LOB #216:
ACADEMY AND MANAGEMENT ASSISTANCE

Purpose

The Academy and Management Assistance line of business provides managerial direction for the agency as a whole. This line of business provides oversight, leadership, policy development, coordination, and services in the areas of human resources, training (sworn and civilian), information technology, financial services and professional services.

This service area strives to hire people who can be properly trained, well-equipped and adequately outfitted to provide the professional services required. This service area also ensures compliance with and review of all applicable laws, mandates, standards, policies, and procedures which govern the functioning of the agency.

Description

The human resources service area handles recruitment, retention, employee relations, classification, and payroll for the agency of 600 positions. The human resources service area is also tasked with the development and review of promotion processes for the agency. Human resources efforts ensure that the probation and annual evaluation process is completed for every agency employee. Their work also coordinates work force planning issues with the County's Department of Human Resources.

The training service area operates within the Fairfax County Criminal Justice Academy and includes the Fairfax County Police Department. The Academy provides Sheriff's Office and Police Department recruits with six months of concentrated training followed by two months of field training before recruits are certified and assigned to duty posts. Although the Sheriff's Office recruits must attend four additional weeks of schooling than Police Department recruits (to understand the service of civil documents, courtroom procedures and jail operations) the Sheriff's Office recruits and Police Department recruits otherwise learn side-by-side throughout the training period. The Academy also provides the continuing education required for all staff to enhance skills and maintain law enforcement certifications. Training is provided through classroom/roll call instruction, practical field exercises, firearms training (with practice at approved ranges) and law enforcement driver training (with practice at an approved track).

The information technology (IT) service area is responsible for maintaining and maximizing the technology infrastructure of the agency. Much of the jail is run through technology, which includes visual security systems, physical security, identity and personal history systems, radio communication systems, and operational information. With approximately 25,500 offenders entering the jail each year, maintaining the massive volume of important information about medical and personal histories can be daunting. Technology is critical to successfully scheduling and coordinating the many appointments and classes for each of the inmates combined with the daily shifting of cell locations and the rotating shifts of deputies. This service area maintains a website, which is especially important for the friends and loved ones of the 25,500 entering inmates. This service area also coordinates the computer replacement system, responds to system failures, and maintains a helpdesk for user support.

The financial service area manages the agency's warehouse. Everything from automobile replacements to inmate clothing and bedding to bullet proof vests are purchased, warehoused, and paid for through this unit. The unit consistently receives high ratings in multiple regular audits performed by the County's Department of Procurement and Material Management. This line of business manages the budget, revenue collection, accounting, and bill payment for the agency. State and independent County financial auditors routinely audit all these financial operations. About 67 percent of the non-personnel budget is driven by direct services to inmates (such as clothing, bedding, medical services, and food) and non-Sheriff agency fees (such as computer charges and fuel charges). The remaining 33 percent of the non-personnel budget must provide for all the operations and security needs of the agency.

The professional services division performs the collection of data needed for the monitoring of accreditation requirements for the American Correctional Association (ACA), Virginia Law Enforcement Professional Standards Commission (VLESPC), National Commission on Correctional Health Care (NCCHC) and the Virginia Department of Corrections (DOC) audit Reviews, which are conducted on a regular basis. It also provides service to the agency through the development, revision, publication, and distribution of agency policies and standard operating procedures. Requests for information from within and outside the agency are handled through research, completion of surveys, and compilation of statistical reports; maintenance, interpretation, analysis, and summarization of data; and Adult Detention Center (ADC) population projections and needs assessments. This line of business reviews proposed legislation and provides feedback to County legislative representatives at the Virginia General Assembly. Compliance with ACA standards is continually monitored and documented to ensure a successful re-accreditation audit of the Adult Detention Center every three years. This area also compiles a multitude of statistics, completes a yearly census, and handles requests for other information from within and outside the agency.

Project Lifesaver is also operated in this line of business. The program serves the needs of children with Down syndrome or an autism spectrum disorder and adults with Alzheimer's disease, dementia or another cognitive disorder that may cause them to chronically wander and get lost. Clients wear a wrist or ankle band that emits a silent tracking signal. When a caregiver notifies the Sheriff's Office that a loved one is missing, deputies respond to the area with state-of-the-art tracking equipment. The program has a 100 percent track record of locating wanderers and bringing them safely home. The agency currently serves 63 clients. The branch also coordinates this region's TRIAD program (crime prevention program for seniors) and oversees the Crime Prevention Officers, Child Safety Seat program, Child ID program and Celebrate Fairfax activities.

Benefits

The majority of the services provided as part of this line of business are split between those directly benefiting agency personnel and those services needed to assist in the care and housing of the inmate population. The Human Resources Branch deals almost exclusively with the personnel needs of the agency. The Financial Services Branch provides the budgeting expertise for the Sheriff's Office, while at the same time coordinates the contracts, procurement for goods, inmate accounts, and services dealing with the inmate population. The Information Technology Branch splits its resources between staff and inmate population needs. The IT Branch provides for the communication, radio, database, and computer needs of the agency while at the same time ensuring the visitation scheduling, inmate reporting, and mobile inmate information platform are all working seamlessly. The Training Branch ensures that mandated training is provided, understood, and effectively demonstrated by all new Sheriff's Office recruits. These new deputies, in turn, use that training to become effective members of the Fairfax County Public Safety team. Finally, the Professional Services Branch provides the administrative review of agency policies to ensure compliance with the many nationally recognized certifications the agency has earned. This branch also oversees the agency's community outreach programs.

Mandates

While the majority of the work outlined in this LOB is in support of the mandated responsibilities listed in LOB: Leadership Management and Oversight, there are specific mandates in the management of the Fairfax County Criminal Justice Academy. *Virginia Code § 15.2-1612.1. Deputy sheriffs to complete course of instruction established by Department of Criminal Justice Services*, outlines the required training necessary to become a sworn law enforcement official.

Trends and Challenges

The Sheriff's Office will continue to recruit and hire the highest quality individuals possible. The agency looks to reflect the diversity of Fairfax County and are very proud of having a diverse staff. Fairfax County's latest (2013) Racial/Ethnic Origin Composition lists a 36.4 percent minority make-up. In FY 2015, the Sheriff's Office had a minority staff level of 35 percent. Current challenges in hiring and maintaining quality individuals will be discussed in the LOB Metric Discussion.

In the finance area, it is impossible to project inmate population, yet many of the agency's expenses relate to the average daily population. The health of the inmates can make medical costs change dramatically, yet there is no way to anticipate each year the number of inmates who will have serious illnesses in need of costly treatment. Weather emergencies and staff vacancies are just two of the significant variables that alter overtime use and cannot be projected. Mandated changes in operations, such as requiring more recreation time or double the security on medical transports, make it difficult to determine how to maintain minimum staffing standards with the fixed staff and expanded responsibilities. Although the leadership team determines how the staff is assigned, the financial area tries to cost out options. Because the agency is at a low point in inmate average daily population, the jail has been able to extend its staffing use significantly. The Public Safety Staffing Plan was developed to try to plan for the replacement of these positions before the inmate population trend reverses.

The IT area is working on many important systems, but none more important than the security system. The current system is obsolete. With over 16,000 individual movements in a 24-hour period, a significant failure of this system could close down courts, programs, and most jail movement. The security system is the primary tool that allows just 50 deputies on a shift to manage the routines of nearly 1100 inmates. The design of a new system in underway, but the capital funding is part of the Capital Improvement Plan and awaits funding this fiscal year. Because of the digital nature of the system, it is important that construction funding closely follow design completion.

Resources

Category	FY 2014 Actual	FY 2015 Actual	FY 2016 Adopted
LOB #216: Academy and Management Assistance			
FUNDING			
Expenditures:			
Compensation	$4,427,456	$4,636,110	$4,935,261
Operating Expenses	1,387,051	1,214,904	1,545,136
Capital Equipment	38,218	175,176	0
Total Expenditures	$5,852,725	$6,026,190	$6,480,397
General Fund Revenue	$850,421	$825,001	$844,245
Net Cost/(Savings) to General Fund	$5,002,304	$5,201,189	$5,636,152
POSITIONS Authorized Positions/Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs)			
Positions:			
Regular	42 / 42	42 / 42	43 / 43
State	27 / 27	27 / 27	27 / 27
Total Positions	69 / 69	69 / 69	70 / 70

Metrics

Metric Indicator	FY 2013 Actual	FY 2014 Actual	FY 2015 Actual	FY 2016 Estimate	FY 2017 Estimate
Percent of variance between adopted and actual expenditures	3.78%	1.40%	3.11%	1.00%	1.00%
Percent of recruits successfully completing the Academy	71%	100%	89%	90%	90%
Percent of minorities hired	47%	68%	36%	33%	33%
Average number of vacancies	6	29	16	35	36

One of the greatest challenges facing the Sheriff's Office over the next few years will be the hiring and retention of qualified individuals, critical in the accomplishment of the mission of the Fairfax County Sheriff's Office. A couple of key factors will play an important role in the Sheriff's Office ability to maintain a vital work force. The first is the much-increased participation in the County's Deferred Retirement Option Program (DROP). From FY 2010-FY 2014, the Sheriff's Office averaged five sworn staff members scheduled to complete the DROP program annually. From FY 2015 to FY 2018, the Sheriff's Office will average 16 sworn staff members scheduled to complete the DROP program -- over a 200 percent increase. The agency currently has approximately 108 sworn staff members with 20 years of active service who are eligible for an early retirement.

Another key factor in maintaining a healthy work force is an attempt to reduce the unscheduled separation of sworn staff from the agency. There are several reasons for these unscheduled separations. Some are separated due to severe agency infractions. While the agency cannot condone any behavior that would result in a disciplinary separation, supervisors do work with staff to ensure expectations are clearly understood. If infractions do occur, progressive discipline is used to deter any future disciplinary issues. The loss of deputy sheriff recruits during Academy training is another issue to manage. Recruits have a well-defined level of training that needs to be met in order to graduate. At times, recruits fail to meet these training levels, even after several attempts. These recruits are released from the Academy. Prior to the agency's separation from these individuals, the Sheriff's Office works with them in their areas of weakness in an attempt to have them successfully graduate from a future academy class. The final factor, and definitely most challenging, is the loss of Academy-trained deputy sheriffs to other (most often) local law enforcement organizations. The Sheriff's Office has found it a challenge to recruit and maintain staff due to the lack of compensation equity with fellow local law enforcement agencies. Over the past nearly 12 months, the Sheriff Office has lost 17 sworn staff members to the above outlined factors; five of them left for other law enforcement agencies, mostly local.