

Cable Communications

LOB #256:

COMMUNICATIONS PRODUCTIONS

Purpose

Communications Productions informs the public about County government by televising meetings of the Board of Supervisors, Planning Commission, and Board of Zoning Appeals, and by producing informational programs that are televised on Fairfax County Government Channel 16, via live video-streaming, and through video-on-demand.

Communications Productions maintains an emergency messaging system that delivers important emergency information to County residents on Channel 16. The emergency message system is a reliable means of communication during an emergency for the Office of Public Affairs and the Office of Emergency Management.

Communications Productions operates the Fairfax County Training Network and produces training programs for over 30,000 employees of Fairfax County Government and Fairfax County Public Schools to support a productive and effective workforce.

Description

Communications Productions is the County's centralized resource for all video production services. Programs produced and televised by Communications Productions include meetings of the Board of Supervisors, Planning Commission, and Board of Zoning Appeals; County Executive programs; Board of Supervisors-directed programming; town meetings; monthly Board of Supervisors video newsletters; and programs highlighting the services of County agencies on Fairfax County Government Channel 16. Communications Productions operates and maintains an emergency messaging system that delivers important messages to the public during an emergency.

In FY 2015, Communications Productions produced 936 hours of original programming. Channel 16 programs are available to approximately 795,000 residents on the Cox, Comcast, and Verizon cable systems. All programs are closed-captioned and live video-streamed, and most are available through video-on-demand. The Communications Productions engineering staff designs, integrates, and maintains infrastructure to capture, process, and transmit high-quality video and audio signals, and provides a reliable means of communication during an emergency.

Communications Productions operates the Fairfax County Training Network, an internal communication channel available at all County and school facilities, that produces training programs for over 30,000 employees of Fairfax County Government and Fairfax County Public Schools. Programming on the Fairfax County Training Network is also live video-streamed for viewing on employee workstations.

Communications Productions provides technical support for all County agency video needs, manages an equipment loan pool, offers video teleconferencing services, processes duplication requests, and provides video engineering consulting services for audio-visual technology projects in new and existing County facilities.

Cable Communications

Benefits

Channel 16 connects the community to information about Fairfax County Government by televising government meetings and agency. Channel 16 informs the public about the latest news in magisterial districts and throughout the County. Through programs like *State of the County*, *Bond Referendum*, and *The County Executive's Annual Budget Presentation*, Channel 16 educates residents about Fairfax County Government and its programs and services.

Channel 16 engages residents in the legislative process and supports an open and transparent government. Channel 16 reaches an estimated 795,000 residents in 286,000 households via cable television, and an even larger audience through live video-streaming and video-on-demand. Televising the meetings of the Board of Supervisors, Planning Commission, and Board of Zoning Appeals supports a culture of engagement. Channel 16 connects a broader segment of the community by closed-captioning all television programs. Channel 16 serves an increasingly diverse constituency by producing television programs in Spanish, Korean, and Vietnamese, as requested by County agencies.

Communications Productions is supported by the Cable Communications Fund through the state communications sales and use tax and the Public, Educational, and Governmental (PEG) capital access grants received from local cable operators. This revenue is reflected in LOB #258 Communications Policy and Regulation which performs administrative functions for this fund. Communications Productions provides an effective and efficient means to communicate vital information to Fairfax County residents. Channel 16 provides responsive support through video production services to all County agencies and to contributory agencies such as the Arts Council of Fairfax County, Volunteer Fairfax, Southeast Fairfax Development Corporation, and the History Commission.

Mandates

Closed-captioning requirements for Fairfax County Government Channel 16 are governed by 47 U.S.C. § 613, *Video Programming* and 47 C.F.R. § 79.1, *Closed captioning of televised video programming*. Communications Productions complies with federal requirements by captioning all live and prerecorded Channel 16 programs.

Requirements for providing access to public records are mandated by Code of Virginia Ann. Title 2.2, *Administration of Government*, Chapter 37, *Virginia Freedom of Information Act*, § 2.2-3700-3714, The Virginia Freedom of Information Act. Communications Productions complies with state requirements by responding to all record requests within the time requirements.

The Cox, Comcast, and Verizon franchise agreements require that a PEG channel be used under the terms specified in the agreement. Fairfax County meets that condition by operating Channel 16. Cable providers may reclaim the channel for their own use should the County terminate operation of Fairfax County Government Channel 16.

Cable Communications

Trends and Challenges

As Fairfax County's population grows more diverse, the communication needs of a multi-lingual community will require broader translation capabilities. More stringent federal captioning requirements may require shifting resources to meet new standards.

In response to agency communication requests for immediate programming, Communications Productions developed the *16 Around Fairfax* daily program to communicate information in a timely manner. Communications Productions distributes the daily segments on both Channel 16 and social media.

The communications needs of agencies are expanding to include video for social media. As the County's centralized video provider, Communications Productions must evaluate how best to accommodate these new video production requirements.

As viewership habits change, Communications Productions will continue to evaluate production practices to provide timely and informative programming that meets County agency communication needs and serves the interests of Fairfax County residents.

Resources

Category	FY 2014 Actual	FY 2015 Actual	FY 2016 Adopted
LOB #256: Communications Productions			
FUNDING			
<u>Expenditures:</u>			
Compensation	\$1,703,432	\$1,666,698	\$1,908,048
Benefits	747,333	738,035	850,685
Operating Expenses	1,077,687	1,120,924	1,255,166
Capital Equipment	274,696	486,371	350,000
Total Expenditures	\$3,803,148	\$4,012,028	\$4,363,899
Total Revenue	\$2,603	\$529	\$1,000
POSITIONS			
Authorized Positions/Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs)			
<u>Positions:</u>			
Regular	25 / 25	25 / 25	25 / 25
Total Positions	25 / 25	25 / 25	25 / 25

Cable Communications

Metrics

Metric Indicator	FY 2013 Actual	FY 2014 Actual	FY 2015 Actual	FY 2016 Estimate	FY 2017 Estimate
Hours of government meetings and informational programs produced per year	781	861	936	865	865
Percentage of requested programs completed	100%	100%	99%	99%	99%
Percentage of uninterrupted transmission of Fairfax County Government Channel 16	99.2%	98.8%	99.7%	99.5%	99.5%
Number of DVD duplication requests completed	562	470	434	430	400

Hours of government meetings and informational programs produced per year

The number of hours of government meetings and informational programs produced per year has increased over the past three fiscal years due to a greater number of requests for productions by the Board of Supervisors, County Executive, County agencies, and contributory organizations such as the Arts Council of Fairfax County. Communications Productions expects to continue to meet projections for numbers of hours of programs produced per year based on current trends and social media video needs.

Percentage of requested programs completed

To meet County video production needs, Communications Productions completed over 99 percent of requested programs, which varied from multi-camera Board Auditorium events to full-length documentaries.

Percentage of uninterrupted transmission of Fairfax County Government Channel 16

The Communications Productions engineering staff designs, integrates, and maintains infrastructure to transmit high-quality video and audio signals 24 hours per day, seven days a week, and provides a reliable means of communication during an emergency. Uninterrupted transmission has improved due to the implementation of new processes and equipment upgrades. In FY 2013, Communications Productions had an uninterrupted transmission rate of 99.2 percent. In FY 2014, the uninterrupted transmission rate was 98.8 percent. In FY 2015, the uninterrupted transmission rate increased to 99.7 percent. Communications Productions expects to meet the uninterrupted transmission estimate in coming fiscal years.

Number of DVD duplication requests completed

Requests for DVD duplication services have decreased over the past three fiscal years due to the availability of programs through video-on-demand. In FY 2013, Communications Productions completed 562 requests for DVD duplication services; 470 requests in FY 2014; and 434 requests in FY 2015. Communications Productions completes DVD duplication requests within Virginia Freedom of Information Act time requirements.