

Lines of Business

LOB #159:

DEPARTMENT LEADERSHIP

Purpose

Department Leadership in NCS manages the central support services for the agency and provides direction and guidance to NCS' three divisions – Countywide Service Integration and Planning Management (CSIPM), Access to Community Resources and Programs (Access) and Regional Services and Center Operations (RSCO). Work in this area also includes communicating with internal staff and external parties, managing a robust volunteer program, and ensuring that the workforce has the training and competencies required to be successful.

Description

The first function is internal and external communications assistance for all NCS programs, services and facilities, the Fairfax County Human Services Council, and the Human Services System. Internal and external communications services provided include strategic communications planning, website management and maintenance, publications creation, graphic design, video production, event planning and promotion, support for participation at public events, media relations, emergency communications, and message development and dissemination via social and traditional media channels.

The second function is the management of a robust volunteer program. NCS recruits, screens, trains and places volunteers in support of agency programs and activities. Department Leadership staff acts as the liaison between NCS and individual volunteers, staff, and volunteer partner organizations (e.g. Volunteer Solutions), while providing data collection and analysis, training and consultative services for the three NCS divisions.

Finally, as a department, NCS values innovation and creativity, employee growth and development, connectedness, a happy and healthy workforce, diversity, meaningful communication, and excellence. NCS Department Leadership strongly believes in “All-Level Leadership” and engages staff members to participate in strategic initiative teams that advance the department toward the achievement of its mission, vision and values while pursuing individual skill and leadership development. All-Level Leadership is a philosophy that: promotes leading through example and design; applies leadership principles and initiatives at all levels of NCS; and supports creative thinking, new ideas and appropriate levels of risk-taking. Training opportunities for staff, awards and recognition programs, and department policies and guidelines are also coordinated and tracked through this LOB.

Benefits

Successful and efficient operations: Department Leadership is necessary for the successful and efficient operation of the agency. This work allows for engaged communication with staff and external parties, enhanced capacity to complete projects and provide services through the use of volunteers and the ongoing recruitment and development of an outstanding professional workforce.

Mandates

This Line of Business is not mandated.

Trends and Challenges

Decentralized communication model: In an agency as vastly diverse in their communications needs and audiences as NCS is, there is a strong need and desire for decentralized communications (i.e. many voices). While such a model can provide ease in message delivery, there is a strong danger of confusing or misaligned messages from different voices. Department Leadership must continue to lead in developing and implementing a strong framework and policy upon which a decentralized communications model can stand as well as providing continuing consultation and guidance on communications initiatives, all to ensure that clear, consistent messages are conveyed (particularly during an emergency) and that the value and credibility of the NCS brand is reinforced with every message.

Participation on social media platforms: Communications trends and tools change at a rapid pace. This LOB must continue to be responsible for analyzing the potential use and adapt messages for a variety of communications tools which become available. Currently, Department Leadership is taking the lead in developing an agency-based social media strategy to allow for the potential for NCS facilities and services to communicate directly with their participants. This is a growing request among all participant groups (from teens to seniors) and will require a significant amount of coordination to ensure that messages are conveyed in accordance with County protocols and best practices.

Keeping “boomers” active: The “Baby Boomer” generation represents the largest active component of the NCS volunteer workforce. In order to continue to provide substantial and meaningful engagement opportunities, Department Leadership must identify new and flexible volunteer opportunities that are adaptable to changing schedules and abilities.

Engaging the 20 to 40 demographic: This group makes up the largest portion of potential volunteers in Fairfax County. This group tends to be more education/career/family focused and have a more limited availability; however, with the current aging of the NCS volunteer force, there is a need to enhance the onboarding of the next generation of volunteers. Department Leadership is engaged in identifying innovative ways to reach out to this age group to enhance awareness of volunteer opportunities as well as developing new ways for making volunteerism more accommodating with their schedules and interests. This effort also includes the development of a new branding initiative.

Enhanced interest among teens: With the increased requirement in many school curriculum related to community service hours, there is increased interest among teens to participate in volunteer activities. In years past, the vast majority of volunteer activities have had age restrictions which limited the number of opportunities available to younger volunteers. Department Leadership must work in consultation with NCS programs and services to find new and creative opportunities that can be fulfilled by this rising generation.

Workforce development: As with most agencies throughout Fairfax County, succession planning and workforce development remain a strong priority as a significant portion of the workforce nears retirement. It is essential for Department Leadership to continue to search for and promote developmental opportunities that will provide for an engaged and enthusiastic workforce as well as for qualified candidates for promotional opportunities.

Department of Neighborhood and Community Services

Resources

Category	FY 2014 Actual	FY 2015 Actual	FY 2016 Adopted
LOB #159: Department Leadership			
FUNDING			
<u>Expenditures:</u>			
Compensation	\$811,260	\$872,593	\$965,000
Operating Expenses	108,152	103,597	107,866
Total Expenditures	\$919,412	\$976,190	\$1,072,866
General Fund Revenue	\$0	\$0	\$0
Net Cost/(Savings) to General Fund	\$919,412	\$976,190	\$1,072,866
POSITIONS			
<i>Authorized Positions/Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs)</i>			
<u>Positions:</u>			
Regular	10 / 10	12 / 12	11 / 11
Total Positions	10 / 10	12 / 12	11 / 11

Metrics

Metric Indicator	FY 2013 Actual	FY 2014 Actual	FY 2015 Actual	FY 2016 Estimate	FY 2017 Estimate
Participants satisfied with available selection of NCS programs	91%	93%	85%	90%	90%
Participants satisfied with overall delivery of NCS programs and services	90%	90%	92%	90%	90%
Percent satisfied with volunteer experience	NA	NA	82%	85%	85%

Within its direct program and service provision efforts, NCS strives to facilitate activities that are aligned with the community's desire. This is increasingly challenging as the participant base continues to increase, both in terms of numbers and diversity. To achieve success, NCS Leadership places a prioritized emphasis on community work, to include: the identification of community leaders and partner organizations; the use of volunteers from the standpoint as both a strategic resource and as an individual community member benefit; and, the training and growth of individual NCS staff to ensure the skill development necessary to operate an organization with such a wide-ranging program and service inventory. These efforts help to ensure all voices are heard and contribute to the successful outcome of aligning programs and services with the community's expectations. The trend line of participant satisfaction with the available selection of NCS programs remains strong, as does the satisfaction rate for the overall delivery of NCS programs and services. As NCS relies heavily on the efforts of volunteers, it is important to ensure all volunteers have a positive experience. Therefore, NCS places a strong focus on ensuring quality experiences for all volunteers as this continues to be a primary factor in volunteer retention.