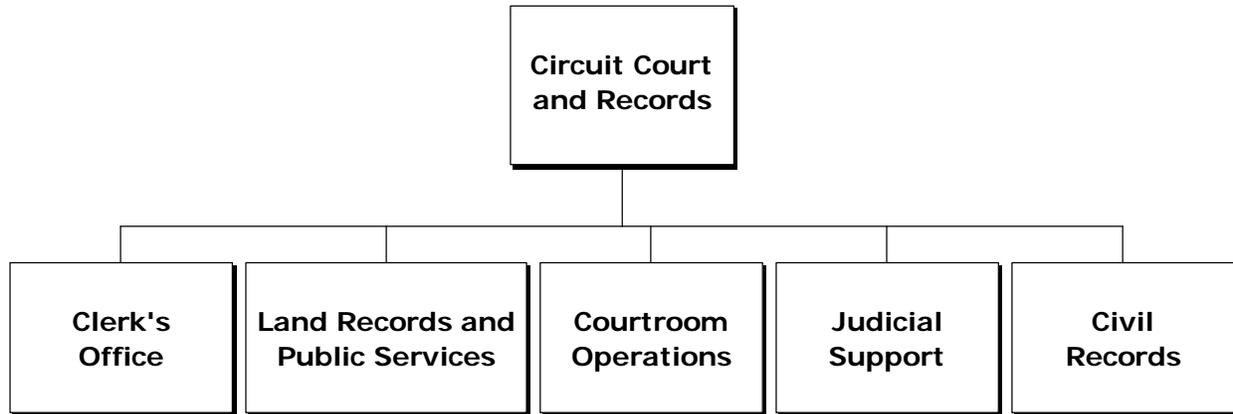


Circuit Court and Records



Mission

To provide administrative support to the 19th Judicial Circuit; to preserve, maintain and protect the public records; and to offer public services with equal access to all in accordance with the Code of Virginia.

AGENCY DASHBOARD			
Key Data	FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2014
1. Public Records Held	44,614,094	44,986,502	46,397,861
2. Criminal Cases	7,195	7,057	7,908
3. Civil Cases	19,123	21,346	20,598
4. Probate Cases	3,230	2,201	2,452
5. Land Recordings	212,644	248,584	154,777
6. Marriage Licenses, Trade Names, Financing Statements, Notaries	12,507	12,964	13,197
7. Jurors called to court for cases	9,911	7,780	7,471

Focus

The Fairfax Circuit Court is a Virginia “court of record” and has jurisdiction over Fairfax’s Criminal and Civil cases and has appellate review over several lower courts and tribunals. Fifteen judges constitute a full complement of the Circuit bench, and the Clerk’s Office supports these judges as they hear the over 25,000 new civil and criminal cases each year. The Circuit Court also has original jurisdiction over other matters such as attachments, adoptions, divorce proceedings, disputes concerning wills, trusts and estates, election recounts, eminent domain and controversies involving personal and real property.

As custodian of the public record, the Clerk of Court also administers the land records for Fairfax, recording 150,000 land transactions every year. As such, the Fairfax Circuit Court is, by far, the busiest and most sophisticated court in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

The Clerk of Court’s mission is to serve the citizen, the bench and the bar, and to exceed their very high expectations of Virginia’s largest Circuit Court, by keeping public records well-preserved and readily-available. Simply stated, the Court’s customers want the efficiency and accountability of a comprehensive, online court experience-- they want 24-hour, remote access where possible, and a

Circuit Court and Records

streamlined on-site court experience only when necessary. Fairfax citizens expect a highly-informed, knowledgeable, customer-oriented staff. The Clerk's Office drives the momentum toward a comprehensive, online, court experience, by placing a budgetary emphasis on technology and personnel training, which includes: maintaining 24-hour customer access to land and business records through CPAN, implementing web-based case management, digitizing paper records for faster retrieval for the bench or the customer, offering on-line jury service software, accepting remote, online marriage pre-applications and training staff to keep pace with these technologies, as well as best practices in courthouse customer service.

As a court of record, the Circuit Court has jurisdiction over appeals from General District Court and Juvenile & Domestic Relations District Court. Since all appeals from these lower courts are heard *de novo*, the cases are tried from the beginning; the citizen enjoys an altogether new hearing on the facts of the case. As opposed to lower courts, the parties in Circuit Court have a right to a jury trial. Citizens also can seek judicial review of administrative agency decisions in Circuit Court, and the Court routinely hears appeals from the Board of Zoning Appeals, the Virginia Employment Commission and even the DMV.

Circuit Court and Records supports the following County Vision Elements:



Maintaining Safe and Caring Communities



Creating a Culture of Engagement



Connecting People and Places



Exercising Corporate Stewardship

In criminal cases, the Circuit Court has original jurisdiction over the trial of all felonies (crimes that are punishable by more than one year in prison.) The Circuit Court also has jurisdiction over misdemeanor offenses (crimes carrying a penalty of 12 months or less) that are appealed from the General District Court and Juvenile & Domestic Relations Court.

Process Improvement: Maximizing Our Technology

Circuit Court staff maintains a high level of performance in spite of continued regional and national economic contractions, while citizen needs and expectations have increased and so have the attendant state mandates for this court to service them. The best way to reconcile these contradictory forces is to further streamline business processes, increase the technological sophistication of Court staff through training, with the result of fully-tapping the available technology, both hardware and software. While Circuit Court routinely takes stock of its business processes, this year the installation of a new, web-based case management system, forced an even more exacting look at court administration, to identify streamlines in workflow, as the office prepared to implement the new software. With the advent of the new case management system, the Court is now able to create internal work-queues inside that software system, which prompt staff and judges to complete tasks in a methodical and efficient order, rather than having paper files fill physical in-boxes.

Technology: Maintaining Current Excellence

Technology investments in the Circuit Court provide customers with easier access to court services and land records and can be understood in two phases: 1) innovations into new technologies that keep court functions cutting-edge and timely and 2) the maintenance of existing software and hardware. Keeping anchor systems fresh over time, through license updates and software upgrades, is a cost of keeping court

Circuit Court and Records

administration current. In FY 2014, 38 percent of Circuit Court operating expenses involved technology maintenance; a 6 percent increase from the previous fiscal year. The Clerk's Office expects this trend to continue to increase over time, as newer IT projects age and phase into maintenance status.

Having pioneered court technology since the 1980s, and as responsible steward of a complex court, the Clerk of Court monitors and updates software licenses and replaces aging hardware using industry standards and best practices. In FY 2014, the five most expensive Circuit Court operating expense outlays all involved software maintenance. Circuit Court commits to IT maintenance as a form of responsible Court administration and to advance momentum toward E-Adjudication, thereby offering superior IT solutions to the bench, the bar, and the citizen.

Court Public Access Network: CPAN

Court Public Access Network (CPAN) is the master, unified system that Circuit Court uses to publish the complete record of all land transactions and to offer our community access to an extract of all the civil and criminal cases before this Court. By virtue of §17.1-276 of the Code of Virginia, the Clerk offers this CPAN service to the community through a subscription agreement; the citizen-subscriber enjoys 24-hour, remote access to the digitized recorded history of Fairfax. The Clerk's office also makes CPAN available on-site at the courthouse on 35 computer terminals, so that the public may access CPAN at no cost. In the digital age, and as custodian of the public record, the Clerk of Court must keep safe all images of every real property transaction housed in CPAN. At the end of FY 2014, the Clerk was custodian of 46,397,861 digital images, making Circuit Court's digital public record the largest Oracle database in Fairfax County. Since the servers that store these land document images make them available to the public on a 24-hour basis, without any interruption in access, the software system and hardware must be upgraded with regularity. Such perpetual access comes at a cost, and in FY 2014 that was \$643,409. In that same fiscal year, there was a slight uptick in the number of subscribers to CPAN, an increase of 1.3 percent over the previous year. While many of these users are title companies that do a high volume of business in the Land Records division of Circuit Court, the total also includes many Fairfax citizens who want to tap the CPAN case summary function, which allows the public to review basic information on the approximately 25,000 cases Circuit Court takes in every year. For every interaction or bit of research the citizen can do remotely, CPAN saves them a trip to the courthouse, and reduces court traffic, as well as automobile traffic. Increasingly, Fairfax citizens expect to be able to do court business online, and CPAN is an important part of the Clerk's momentum toward a comprehensive online court experience.

Web-Based Case Management Implementation

Yet another prime example of on-going maintenance and regular updating of mature technology initiatives is seen in this year's migration to a web-based case management system for Circuit Court. In Fiscal Year 2014, the Court took in a total of 25,155 new civil and criminal cases, making the Fairfax Circuit Court the busiest Circuit in Virginia. A docket this large requires a comprehensive case management system that allows the Clerk's staff to manage the complex case hearings schedule, set trials, notify parties, conform to state Code timelines, and execute orders of the Court. For over 10 years, the Court has used case management software, getting routine system "version updates" over time. In April of this past year, Circuit Court went through a technological and infrastructural renovation, migrating the entire case management system to a more robust, web-based platform. As trends in the IT industry are making web-based computing the norm, this migration marked the natural evolution for Fairfax Circuit Court's case management system, and offers many tools for further workflow efficiency, like document management and internal work-queues. Because of the Court's mission to offer meaningful access to the courts, while honoring the Virginia Constitution's clarion call for full, fair, and swift trials, a streamlined case process advances that goal.

Circuit Court and Records

Digitizing Paper: Document Management as a New Tool for Internal Efficiency

With the Court's web-based case management system, the agency has the added tool of document management, which allows for the digitizing of case file documents and orders of the court for internal judicial administration. The consequence is a reduced-paper environment at the Fairfax Circuit Court and an even smoother workflow for court staff. Staff is eager to learn the new, technical skills required to make these work-process changes, and are pleased with the efficiencies digitized documents can offer. While the agency is not yet paperless, and there is more staff training needed, Fairfax is already becoming a more digital court. As this transition continues, it will obviate the need for, or prompt the repurposing of; older technologies that once addressed the paper-heavy work environment.

Radio Frequency ID: Repurposing RFID Technology

Currently, in a still predominantly-paper work environment, litigation files travel all over the inside of the courthouse; intake, storage, chambers, the courtroom, and then back to shelving. In order to improve efficiency and accountability, the Circuit Court invested in a bar-code system that tags each case-numbered file with a radio frequency device, allowing staff to type in the case number and identify where the case files or exhibits are physically located. RFID has made an incredible difference in administrative efficiency of the paper files. Time spent by staff looking for files has been significantly reduced, and this will continue as the staff fully transitions to scanned, digital files. Importantly, as the Clerk's office moves on to e-filing pleadings, motions, and other court documents, RFID will become obsolete for tracking files. However, while originally intended to track case files, the Clerk's office has already adopted the RFID technology for tracking the chain of custody for exhibits and evidence submitted during trials. While the staff anticipates a significant reduction in paper files over the next four years, Circuit Court will repurpose some of the incumbent technology for a different court function.

Court Digital Audio Recording: CDAR Project Matures to Perpetuation

Court Digital Audio Recording is the sound system hardware that currently allows 5 of the 15 courtrooms to provide near real-time streaming of the court proceedings. While not part of the official public record, these digital audio files are an incredible tool for internal administrative and judicial efficiency, allowing deputy clerks to queue-up portions of hearings where the judge directed certain actions, set certain dates for future court appearances, and issued other bench orders that must be memorialized into the case management system by staff.

Electronic Filing System in Land Records: EFS Pioneering Remote Submission

The Circuit Court Clerk's current technology is a function of what Virginia practitioners understand as the two wings of the Circuit Court. There is the "court-side" which includes Fairfax's 15 Circuit judges and the criminal and civil cases they hear. Secondly, is the Land Records division of the Clerk's office, which is not adjudicative, but more ministerial in nature. While the Virginia Supreme Court and Code of Virginia controls the procedures and practice of the court-side, the General Assembly controls the land records more directly through legislation. In 1999, the Clerk's Office launched our "Electronic Filing System" and "Court Automated Recording System," (EFS and CARS) which allow attorneys, title and mortgage companies, lenders, and other trusted partners to present a document for recordation remotely from their work or home computer. Currently, EFS technology requires certain of the closing documents to be scanned first and then sent electronically by the law office or lender. However, new, third-party "submitters" are coming on to the land records industry scene to package "born-digital" closing documents and present them for recordation, making EFS even easier to use. Approximately 18 percent of all the land transactions are recorded electronically, which has been a steady number over the past few years. Once e-recordings open up to this emerging cottage industry of born-digital document submitters, Circuit Court expects over half of recordings will come through EFS. Additionally, recent changes to the Virginia Property Owners' Association Act will make it easier for Fairfax's many home owner

Circuit Court and Records

associations (HOAs) to effectively e-file many of their land record instruments, which should increase the percentage of transactions coming through EFS.

Not Just Remote Access, but Meaningful, Equal Access

Circuit Court is ever-improving the ease and convenience of doing Court business for Fairfax residents, often by offering remote, electronic means. Access to the court needs to not only be convenient, but must also be meaningful. Nearly one in five Americans speaks a language other than English at home, and in Fairfax County that number is higher. Circuit Court provides a very high quality of service to ensure equal access to the judicial system for all people, regardless of their command of the English language. Circuit Court employs many multilingual administrative staff in the Civil, Criminal and Public Service Divisions, who answers procedural questions and provide basic court information. Multilingual Circuit Court employees staff the main courthouse information desk, directing the thousands of court-users who flow through the Circuit courthouse each week.

In all criminal cases and in some civil cases, the Circuit Court is obligated by law to provide language interpreters, if a language barrier exists. To ensure meaningful and equal access justice, the Clerk's office provides interpreters for over 30 different languages. The Virginia Supreme Court certifies all of the Court's Spanish language interpreters, and the Court uses approved, trained and qualified interpreters for all other languages. In addition, the Clerk's office provides sign language interpreters for both civil and criminal cases through the Virginia Department of Deaf and Hard of Hearing.

As the Clerk's Office further increases its online services, Fairfax citizens are responding enthusiastically to remote access. This past court term, a full 50 percent of potential jurors opted to fill out their Jury Service Questionnaire through our web-based Juror System, significantly reducing the hassle of meeting their civic duty to serve on a jury. Making jury service easier faster and more efficient for the customer, makes their jury experience better, and supports a strong system of justice.

Emerging Court Leaders: Continuity of Experience, Continuum of Skillsets

In 2014, the Circuit Court watched five veteran deputy clerks retire. Taken together with the preceding year and next year's anticipated participants, the Clerk's Office will have lost a full 50 percent of senior-level leadership by 2015. To respond to this loss of institutional knowledge, the Circuit Court is training staff on change management theory and best practices in court administration and human resource management, so that emerging and new court leaders are armed to succeed. However, unlike other agencies, the Clerk's Office of Circuit Court is unique insofar as it is a court of law, subject to the Virginia Constitution, the Code of Virginia, and the United States Constitution. Many best practices for state courts are established by national court associations and land records industry groups, and so the Clerk's Office regularly sends staff to be trained on these legal practice standards and larger industry trends. As a Circuit Court in the Commonwealth, the Clerk's Office is subject to Rules and Practices established by the Virginia Supreme Court, the Court also sends emerging court leaders to various Virginia Supreme Court trainings, for Virginia Code-specific seminars.

Moreover, with the arrival of the agency's new, web-based case management system this past year, staff continues to train on the program's various functionalities and improvements, keeping the staff's skillset current with the office's new technology, to maximize the efficiencies it offers. The citizens of Fairfax rightly expect an efficient and accountable court. In order to meet and exceed the citizen's expectations, the Court believes in responsibly developing entry-level staff and new hires, as they rise up through their career with the Circuit Court. Arming emerging court leaders with supervisory and management training offered locally by the County, as well as the commensurate legal training offered state-wide and nationally, helps the Court accomplish its forward-looking mission.

Circuit Court and Records

Budget and Staff Resources

Category	FY 2014 Actual	FY 2015 Adopted	FY 2015 Revised	FY 2016 Advertised
FUNDING				
Expenditures:				
Personnel Services	\$8,586,106	\$8,657,225	\$8,657,225	\$8,829,340
Operating Expenses	1,940,357	1,998,576	2,078,647	1,985,826
Capital Equipment	0	0	0	0
Total Expenditures	\$10,526,463	\$10,655,801	\$10,735,872	\$10,815,166
Income:				
Land Transfer Fees	\$23,663	\$27,650	\$23,663	\$23,663
Courthouse Maintenance Fees	32,475	34,664	32,475	32,475
Circuit Court Fines and Penalties	166,319	140,533	166,319	166,319
Copy Machine Revenue	77,189	71,436	71,436	71,436
County Clerk Fees	4,584,944	5,979,269	4,258,254	4,258,254
City of Fairfax Contract	184,861	184,861	205,017	196,170
Recovered Costs - Circuit Court	46	200	200	200
CPAN	326,806	327,300	331,840	333,500
State Shared Retirement - Circuit Court	172,722	176,465	176,465	176,465
Total Income	\$5,569,025	\$6,942,378	\$5,265,669	\$5,258,482
NET COST TO THE COUNTY	\$4,957,438	\$3,713,423	\$5,470,203	\$5,556,684
AUTHORIZED POSITIONS/FULL-TIME EQUIVALENT (FTE)				
Regular	139 / 139	139 / 139	139 / 139	139 / 139
Exempt	24 / 24	24 / 24	24 / 24	24 / 24
State	15 / 15	15 / 15	15 / 15	15 / 15

FY 2016 Funding Adjustments

The following funding adjustments from the FY 2015 Adopted Budget Plan are necessary to support the FY 2016 program.

- ◆ **Employee Compensation** **\$272,115**
 An increase of \$272,115 in Personnel Services includes \$72,623 for a 0.84 percent market rate adjustment (MRA) for all employees and \$199,492 for performance-based and longevity increases for non-uniformed merit employees, both effective July 2015.

Circuit Court and Records

◆ **Reductions**

(\$112,750)

A decrease of \$112,750 reflects the following reductions utilized to balance the FY 2016 budget. The following table provides details on the specific reductions:

Title	Impact	Posn	FTE	Reduction
Manage Position Vacancies to Achieve Savings	This reduction will require keeping one of three Management Analyst II positions in the agency vacant. This position is in the Courtroom Operations section, and therefore will result in delays processing case files and reduce administrative support for judges. Previous year budget reductions have forced the court to hold positions vacant in order to achieve savings and this further reduction will make an already difficult situation that much harder to manage and requires the court to operate at significantly less than required staffing.	0	0.00	\$100,000
Reduce Printing and Copying Supplies	This reduction is associated with a countywide policy decision being implemented to reduce the volume of printing and copying documents over a multi-year period. This was a common and recurring theme brought forward by employees as part of the Mission Savings process in Fall 2014. Agencies are being directed to review internal printing policies and reduce the use of individual desktop printers by utilizing the Multi-Functional Devices (MFDs) available throughout County buildings. In addition, agencies are being directed to reduce paper and toner consumption by only printing documents when necessary and by printing materials double-sided whenever possible.	0	0.00	\$7,150
Reduce Operating Expenses	As part of the Mission Savings process, Circuit Court and Records identified savings in Operating Expenses, primarily associated with travel for non-mandatory training. The agency will utilize additional webinars, e-trainings, and "train the trainer" sessions. Additional savings in office supplies were also identified.	0	0.00	\$5,600

Circuit Court and Records

Changes to FY 2015 Adopted Budget Plan

The following funding adjustments reflect all approved changes in the FY 2015 Revised Budget Plan since passage of the FY 2015 Adopted Budget Plan. Included are all adjustments made as part of the FY 2014 Carryover Review, and all other approved changes through December 31, 2014.

- ◆ **Carryover Adjustments** **\$80,071**
 As part of the FY 2014 Carryover Review, the Board of Supervisors approved encumbered funding of \$80,071 primarily for a high density filing system, display cases, and other expenses related to the conservation of historic court documents.

Cost Centers

The Circuit Court and Records has five cost centers including Land Records and Public Services, Courtroom Operations, the Clerk’s Office, Judicial Support and Civil Records.

Land Records and Public Services

This cost center exists to record, preserve, safeguard and provide access to all recorded documents and instruments pertaining to land, property and judgments. The Clerk’s Probate division administers wills and qualifies fiduciaries for estate, trust, and guardianship matters. The Public Services division issues marriage licenses and processes notary public commissions and trade names. Due to increased attempted fraud on the Court by participants in the self-described “sovereign citizen” movement, the Public Services staff is increasing its oversight of such attempted transactions.

Category	FY 2014 Actual	FY 2015 Adopted	FY 2015 Revised	FY 2016 Advertised
EXPENDITURES				
Total Expenditures	\$2,467,305	\$2,709,942	\$2,725,634	\$2,782,174
AUTHORIZED POSITIONS/FULL-TIME EQUIVALENT (FTE)				
Regular	39 / 39	39 / 39	37 / 37	37 / 37
1 Management Analyst II	3	Administrative Assistants IV	1	Assistant Archivist
1 Administrative Associate	19	Administrative Assistants III	1	Archives Technician
8 Administrative Assistants V	1	Administrative Assistant II	2	Legal Records/Services Managers
TOTAL POSITIONS				
37 Positions / 37.0 FTE				

Circuit Court and Records

Courtroom Operations

The Courtroom Operations cost center provides full administrative and paraprofessional support to the 19th Judicial Court in order to accomplish the efficient and prompt resolution of all cases and jury functions according to the Code of Virginia.

Category	FY 2014 Actual	FY 2015 Adopted	FY 2015 Revised	FY 2016 Advertised
EXPENDITURES				
Total Expenditures	\$2,046,294	\$2,109,765	\$2,109,765	\$2,165,222
AUTHORIZED POSITIONS/FULL-TIME EQUIVALENT (FTE)				
Regular	38 / 38	38 / 38	38 / 38	38 / 38
1 Management Analyst II	17	Administrative Assistants V	16	Administrative Assistants III
1 Administrative Associate	1	Administrative Assistant IV	2	Legal Records/Services Managers
TOTAL POSITIONS				
38 Positions / 38.0 FTE				

Clerk's Office

The Clerk's Office cost center provides effective management of technical support and other agencywide components to produce efficient and effective service to the bench, the bar, and the citizens of Fairfax.

Category	FY 2014 Actual	FY 2015 Adopted	FY 2015 Revised	FY 2016 Advertised
EXPENDITURES				
Total Expenditures	\$2,969,243	\$2,759,690	\$2,824,069	\$2,695,474
AUTHORIZED POSITIONS/FULL-TIME EQUIVALENT (FTE)				
Regular	15 / 15	15 / 15	15 / 15	15 / 15
Exempt	9 / 9	9 / 9	9 / 9	9 / 9
1 Management Analyst IV	2	Info. Tech. Technicians I	1	County Clerk (Elected) E
1 Human Resources Generalist II	1	Business Analyst IV	1	Deputy County Clerk E
1 Programmer Analyst IV	1	Financial Specialist II	1	Chief of Administrative Services E
1 Programmer Analyst II	1	Financial Specialist I	2	Management Analysts III E
1 Info. Tech. Program Mgr. I	3	Administrative Assistants IV	1	Management Analyst II E
1 Network/Telecom. Analyst III			1	Administrative Assistant IV E
1 Info. Tech. Technician III			2	Administrative Assistants III E
TOTAL POSITIONS				
24 Positions / 24.0 FTE				

E Denotes Exempt Position

Circuit Court and Records

Judicial Support

The Judicial Support cost center provides full administrative and professional support to the Judges of Virginia's 19th Judicial Circuit to ensure appropriate and prompt resolution of cases.

Category	FY 2014 Actual	FY 2015 Adopted	FY 2015 Revised	FY 2016 Advertised
EXPENDITURES				
Total Expenditures	\$978,879	\$1,323,020	\$1,323,020	\$1,363,881
AUTHORIZED POSITIONS/FULL-TIME EQUIVALENT (FTE)				
Regular	2 / 2	2 / 2	2 / 2	2 / 2
Exempt	15 / 15	15 / 15	15 / 15	15 / 15
State	15 / 15	15 / 15	15 / 15	15 / 15
<hr/> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div> <p>1 Chief Judge S</p> <p>14 Judges S</p> <p>15 Judicial Law Clerks E</p> </div> <div> <p>1 Administrative Assistant V</p> <p>1 Administrative Assistant IV</p> </div> </div>				
TOTAL POSITIONS		E Denotes Exempt Position		
32 Positions / 32.0 FTE		S Denotes State Position		

Civil Records

The Civil Records cost center is responsible for records management and the coordination of the retention and archiving of cases. It also processes the filing of new civil cases and subsequent documents to ensure efficient and timely resolution of civil cases brought before the Judges of the 19th Judicial Circuit.

Category	FY 2014 Actual	FY 2015 Adopted	FY 2015 Revised	FY 2016 Advertised
EXPENDITURES				
Total Expenditures	\$2,064,742	\$1,753,384	\$1,753,384	\$1,808,415
AUTHORIZED POSITIONS/FULL-TIME EQUIVALENT (FTE)				
Regular	45 / 45	45 / 45	47 / 47	47 / 47
<hr/> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div> <p>1 Management Analyst II</p> <p>2 Legal Records/Services Managers</p> <p>3 Administrative Assistants V</p> </div> <div> <p>4 Administrative Assistants IV</p> <p>27 Administrative Assistants III</p> <p>10 Administrative Assistants II</p> </div> </div>				
TOTAL POSITIONS				
47 Positions / 47.0 FTE				

Circuit Court and Records

Key Performance Measures

Indicator	Prior Year Actuals			Current Estimate
	FY 2012 Actual	FY 2013 Actual	FY 2014 Estimate/Actual	FY 2015
Land Records and Public Services				
Percent change in time to return documents	127%	28%	(22%)/(94%)	0%
Percent change of CPAN connections	0.0%	4.0%	0.0%/1.0%	0.0%
Percent change in waiting time	(26.6%)	31.8%	(31.0%)/27.6%	0.0%
Courtroom Operations				
Percentage point change in juror utilization rate	(1)	2	(1)/(2)	1
Clerk's Office				
Percentage change in number of requests (phone & email) received	1%	(6%)	(2%)/1%	0%
Civil Records				
Percentage point change of DCTP Law caseload concluded within one year	0	(4)	4/(1)	0
Percentage point change of DCTP Domestic caseload concluded within 15 months of initial filing	0	(1)	1/1	0

A complete list of performance measures can be viewed at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dmb/fy2016/advertised/pm/80.pdf

Performance Measurement Results

As a Virginia Constitutional Officer, the Clerk of Court to the 19th Judicial Circuit serves all residents of the City of Fairfax and Fairfax County. Court users include litigants, attorneys, jurors, title companies and members of the public who are seeking a marriage license, to record real estate deeds, to probate a will, or to become a notary.

Fairfax Circuit Court is the busiest and largest Circuit in the Commonwealth of Virginia. While the recession continues to force an environment of personnel hiring austerity, the Circuit Court has still been able to meet most of its performance objectives. With over 1.3 million residents in Fairfax City and the County of Fairfax, the court takes in almost 4,500 divorce cases a year. Ninety eight percent of these divorce cases are finalized within 15 months of the suit being filed. In spite of the fact that Fairfax has such a high volume of domestic cases, our Court exceeds the Commonwealth's goal of 90 percent.

Jury service is a civic right and civic duty, and it is administered by the Clerk of Court. The Court has worked hard to make the jury service experience for citizens as convenient as possible. In addition to citizens submitting their jury questionnaires online, once they are chosen to serve, they now have access to Wi-Fi while they wait in the jury assembly room. The jury assembly room also has a refrigerator for jurors with special dietary needs or medicine that needs refrigeration. Customer service is a priority when residents are exercising their civic rights and civic duties.

The Clerk of Court's continued investment in advanced juror management technology has made it possible for the Court to increase the Juror Utilization Rate, which is the number of jurors that are summoned for jury duty and actually serve on a jury. As a result, the Court is able to call in fewer jurors. In FY 2014, if summoned to serve on a jury, 89 percent of the time, individuals ended up sitting on a jury

Circuit Court and Records

panel. The increased Juror Utilization Rate along with the implementation of a 1 day 1 trial juror system, several years ago, has made jury service in Fairfax easier and more efficient for citizens.

The Court also saw a marked shortening in the turn-around time for returning recorded land documents to the filer. In Fiscal Year 2014 the Court now returns recorded instruments in two days, down from 25 days. Part of that time efficiency is due to the substantial drop in recordings, which has relieved some the workload pressures on lands division staff, but it still represents better customer service.

In FY 2014, the number of criminal prosecutions and divorce cases being adjudicated, as well as the ministerial intake of applications and wills, remains constant (with increase or decrease trends within 2 percent which Circuit Court considers statistically insignificant). Much of this increase is due to the high volume of Concealed Weapons Permit applications filed in populous Fairfax. Code of Virginia §18.2-308(D) requires the Court to issue a CWP permit, if at all, within 45 days from receipt of application. Because of this statutory deadline and the continued high-volume of CWPs, the Clerk's office has had to increase CWP staffing to process the increased volume within state-mandated deadlines. This continues to put substantial pressure on the civil section staff.

In spite of Fairfax's large volume of caseload, and continued calls for budget austerity, Circuit Court provides exceptional, and expeditious, service to the citizens of Fairfax.