

Lines of Business

LOB #215:

LEADERSHIP MANAGEMENT AND OVERSIGHT

Purpose

The elected position of Sheriff, a Constitutional Officer, provides oversight and guidance for the entire Office of the Sheriff and is responsible for providing service in three major areas:

- Operating the Fairfax County Adult Detention Center and Alternative Incarceration Branch where individuals are detained and housed while awaiting trial or when convicted of violations of the law;
- Providing security for all courts and judges within Fairfax County, the City of Fairfax, and the Towns of Herndon and Vienna;
- Enforcing orders of the Courts by serving papers generated by the courts and carrying out actions resulting from civil proceedings.

Description

The Sheriff, the Chief Deputies and the support staff provide the overall services for the Sheriff's Office in Leadership/Management and Oversight line of business. They are employees of Fairfax County. The Sheriff is elected to serve four-year terms. The Sheriff and the Chief Deputies provide overall guidance and vision for the agency composed of 600 (regular/exempt) authorized positions.

Supporting programs which report to the Sheriff include Internal Affairs, Equal Employment Opportunity and Affirmative Action (EEO-AA) services, public information and the liaison to the Criminal Justice Advisory Board/Community Criminal Justice Board.

Benefits

As with any agency, a strong leadership team is needed for effective management and direction for all the operations for which the agency is responsible. Effective career employees help the Sheriff's Office see important trends that need to be addressed long before crises arise. The responsibility of the Leadership and Management team is to develop solutions and keep the public informed so issues can be resolved before they become public safety problems.

Mandates

Virginia Constitution Article VII, Section 4; Virginia Code §§ 53.1-68 - 53.1-133; Virginia Code § 8.01-295; Virginia Code §§ 53.1-119 and 53.1-120 establish mandates and guidelines for the establishment and governance of the Sheriff's Office and its functions.

Office of the Sheriff

Trends and Challenges

The challenges facing the Sheriff's Office are considerable. The first is the treatment of inmates with mental illness. A mentally ill inmate died in February 2015. The Sheriff's Office was in the middle of evaluating and changing the custody practices of inmates with mental illness when it happened. The agency had already restructured the housing for the men's mental health unit. The units were moved in close proximity to classrooms and Community Services Board (CSB) staff to help provide the required intensive supervision and the security based on their propensity for instability and danger.

In 2014, the female mental health unit was moved from a busy, noisy corridor to a more therapeutic area, also adjacent to CSB staff. Each cell has a window to let in natural light, and overhead lights are kept low during the day and turned off at night. The inmates have some private time as requested by the CSB.

Although all deputies that work in the mental health area are specially trained to know how to handle mentally ill inmates, the agency is undergoing a comprehensive training program to make sure all staff is trained in handling mentally ill inmates.

Because of the lack of beds in Virginia's psychiatric hospitals, minor offenders in crisis are often brought to jail rather than to a crisis care center. The Sheriff's Office is working with other County agencies to launch and staff a Diversion Center where those under arrest can first be evaluated by CSB staff to determine if jail is the right place for them. If it is not, the CSB will search throughout the state for an available mental health bed, and a police officer or sheriff's deputy will transport the person to a treatment facility rather than to the jail. The Sheriff's Office can only be assured of available staffing through FY 2016.

A second major challenge for the Sheriff's Office concerns the jail security system, which includes the electrical/mechanical controls for secure doors, visual surveillance, and voice communications. A 2006 consultant's security study concluded that the security system was "aged" and "overloaded." Nine years later, the system is so old that repair parts often cannot be found. A new design is now underway, but the project, now in the Capital Improvement Program, needs to be funded. Even with funding, it will still be another three years before the new system could be operational.

The third major challenge is the staffing level. It is critical that the Public Safety Staffing Plan be implemented. The Sheriff's Office has extended staff considerably to meet the changes in federal and state laws and to implement important changes in professional standards required by certification agencies. Stretching staff resources has only worked because employment has been high and inmate population has been low. It is clear the agency will be experiencing significant retirements at every level of the organization in the next few years. There is also a growing exodus of staff to surrounding Police Departments, where pay is higher for similar risk. The number of anticipated vacancies and the growing difficulty in recruiting deputies exacerbate the problem of having too few positions to continue the services that are provided today.

Office of the Sheriff

Resources

Category	FY 2014 Actual	FY 2015 Actual	FY 2016 Adopted
LOB #215: Leadership Management and Oversight			
FUNDING			
<u>Expenditures:</u>			
Compensation	\$1,430,369	\$1,476,011	\$1,648,195
Operating Expenses	372,486	550,276	642,374
Capital Equipment	15,895	0	0
Total Expenditures	\$1,818,750	\$2,026,287	\$2,290,569
General Fund Revenue	\$216,317	\$209,305	\$222,278
Net Cost/(Savings) to General Fund	\$1,602,433	\$1,816,982	\$2,068,291
POSITIONS			
Authorized Positions/Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs)			
<u>Positions:</u>			
Regular	11 / 10.5	11 / 10.5	11 / 10.5
Exempt	3 / 3	3 / 3	3 / 3
Total Positions	14 / 13.5	14 / 13.5	14 / 13.5

Metrics

Metric Indicator	FY 2013 Actual	FY 2014 Actual	FY 2015 Actual	FY 2016 Estimate	FY 2017 Estimate
Average Daily Population of inmates receiving psychotropic medications	199	189	193	175	150
Total transports	69	78	88	115	130
Referrals sent to Forensics	4,717	4,250	4,503	4,250	4,000
Average number of vacancies	6	29	16	35	36

At least 40 percent of inmates suffer from a mental illness, but defining what constitutes mental illness is a challenge. The attached data show only the number of inmates with mental illness who take psychotropic medications. Once the County's Diversion Center is fully operational, there should be fewer inmates who take psychotropic medications because they will have been diverted for assessment. The data also reflect a growing need for transports of diverted inmates to treatment facilities, but that data also will be better defined once the Diversion Center is fully operational.

The average number of sworn staff vacancies has varied considerably. Experience has shown that once these vacancies top 35, positions need to be covered with overtime pay. As a result, the agency will make an effort to minimize vacancies in the future.