

# Fire and Rescue Department

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LOB #237:

## **PERSONNEL SERVICES BUREAU / EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY / INTERNAL AFFAIRS**

### **Purpose**

The Personnel Services Bureau (PSB) is designed to promote efficiency and synergy in the administration of all human resource management services. This bureau oversees the following LOBS:

- Volunteers
- Health and Safety
- Human Resources, Recruitment, and Promotional Exams
- Training

The Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Office and Professional Standards Office are entities operating within the PSB working collaboratively with the other sections in the bureau.

The EEO Office is responsible for ensuring adherence to all Federal, State and County regulations prohibiting discrimination, and safeguarding diversity and inclusivity within the workplace.

The Professional Standards Office exists to maintain the integrity and professionalism expected by the Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Department. All employees are subject to the departmental Rules and Regulations and to Fairfax County's Rules and Code of Ethics. This office will respond to any credible information concerning misconduct by department employees, and is charged with investigating and serious allegations of misconduct involving an employee.

### **Description**

The EEO Office responds to allegations of discrimination, harassment and hostile work environments, develops and delivers training, monitors the department's diversity plan, trains a cadre of peer counselors and monitors court and commission rulings and enactment of new law to ensure the department's EEO policies are in compliance

The Professional Standards Office conducts a variety of investigations for the FRD. These investigations include allegations of misconduct involving professional firefighters/EMTs, civilian employees and volunteers. The second type of investigation is background screening for newly hired County employees and volunteers including polygraph examinations on potential employees. Professional Standards also monitors employees who are placed into the Disciplinary Diversion program as a result of alcohol and drug use/abuse.

### **Benefits**

A strong and successful EEO program benefits everyone. By encouraging diversity in the hiring practices, the compliment of emergency response providers more accurately reflects the community resulting in enhanced communication and improved service quality. A successful EEO program also creates an internal culture where it is clear discrimination and harassment are not tolerated, resulting in confidence of employees to report issues or concerns involving discrimination or harassment. Lower occurrences of discrimination and harassment make for more healthy working environments, decreases potential distractions and allows employees to focus on the task at hand resulting in increased effectiveness.

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A strong and successful Professional Standards Program ensures the integrity of the FRD by promptly and thoroughly investigating complaints and allegations of employee misconduct. The integrity and reputation of a Fire and Rescue Department are vital if it is to accomplish its mission. Accordingly, the Office of Professional Standards is responsible for helping the FRD maintain its credibility and respect, both from the public it serves and its members.

## Mandates

EEO & Diversity is mandated by Title VII of the Civil Rights Act (as amended), County Personnel Regulations, and Core Values.

## Trends and Challenges

Successful training programs have proven effective in reducing discrimination and harassment. FRD's challenge is to maintain an engaging, frequent and impactful training program to reach over 1,500 employees in order to maintain a discrimination and harassment free work environment. This can sometimes prove challenging with over 45 various work locations, three separate shifts, competing priorities to accommodate required training and limited staff resources.

With the rise of social media comes a greater risk for improper use by employees whether at or away from work. With the rise in acceptable usage of social media for work – Facebook, twitter, blogs, restrictions that once existed have been lifted providing employees the opportunity to access these sites, but also increasing the opportunity for abuse. Increased education on proper usage along with the development of department policies and procedures is one step towards reducing misconduct.

## Resources

Category	FY 2014 Actual	FY 2015 Actual	FY 2016 Adopted
<b>LOB #237: Personnel Services Bureau / Equal Employment Opportunity / Internal Affairs</b>			
<b>FUNDING</b>			
<u>Expenditures:</u>			
Compensation	\$748,786	\$629,389	\$560,041
Operating Expenses	54,897	48,353	31,546
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>\$803,683</b>	<b>\$677,742</b>	<b>\$591,587</b>
General Fund Revenue	\$0	\$0	\$0
Net Cost/(Savings) to General Fund	\$803,683	\$677,742	\$591,587
<b>POSITIONS</b>			
Authorized Positions/Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs)			
<u>Positions:</u>			
Regular	7/7	7/7	7/7
<b>Total Positions</b>	<b>7/7</b>	<b>7/7</b>	<b>7/7</b>

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## Metrics

Metric Indicator	FY 2013 Actual	FY 2014 Actual	FY 2015 Actual	FY 2016 Estimate	FY 2017 Estimate
Discrimination Complaints (internal/external) Processed	12	16	19	18	20
Number of personnel receiving diversity training	NA	100	500	400	400
Professional Standards Investigations	44	48	40	44	50
Professional Standards Volunteer Background Checks	251	388	330	300	300

The number of internal/external discrimination complaints has increased since FY 2013. This was the expected outcome as a result of more education about EEO/Diversity combined with personnel becoming more comfortable with and having increased confidence in the manor and method in which the department handles and processes complaints of discrimination and sexual harassment. There is a direct correlation in the number of complaints and the number of diversity training classes conducted. An increased number of complainants can be an indicator of a healthy system in which members believe they are the recipient of discriminatory practices or harassing behavior they feel comfortable and confident with the department to address their concerns.

The number of diversity training classes and department members trained increased in FY 2015. The ultimate goal is for all department members to receive recurring diversity training throughout their career. The number of trainings provided and the number personnel trained is driven by the overall population of the department. The goal of diversity training is to reach all department personnel educating them on current issues impacting diversity in hopes of fostering a respectful work place free of discrimination and harassment, and to educate all levels within the chain of command on how to appropriately address concerns of discrimination and harassment if they occur.

Internal affairs/professional standards investigations are a result of credible information concerning misconduct by department employees. While the number of internal affairs investigations fluctuate annually, the fluctuation is minimal.

The number of volunteer background checks fluctuates annually and is dependent on the volunteer's recruiting efforts.