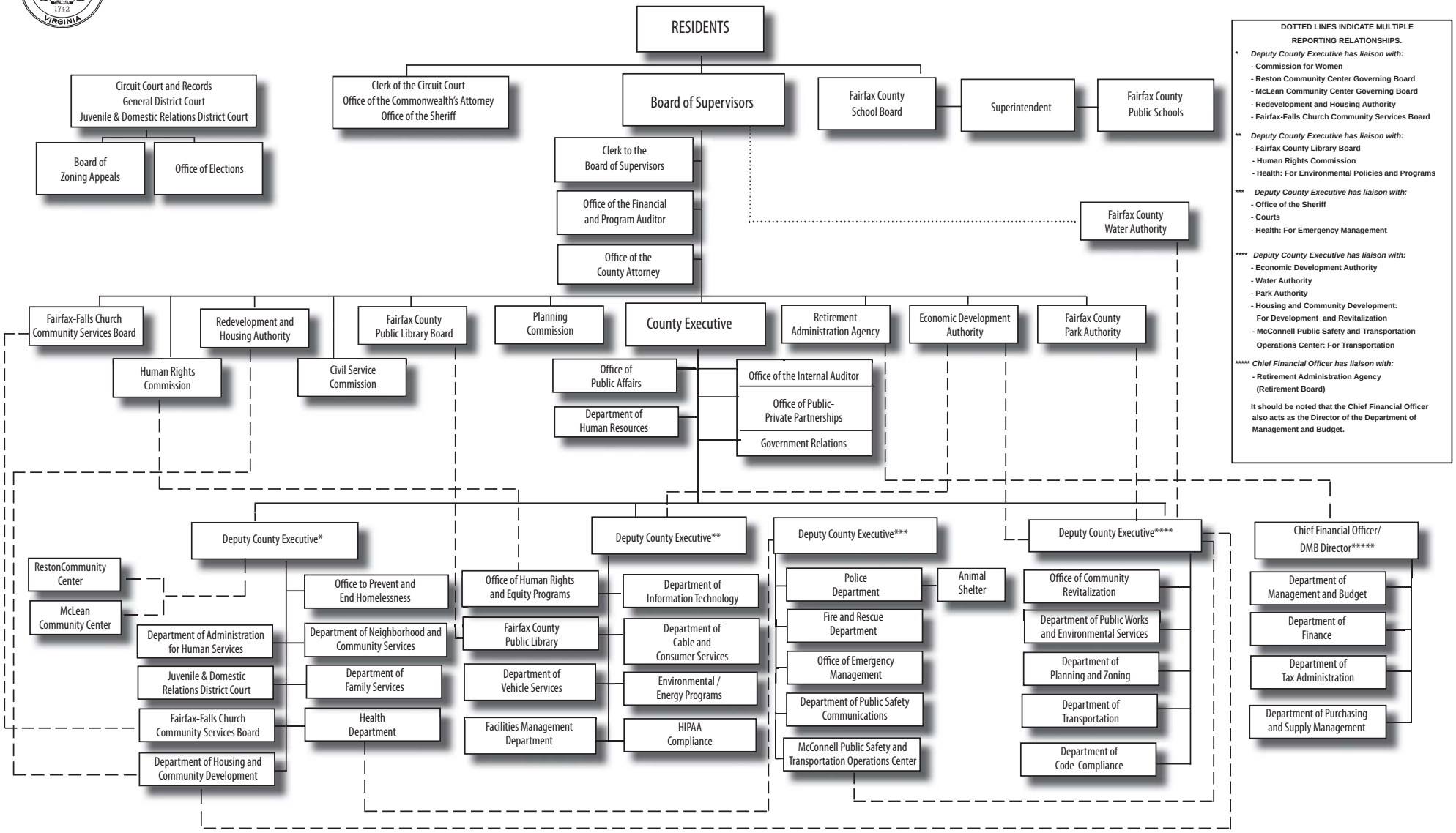
The Board of Supervisors appoints a County Executive to act as the administrative head of the County. The County Executive serves at the pleasure of the Board of Supervisors, carries out the policies established by the Board of Supervisors, directs business and administrative procedures, and recommends officers and personnel to be appointed by the Board of Supervisors.

## The Fairfax County Board of Supervisors

*From left to right: Catherine M. Hudgins (Hunter Mill District); Michael R. Frey (Sully District); John C. Cook (Braddock District); Gerald W. Hyland (Mount Vernon District); Sharon Bulova (Chairman, At-Large); Penelope A. Gross (Mason District, Vice Chairman); John W. Foust (Dranesville District); Jeffrey C. McKay (Lee District); Pat Herrity (Springfield District); and Linda Q. Smyth (Providence District).*

An organizational chart of Fairfax County government is provided on the next page.

# ORGANIZATION OF FAIRFAX COUNTY GOVERNMENT



## BOARDS, AUTHORITIES AND COMMISSIONS

### *Appeal Groups*

Board of Building and Fire Prevention Code Appeals
Board of Equalization of Real Estate Assessments
Board of Zoning Appeals[1]
Civil Service Commission
Human Rights Commission

### *Management Groups*

Audit Committee (3 Board Members, 2 Citizens)
Burgundy Village Community Center Operations Board
Celebrate Fairfax, Inc. Board of Directors
Economic Development Authority
Electoral Board
Fairfax County Convention & Visitors Corporation Board of Directors
Fairfax County Employees' Retirement System Board of Trustees
Fairfax County Park Authority
Fairfax County Public Library Board of Trustees
Fairfax County Water Authority
Fairfax-Falls Church Community Services Board
Industrial Development Authority
McLean Community Center Governing Board
Police Officers Retirement System Board of Trustees
Redevelopment and Housing Authority
Reston Community Center Governing Board
Uniformed Retirement System Board of Trustees

### *Regional Agencies to which Fairfax County Contributes*

Health Systems Agency Board
Metropolitan Washington Airports (MWA) Policy Committee
Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments
National Association of Counties
Northern Virginia Community College Board
Northern Virginia Regional Commission
Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority
Northern Virginia Transportation Commission
Northern Virginia Transportation Coordinating Council
Route 28 Highway Transportation District Advisory Board
Upper Occoquan Sewage Authority (UOSA)
Virginia Association of Counties
Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA)

[1] The members of this group are appointed by the 19th Judicial Circuit Court of Virginia.

## BOARDS, AUTHORITIES AND COMMISSIONS

### *Advisory Groups*

A. Heath Onthank Award Selection Committee
Advisory Plans Examiner Board
Advisory Social Services Board
Affordable Dwelling Unit Advisory Board
Agricultural and Forestal Districts Advisory Committee
Airports Advisory Committee
Alcohol Safety Action Program Local Policy Board
Animal Services Advisory Commission
Architectural Review Board
Athletic Council
Barbara Varon Volunteer Award Selection Committee
Chesapeake Bay Preservation Ordinance Exception Review Committee
Child Care Advisory Council
Citizen Corps Council, Fairfax County
Commission for Women
Commission on Aging
Commission on Organ and Tissue Donation and Transplantation
Committee for the Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness in the Fairfax-Falls Church Community
Community Action Advisory Board (CAAB)
Community Criminal Justice Board (CCJB)
Community Policy and Management Team, Fairfax-Falls Church
Community Revitalization and Reinvestment Advisory Group
Consumer Protection Commission
Criminal Justice Advisory Board (CJAB)
Dulles Rail Transportation Improvement District Advisory Board, Phase I
Dulles Rail Transportation Improvement District Advisory Board, Phase II
Economic Advisory Commission
Engineering Standards Review Committee
Environmental Quality Advisory Council (EQAC)
Fairfax Area Disability Services Board
Fairfax Community Long Term Care Coordinating Council
Fairfax County History Museum Subcommittees
Fairfax County Safety Net Health Center Commission
Geotechnical Review Board
GMU Fairfax Campus Advisory Board
Health Care Advisory Board

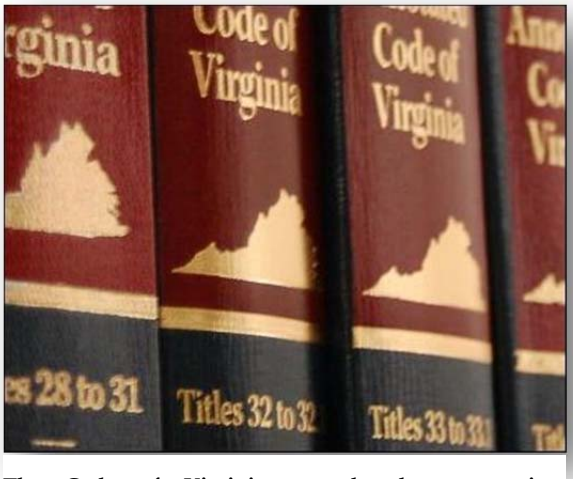
## BOARDS, AUTHORITIES AND COMMISSIONS

### *Advisory Groups*

History Commission
Human Services Council
Information Technology Policy Advisory Committee (ITPAC)
Juvenile & Domestic Relations Court Citizens Advisory Council
Laurel Hill Project Advisory Citizen Oversight Committee
Mosaic District Community Development Authority
Oversight Committee on Drinking and Driving
Planning Commission
Road Viewers Board
Route 28 Highway Transportation Improvement District Advisory Board
Security Alarm Systems Commission
Small Business Commission, Fairfax County
Southgate Community Center Advisory Council
Supervised Visitation and Supervised Exchange Task Force
Tenant Landlord Commission
Trails and Sidewalks Committee
Transportation Advisory Commission
Tree Commission
Trespass Towing Advisory Board
Tysons Transportation Service District Advisory Board
Volunteer Fire Commission
Wetlands Board
Youth Basketball Council Advisory Board

## THE BUDGET

Each year, Fairfax County publishes sets of budget documents or fiscal plans: the Advertised Budget Plan and the Adopted Budget Plan. Submission and publication of the budget is contingent upon criteria established in the Code of Virginia. The County prepares and approves an annual budget in compliance with sound financial practices, generally accepted accounting principles, and the provisions of the Code of Virginia which control the preparation, consideration, adoption, and execution of the County budget. As required by the Code of Virginia (§ 15.2-2503), the County Executive must submit to the Board of County Supervisors a proposed budget, or fiscal plan, on or before April 1 of each year for the fiscal year beginning July 1. A budget is balanced when projected total funds available equal total disbursements, including established reserves. All local governments in the Commonwealth of Virginia must adopt a balanced budget as a requirement of state law no later than by July 1. The Advertised Budget Plan is the annual budget proposed by the County Executive for County general government operations for the upcoming fiscal year, which runs from July 1 through June 30. The Advertised Budget Plan is based on estimates of projected expenditures for County programs and it provides the means for paying for these expenditures through estimated revenues. According to the Code of Virginia, the Board of Supervisors must approve a tax rate and adopt a budget for informative and planning purposes no later than the beginning of the fiscal year (July 1). Following extensive review, deliberation and public hearings to receive input from County residents, the Board of Supervisors formally approves the Adopted Budget Plan typically in late April in order to satisfy the requirement that the Board of Supervisors approve a transfer to the Fairfax County School Board by May 1, or within 30 days of receiving state revenue estimates from the state, whichever is later. The transfer amount has traditionally been included in the Board's Adopted Budget, requiring that the Board adopt the budget on or before May 1, not July 1 as the Code allows.

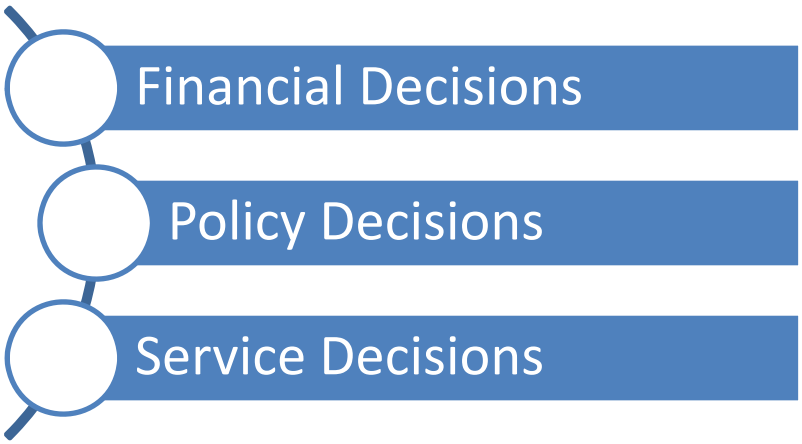



**The Code of Virginia controls the preparation, consideration, adoption, and execution of the County's budget.**

The County's budget serves as the documentation of the financial, policy, and service decisions that the Board of Supervisors has authorized for the fiscal year. This document contains some of the best sources of information on County governmental programs and services, as well as key financial information for policy makers and managers.

## What The County's Budget Publications Document

**Financial Decisions:** The budget provides an estimate of the costs that will be incurred if programs are carried out as planned and the public and private revenues available to finance these activities (through sources such as state and local taxes, fees, and grants). The appropriation ordinance adopted by the Board of Supervisors legally authorizes the expenditure of public monies and becomes the approved financial plan for the upcoming fiscal year.




**Policy Decisions:** The budget reflects decisions made by the County Executive, department directors, and agency heads to prioritize and allocate resources toward providing services that help us achieve common goals efficiently and effectively. As a management tool, the budget also establishes accountability for the effective and efficient operation of programs and activities and to locate responsibility for the delivery of City services.

**Service Decisions:** The budget describes the services or lines of business carried out by each departmental program within the County. Each budget narrative, which is organized by Program Area in Volume 1 and Fund groupings in Volume 2, provides a map detailing what each department does with their personnel and other resources, for whom or what these activities are undertaken, and how the County benefits from its funding of these discrete programs and services. Performance data are associated with each activity and help to quantify levels of service, program effectiveness and efficiency, and quality in terms of results, value, and outcomes.

The Fairfax County Budget Plan (Advertised and Adopted) is presented in several volumes. A brief description of each document is summarized below:

***The Citizen's Guide*** for the Advertised Budget includes a summary of the key facts, figures, and highlights of the budget.

***The Budget Overview*** summarizes the budget, thereby allowing a complete examination of the budget through this document. The Overview contains the County Executive's message to the Board of Supervisors; budget highlights; a summary of the County's fiscal condition, allocation of resources, and financial history; and projections of future revenues and expenditure requirements. Also included is information on the County's taxes and fees; fiscal, demographic, and economic trends; direct spending by County departments; transfers to other public organizations, such as the Fairfax County Public Schools and Metro; and funded construction projects.

***Volume 1 – General Fund*** details the budgets for County departments and agencies funded from general tax revenue such as real estate and personal property taxes. Included are summary budget schedules and tables organized by accounting classification and program area summaries. Detailed budget information is presented by program area and by department/agency. Also included are organizational charts, strategic issues, and performance indicators for each department/agency.

***Volume 2 – Capital Construction and Other Operating Funds*** details budgets for County departments, agencies, construction projects, and programs funded from non-General Fund revenue sources, or from a mix of General Fund and non-General Fund sources, such as federal or state grants, proceeds from the sale of bonds, user fees, and special tax districts. Included are detailed budget schedules and tables organized by accounting classification, as well as budget summaries by fund group. This volume also details information associated with Fairfax County funding for Contributory Agencies.

**The County's budget is online at [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/budget](www.fairfaxcounty.gov/budget)**

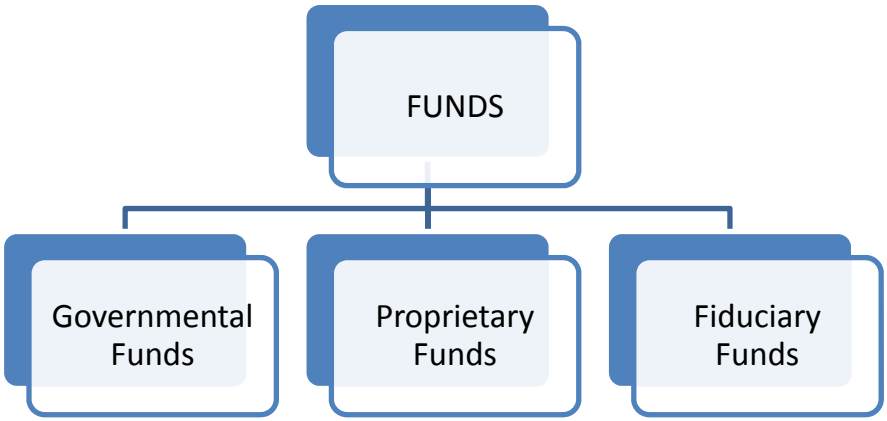
**Capital Improvement Program** – The County also prepares and publishes a 5-year Capital Improvement Program (CIP) – separate from the budget – which is also adopted by the Board of Supervisors and published as a separate document. The CIP specifies capital improvements and construction projects which are scheduled for funding over the next five years in order to maintain or enhance the County's capital assets and delivery of services. In addition, the CIP also describes financing instruments or mechanisms for those projects. Financial resources used to meet priority needs as established by the CIP are accounted for in the Capital Project Funds. The primary type of operating expenditure included in the budget relating to the CIP is funding to cover debt service payments for General Obligation Bonds or other types of debt required to fund specific CIP projects. In addition, the cost of opening and operating new facilities is closely linked to the CIP.

## BASIS OF ACCOUNTING AND BUDGETING

A budget is a formal document that enables the County to plan for the future, measure the performance of County services, and help the public to understand where revenues come from and how they are spent on County services. The budget reflects the estimated costs of operation for the County's programs, services, and activities. The budget serves many purposes and addresses different needs depending on the "audience" including, County residents, federal and state regulatory authorities, elected officials, other local governments, taxpayers or County staff.

The budget must comply with the Code of Virginia and regulatory requirements. Fairfax County is required to undergo an annual financial audit by independent auditors. Thus, the budget outlines the required information to serve legal and financial reporting requirements. The budget is prepared and organized within a defined basis of budgeting and financial structure to meet regulatory and managerial reporting categories of expenditures and revenues.

The Commonwealth of Virginia requires that the County budget be based on fund accounting, which is a system that matches the sources of revenue (such as taxes or service fees) with the uses (program costs) of that revenue. Therefore, the County budgets and accounts for its revenues and expenditures in various funds. Financially, the County budget is composed of three primary fund types: Governmental Funds (General Fund, Debt Service Fund, Special Revenue Funds and Capital Project Funds), Proprietary Funds (Enterprise Funds and Internal Service Funds), and Fiduciary Funds (Trust Funds and Agency Funds).




## Accounting Basis

The County's governmental functions and accounting system are organized and controlled on a fund basis. Each fund is considered a separate accounting entity, with operations accounted for in a separate set of self-balancing accounts that comprise assets, liabilities, fund equity, revenues, and expenditures or expenses as appropriate.

The County's budget is prepared in accordance with "Generally Accepted Accounting Principles" (GAAP) as promulgated by the Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB) and the Auditor of Public Accounts of the Commonwealth of Virginia (APA). These principles are also used to prepare the County's audited *Comprehensive Annual Financial Report* (CAFR). The County's budget applies two different accounting methods depending on the nature of the fund.

- The modified accrual basis of accounting is used to prepare the budgets of the General, Special Revenue, and Capital Projects Funds. Under this method of accounting, revenues are recognized in the period that they become measurable and available. With respect to real and personal property tax revenue and other local taxes, the term "available" is limited to collection within 45 days of the fiscal year-end. Federal and State reimbursement-type grants are recorded as revenue when related eligible expenditures are incurred.

- The accrual basis of accounting is used to prepare the budget and financial statements of the Proprietary Funds. Under this method of accounting, revenues are recognized when earned and expenses are recorded when liabilities are incurred without regard to receipt or disbursement of cash, regardless of when the related cash flows take place.

Governmental and agency funds are accounted for on a modified accrual basis of accounting. Revenue is considered available and recorded if it is collectible within the current period or within 45 days thereafter, to be used to pay liabilities of the current period. Expenditures are generally recorded when the related fund liability is incurred, with the exception of certain liabilities recorded in long-term liabilities.

Proprietary, pension and non-expendable trust funds utilize the full accrual basis of accounting which requires that revenues be recognized in the period in which service is given and that expenses be recorded in the period in which the benefit is received. A description of the fund types is provided:

- **General Fund Group:** The largest fund in the General Fund Group, the General Fund, is the County's primary operating fund, and it is used to account for all revenue sources and expenditures which are not required to be accounted for in other funds. Revenues are derived primarily from real estate and personal property taxes as well as other local taxes, federal and state distributions, license and permit fees, charges for services, and interest from investments. A significant portion of General Fund revenues are transferred to other funds to finance the operations of the County's public schools, Community Services Board (CSB), and debt service, among others. The General Fund group also includes funds which are primarily funded through transfers from the General Fund.

- **Debt Service Funds:** The debt service funds are used to account for the accumulation of resources for, and the payment of, the general obligation debt service of the County and for the debt service of the lease revenue bonds and special assessment debt. Included in this fund type is the School Debt Service Fund as the County is responsible for servicing the general obligation debt it has issued on behalf of Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS).

- **Capital Project Funds:** These funds are used to account for financial resources to be used for the acquisition or construction of any major capital facilities (other than those financed by Proprietary Funds), and are used to account for financial resources used for all general construction projects other than enterprise fund construction. The Capital Project Funds account for all current construction projects, including improvements to and the construction of schools, roads and various other projects.

- **Special Revenue Funds:** These funds are used to account for the proceeds of specific revenue sources (other than expendable trusts or major capital projects) that are legally restricted to expenditures for specified purposes.

- **Proprietary Funds:** These funds account for County activities, which operate similarly to private sector businesses. Consequently, these funds measure net income, financial position, and changes in financial position. The two primary types of Proprietary Funds are Internal Service Funds and Enterprise Funds. Internal Service Funds are used to account for the provision of general liability, malpractice, and workers' compensation insurance, health insurance for County employees and retirees, vehicle services, the County's print shop operations, and technology infrastructure support that are provided to County departments or agencies on an allocated cost recovery basis. The Fairfax County Integrated Sewer System reflects the only enterprise funds of the County. These funds are used to account for the financing, construction, and operations of the countywide sewer system.

- **Fiduciary Funds:** These funds are used to account for assets held by the County as an agent for individuals, private organizations, other governments, and/or other funds or in a trustee capacity. Agency Funds are used to account for monies received, held, and disbursed on behalf of developers, welfare recipients, the Commonwealth of Virginia, the recipients of certain bond proceeds, and certain other local governments. Also included in Fiduciary Funds are Trust Funds, which include the funds used to account for the assets held in trust by the County for the employees and beneficiaries of its defined pension plans – the Employees' Retirement System, the Police Officers Retirement System, and the Uniformed Retirement System, as well as assets held to meet the County's Other Post-Employment Benefit obligations.

## Accounting Standards

During FY 2016 the County will continue to use the Governmental Accounting Standards Board's (GASB) Statement Number 34, Basic Financial Statements and Management's Discussion and Analysis for State and Local Governments, financial reporting model, otherwise known as GASB 34. These standards changed the entire reporting process for local governments, as they require new entity-wide financial statements, in addition to current fund statements and other additional reports such as management discussion and analysis. Infrastructure values are now reported, and various changes in accounting have been implemented.

It should be noted that, beginning in FY 2008, the County's financial statements were required to implement GASB Statement Number 45 for post-employment benefits including health care, life insurance, and other non-retirement benefits offered to retirees. This standard addresses how local governments account for and report their costs related to post-employment healthcare and other non-pension benefits, such as the County's retiree health benefit subsidy. Historically, the County's subsidy was funded on a pay-as-you-go basis. GASB 45 required that the County accrue the cost of these post-employment benefits during the period of employees' active employment, while the benefits are being earned, and disclose the unfunded actuarial accrued liability in order to accurately account for the total future cost of post-employment benefits and the financial impact on the County. This funding methodology mirrors the funding approach used for pension/retirement benefits. The County decided to follow guidance provided by GASB 45 and established a trust fund as part of the FY 2008 Adopted Budget Plan to pre-fund the cost of post-employment healthcare and other non-pension benefits. For further details please refer to the Fund 73030, OPEB Trust Fund, narrative in Volume 2.

***The County's basis of budgeting is consistent with generally accepted accounting principles.***

## Budgetary Basis

Annual budgets spanning the fiscal year (July 1 – June 30) are prepared on an accounting basis, with certain exceptions. Please refer to the table in the Financial Structure portion of this section for information regarding the purpose of various types of funds, supporting revenues and budgeting and accounting bases.

The budget is controlled at certain legal and managerial/administrative levels. The Code of Virginia requires that the County adopt a balanced budget. The adopted Supplemental Appropriation Resolution places legal restrictions on expenditures at the agency or fund level. Managerial budgetary control is maintained and controlled at the fund, department, superior commitment item (Compensation, Benefits, Operating Expenses, etc.), or Funded Program (project) level. It should be noted that funding information included in the budget volumes consolidates superior commitment items into four primary categories: Personnel Services, Operating Expenses, Capital Equipment, and Recovered Costs. Personnel Services include regular pay, fringe benefits, and extra compensation. Operating Expenses are the day-to-day costs involved in the administration of an agency. Capital Equipment reflects items that have a value of more than $5,000 and an expected life of more than one year, and Recovered Costs are reimbursements from other County agencies for specific services that have been provided.

There are also two built-in provisions for amending the adopted budget – the *Carryover Review* and the *Third Quarter Review*. During the fiscal year, quarterly budget reviews are the primary mechanism for revising appropriations. Once approved, the budget can be amended by a supplemental appropriation resolution. A supplemental appropriation ordinance amends the budget for grant programs to reflect actual revenue received and to make corresponding balancing adjustments to grant program expenditures. A supplemental appropriation ordinance may, therefore, either increase or reduce the County's total budget from the original approved budget appropriation. The budget for any fund, agency, program grant, or project can be increased or decreased by formal Board of Supervisors action (budget and appropriation resolution). According to the Code of Virginia any budget amendment which involves a dollar amount exceeding one percent of total expenditures from that which was originally approved may not be enacted without the County first advertising the amendment and without conducting a public hearing. The advertisement must be published at least once in a newspaper with general County circulation at least 7 days prior to the public hearing. It should be noted that, any amendment greater than 1.0 percent of expenditures requires that the Board advertise a synopsis of the proposed changes. After obtaining input from residents at the public hearing, the Board of Supervisors may then amend the budget by formal action.

The *Carryover Review* represents the analysis of balances remaining from the prior year and provision for the appropriation of funds to cover the prior year's legal obligations (encumbered items) in the new fiscal year without loss of continuity in processing payments. *Carryover* extends the prior year funding for the purchase of specific items previously approved in the budget process, but for which procurement could not be obtained for various reasons. All agencies and funds are reviewed during the *Carryover Review* and adjustments are made to the budget as approved by the Board of Supervisors.

All annual appropriations lapse at the end of the fiscal year. Under the County's budgetary process, outstanding encumbrances are reported as reservations of fund balances and do not constitute expenditures or liabilities since the commitments will be reappropriated and honored the subsequent fiscal year.

In addition, the County's Department of Management and Budget is authorized to transfer budgeted amounts between superior commitment items, grants, or projects within any agency or fund. The budget process is controlled at the superior commitment item or project level by an appropriations system within the automated financial accounting system. Purchase orders are encumbered prior to release to vendors, and those that exceed superior commitment item level appropriations are not released until additional appropriations are available.

## DEPARTMENTS AND PROGRAM AREAS

The County's departments and program areas are easiest to understand if compared to a filing cabinet. Each drawer of the filing cabinet is a separate fund type/fund, such as Special Revenue, and within each drawer or fund there are many file folders which represent County agencies, departments or funds. County organizations in the General Fund are called agencies or departments, while organizations in the other funds are called funds. For example, the Health Department, which is a General Fund agency, is one agency or folder in the General Fund drawer.

For reporting purposes, all agencies and departments in the General Fund are grouped into "program areas." A program area is a grouping of County agencies or departments with related countywide goals. Under each program area, individual agencies and departments participate in activities to support the program area goals. The Public Safety Program Area, for example, includes the Police Department and the Fire and Rescue Department, among others.

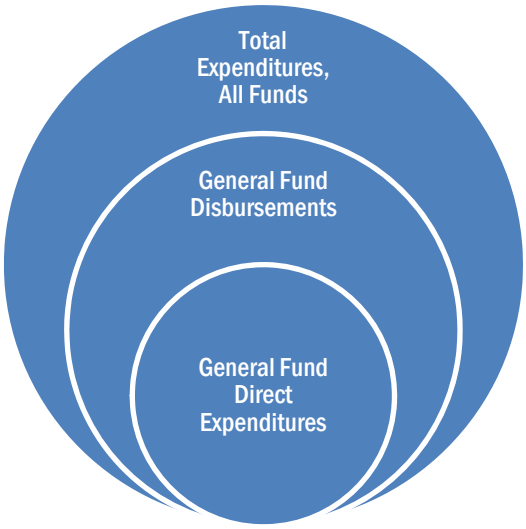
While most of the information in the budget is focused on an agency or fund, there are several summary schedules that combine different sources of information such as General Fund receipts and expenditures, County position schedules, and other summary schedules.

## COUNTY EXPENDITURES AND REVENUES

### County Expenditures

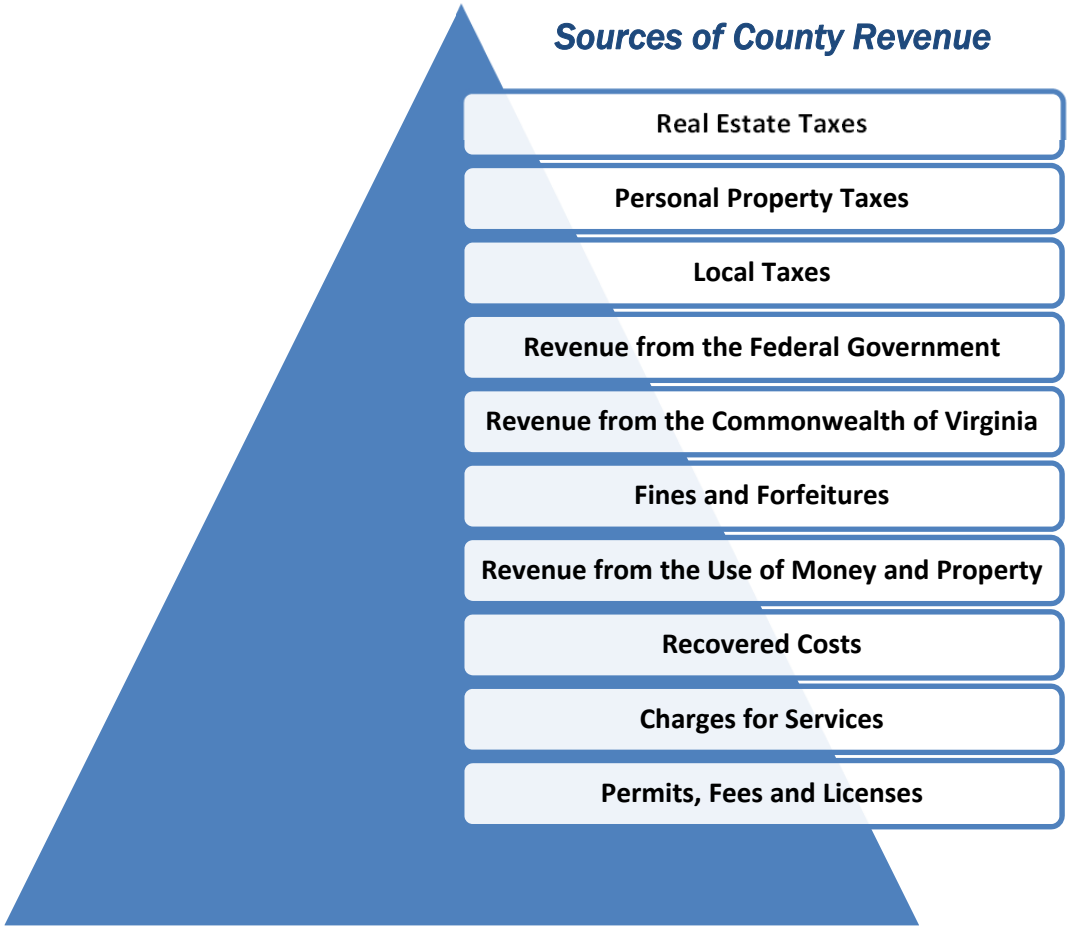
Expenditures for Fairfax County services and programs can be categorized as three concentric circles. Each circle encompasses the funds inside it:

- In the smallest circle are the General Fund Direct Expenditures that support the day-to-day operations of most County agencies.
- The second largest circle is General Fund Disbursements. This circle includes General Fund Direct Expenditures as well as General Fund transfers to other funds, such as the Fairfax County Public Schools, Metro transportation system, and the County's debt service. The transfer of funding to the County Public Schools, including debt service, accounts for 52.7 percent of the County's disbursements in FY 2016.
- The largest circle is Total Expenditures. It represents expenditures from all appropriated funds.



## County Revenues

The General Fund portion of Total Revenues consists of several major components, the two largest being Real Estate Tax revenues and Personal Property Tax revenues. In FY 2016, these categories are estimated to account for 63.9 percent and 15.2 percent of the total General Fund revenues, respectively. Please note that a portion of the Personal Property Taxes is paid to the County by the state. These funds are included in the aforementioned Personal Property Tax total, rather than in Revenue from the Commonwealth. Local Taxes, which include Local Sales Tax receipts, Consumer Utility Taxes, and Business Professional and Occupational License Taxes, comprise approximately 13.0 percent of General Fund revenues in FY 2016. The remaining revenue categories, including Revenue from the Federal Government, Fines and Forfeitures, Revenue from the Use of Money and Property, Revenue from the Commonwealth, Recovered Costs, Charges for Services, and Permits, Fees and Regulatory Licenses make up 7.9 percent of the total. Total Revenues consist of all revenues received by all appropriated funds in the County. Total Revenues include all General Fund revenues, as well as sewer bond revenue, refuse collection and disposal fees, and revenue from the sale of bonds.



## FINANCIAL STRUCTURE

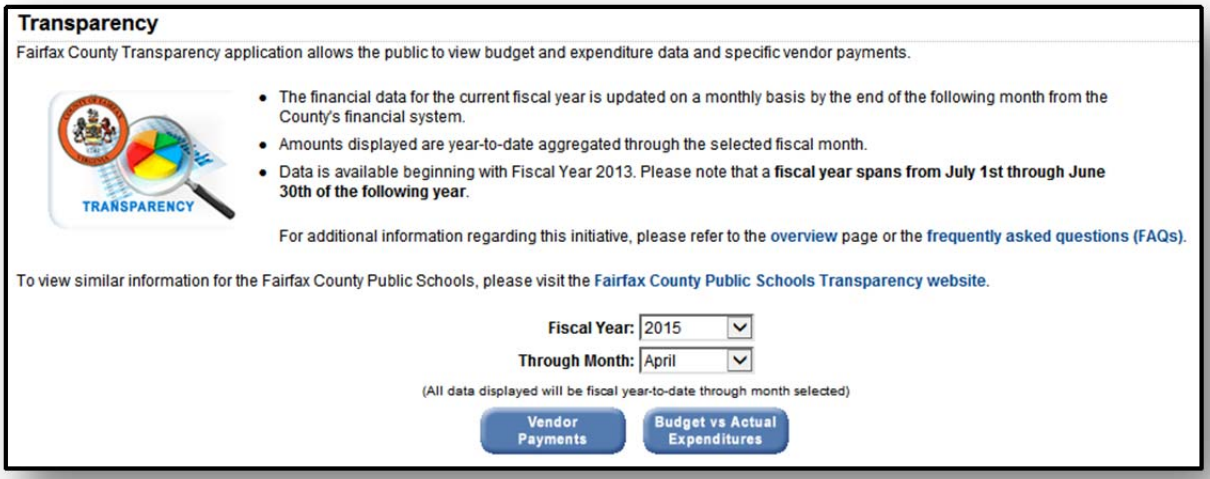
| Fund/Fund Type Title | Purpose | Revenue | Budgeting Basis | Accounting Basis |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **GOVERNMENTAL FUNDS** | | | | |
| General Fund (Volume 1) | Accounts for the cost of general County government. | Primarily from general property taxes, other local taxes, revenue from the use of money and property, license and permit fees, and state shared taxes. | Modified Accrual, donated food not included, only lease payment due in FY included | Modified Accrual |
| General Fund Group: (Volume 2) | Account for the County's Revenue Stabilization Reserve, awards provided to community organizations through the Consolidated Community Funding Pool, contributions to County organizations through the Contributory Fund, and County Information Technology projects. | General Fund transfers, transfers from other County funds, and interest earnings. | Modified Accrual, donated food not included, only lease payment due in FY included | Modified Accrual |
| Debt Service Funds (Volume 2) | Account for the accumulation of resources for and the payments of general obligation bond principal, interest and related expenses. | General Fund transfers and special assessment bond principal and interest from special assessment levies. | Modified Accrual, donated food not included, only lease payment due in FY included | Modified Accrual |
| Capital Project Funds (Volume 2) | Account for financial resources used for all general County and School construction projects other than Enterprise Fund construction. | General Fund transfers, bond proceeds revenue from the real estate penny, and miscellaneous contributions. | Modified Accrual, donated food not included, only lease payment due in FY included | Modified Accrual |
| Special Revenue Funds (Volume 2) | Account for the proceeds of specific revenue sources (other than major capital projects) that are legally restricted to expenditures for specified purposes. | A variety of sources including fees for service, General Fund transfers, federal and state grant funding, cable franchise fees, and special assessments. | Modified Accrual, donated food not included, only lease payment due in FY included | Modified Accrual |
| **PROPRIETARY FUNDS** | | | | |
| Internal Service Funds (Volume 2) | Account for the financing of goods or services provided by one department or agency to other departments or agencies of the government and to other government units on a reimbursement basis. | Reimbursement via various inter-governmental payments, including the General Fund, for services and goods provided. | Accrual, depreciation expenses not included | Accrual |
| Enterprise Funds (Wastewater Management Program) (Volume 2) | Account for operations financed and operated in a manner similar to the private sector. The County utilizes Enterprise Funds for the Wastewater Management Program, which provides construction, maintenance, and operation of the countywide sewer system. | User charges to existing customers for continuing sewer service and availability fees charged to new customers for initial access to the system. | Accrual, depreciation expenses not included | Accrual |
| **FIDUCIARY FUNDS** | | | | |
| Agency Funds (Volume 2) | Agency funds are custodial in nature and are maintained to account for funds received and disbursed by the County for various governmental agencies and other organizations. | Various inter-governmental payments, including the General Fund, and contributions by participants. | Modified Accrual | Modified Accrual |
| Trust Funds (Volume 2) | Account for assets held by the County in a trustee or agency capacity. Trust funds are usually established by a formal trust agreement. | Various inter-governmental payments, including the General Fund, and contributions by participants. | Accrual | Accrual |

## Additional Budget Resources

In addition to the availability online of all of the County's published budget volumes, additional budgetary information including quarterly reviews, budget calendars, economic data, and historical files is available on the Department of Management and Budget's website at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dmb/. The department has focused resources on expanding public access to essential information at all stages of the budget formulation process in order to afford residents a better understanding of their County government, the services it offers, and the role they can play. On the site, residents can access a County Budget Primer, whereby they can look up budget terms and find answers to common budget questions. On each page, residents can also provide feedback on the website itself and offer suggestions of what additional information might be helpful to them in understanding the County's budget.

### Transparency Website

The County has a useful transparency website at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/transparency/ which enables the public to view amounts paid to County vendors. Visitors can view budgetary data and actual expenditures by Fund or General Fund agency each month. Fairfax County Public Schools also hosts its own transparency website - http://www.fcps.edu/fs/transparency/index.shtml – where data specific to FCPS funds, departments, and schools, can be viewed. Used in collaboration with information already available to residents, such as the County's budget and the Comprehensive Annual Financial Report, the transparency initiative provides residents with an additional tool to learn more about the County's overall finances or focus on specific areas of interest.



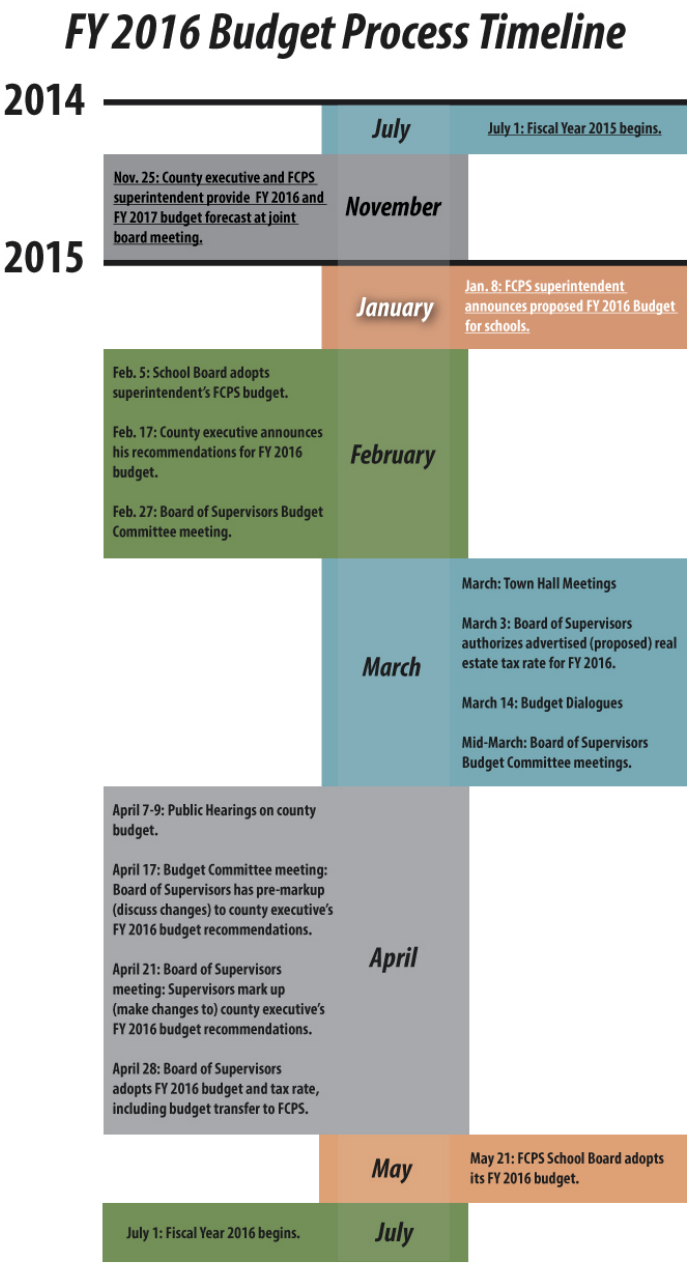
## THE BUDGET CYCLE

The Code of Virginia (Sections 15.2-516 and 2503) requires that the County Executive submit a proposed budget to the Board of County Supervisors no later than April 1 for the upcoming fiscal year. Sections 15.2-2506, 58.1-3007, and 58.1-3321 of the Code of Virginia govern the public notice requirements that guide the County's budget review and public comment period. After receipt of the proposed budget, the first action by the Board of Supervisors (BOS) is to authorize the advertisement of the proposed tax and levy rates. Once the proposed rate is advertised, the BOS can adopt lower tax and levy rates, but cannot, without additional advertisement, adopt higher rates. The timing of the advertisement is tied to the amount of increased revenue anticipated by the proposed rate. The Code of Virginia also requires the BOS to hold public hearings on the proposed budget and the proposed tax and levy rates to collect public comment. Once the budget has been adopted by the Board of Supervisors, it becomes a work plan of objectives to be accomplished during the next fiscal year.

The County's budget has two major elements: the operating budget and the capital budget. The operating budget includes all projected expenditures not included in the capital budget, including the operating transfer to Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS). The operating budget funds the service delivery of County programs. Excluding the General Fund Transfer to FCPS, the largest expenditure category is employee compensation.

Fairfax County follows a series of policies, including its Ten Principles of Sound Financial Management, (see the *Long-Term Financial Tools and Policies* section in this volume) and approved practices to guide the development of the annual budget. For examples, these policies govern practices for the following:

- Capital Improvement Program
- Cash Management
- Debt Management
- Fund Balances
- Procurement
- Property Tax Collection
- Real Property Assessments
- Replacement Schedules
- Reserves
- Revenues
- Risk Management



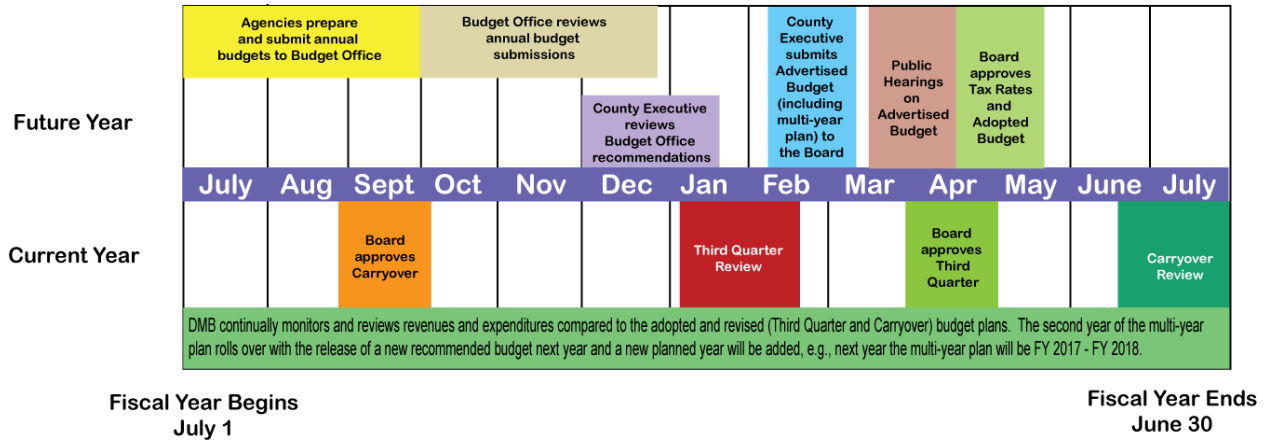
# Budget Process

By adhering to these policies and practices, the County promotes and ensures a consistent approach to budgeting that allows the Board of Supervisors and the community to compare the proposed budget to previous budgets.

The budget has several major purposes. It converts the County's long-range plans and policies into services and programs; serves as a vehicle to communicate these plans to the public; details the costs of County services and programs; and outlines the revenues (taxes and fees) that support the County's services, including the rate of taxation for the coming fiscal year.

The annual Fairfax County budget process is an ongoing cyclical process simultaneously looking at two fiscal years (current and future). The budget year officially starts on July 1; however, the budget process itself is a continuum which involves both the current year budget and the next fiscal year's budget. Changes to the current year budget are made at the *Third Quarter Review* and the *Carryover Review*. The *Carryover Review* closes out the previous year in addition to revising the expenditure level for the current year. These changes must be approved by the Board of Supervisors. During the fiscal year, quarterly reviews of revenue and expenditures are undertaken by the Department of Management and Budget, and any necessary adjustments are made to the budget. On the basis of these reviews, the Board of Supervisors revises appropriations. Public hearings are held prior to Board action when potential appropriation increases are greater than 1.0 percent of expenditures.

Citizen involvement and understanding of the budget are a key part of the review process. The County Executive presented the FY 2016 Advertised Budget Plan (including the FY 2016 – FY 2017 Multi-Year Budget) on February 17, 2015. Public hearings for the County Executive's FY 2016 Advertised Budget Plan and the FY 2016 – FY 2020 Advertised Capital Improvement Program (CIP) were held on April 7, 8 and 9, 2015 at the Government Center. The mark-up of the FY 2016 budget was held on Tuesday, April 21, 2015, and the Board of Supervisors formally adopted the FY 2016 Adopted Budget Plan on Tuesday, April 28, 2015.

The chart below illustrates the roles, responsibilities, and tasks in which both County staff and the Board of Supervisors engage during the course of a typical fiscal year. These efforts include budget adjustments for the current fiscal year, budget development for the next fiscal year, and budgetary projections for the following fiscal year.

**Current Year and Future Budget Year**