

LOB #42:

DEPARTMENT PLANNING AND ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT

Purpose

The purpose of this line of business is to ensure that the Office of Public Affairs (OPA) fulfills its planning and administrative duties through strategic and work planning; human capital management including workforce and succession planning; training monitoring; budget preparation and monitoring; financial processing, reporting and reconciliation; and procurement.

Description

Among the functions handled through this LOB are:

Strategic Planning and Work Planning

Agency management and the senior staff team periodically update OPA's strategic plan and develop annual work plans to support OPA's mission. It is an ongoing process to support results-based decision-making, planning and budgeting.

Human Capital Management

In addition to the day-to-day human capital management activities such as time management, OPA also focuses on strategic challenges associated with recruitment and staff development, particularly in light of the County's succession planning initiative and workforce planning to ensure that OPA has "the right number of people in the right jobs with the right competencies at the right time." With the County's priority on succession planning, given the high number of employees eligible to retire in the next few years countywide, staff in this LOB is responsible for preparing OPA's plan and participating in the succession planning community of practice. Another duty is the completion of the annual Diversity Report required by the Office of Human Rights and Equity Programs.

Training Monitoring

Staff associated with this line of business is also responsible for tracking mandatory training to ensure that OPA is in compliance with County requirements. In addition to countywide mandated training such as Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Prevention of Sexual Harassment, etc., there are a number of courses required, e.g., incident command systems training, for OPA employees to staff the Joint Information Center in the event of an activation of the Emergency Operations Center. It is crucial that staff have the appropriate training to enable them to perform satisfactorily in such situations. In addition, given changing technology and communication techniques, it is imperative that employees consistently upgrade their skills in order to ensure a high performance workforce to be able to deliver the level of service County residents have come to expect.

Budget Preparation/Monitoring

OPA's Financial Operations Manager prepares, justifies and manages the agency's annual budget as well as prepares the Third Quarter and Carryover Review submissions. Regular budget monitoring is also accomplished to ensure that OPA does not exceed its appropriation. Periodic updates are provided to OPA senior staff to provide a clear financial picture to allow for efficient and effective management of agency resources.

Financial Processing/Reporting/Reconciliation

The Financial Operations Manager is also responsible for submitting financial reports as well as preparing OPA's monthly financial reconciliation as required by Accounting Technical Bulletin (ATB) 020. In addition, when the agency has grants, staff is responsible for completing and submitting the required reports to the Department of Finance and the Department of Management and Budget, as well as the grantor, with regard to the establishment of grants, monitoring during the life cycle of the grants and completing the appropriate steps to close out grants when necessary.

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Procurement

To comply with the County's separation of duties requirements, the Administrative Assistant V initiates orders which are then approved by the Financial Operations Manager. This includes processing shopping carts and purchase orders through the County's FOCUS system, as well as managing OPA's use of the procurement card to ensure compliance with all applicable policies and procedures. These staff also prepare and review the weekly p-card and marketplace reconciliations as required by County policy.

There is 1/1.02 FTE position associated with this line of business. However, rather than one person, it includes parts of several OPA employees' time. This division of duties is primarily due to the need for separation of duties, e.g., one person cannot perform all the processes within a particular function, e.g., financial processing and reconciliation, procurement and human capital management.

Benefits

A strong infrastructure resulting from the activities of this line of business enables the Office of Public Affairs to run efficiently and effectively, thus benefiting the entire County. It ensures the optimum application of both financial and human resources in providing services for which the agency is responsible.

Ensuring that OPA is in compliance with the County's internal controls regarding human resources, finance, budgeting and procurement reduces Fairfax County's risk exposure for waste, fraud and abuse and strengthens accountability.

A focus on strategic planning supports the appropriate allocation of scarce resources to meet the communication needs of a growing population.

Mandates

Although the functions performed under this LOB are not mandated by the federal or state governments, there are internal compliance requirements, i.e., separation of duties, regular financial reconciliation, etc.

Trends and Challenges

As is the case for most County agencies, the Office of Public Affairs is challenged with doing more with less. OPA's budget has decreased 7.4 percent over the past 10 years, despite receiving funding for employee raises in six of those years. As a result, it has been necessary to reduce positions and expenditures. It is also important to note that over the past five years, OPA's staffing has decreased from 20 to 17 positions or a 15 percent decrease.

These decreases have meant that remaining staff has had to prioritize strategically and identify means to accomplish the OPA mission with fewer resources, despite a growing population and increased demands for OPA's services.

It also falls to this line of business to identify resources to develop the OPA workforce with limited funding, especially given rapidly changing communications environment – new technology, new tools, etc. on which staff must be trained. Additionally, staff associated with this LOB is responsible for monitoring mandatory training for OPA employees. In addition to countywide mandated training, this includes National Incident Management System (NIMS) and Incident Command Systems (ICS) training that is necessary to prepare staff to staff the Joint Information Center at the Emergency Operations Center which is activated for major emergencies or other events. Given the many other responsibilities assigned to OPA staff, it is challenging to identify time to undertake this valuable training.

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Resources

Category	FY 2014 Actual	FY 2015 Actual	FY 2016 Adopted
LOB #42: Department Planning and Administrative Support			
FUNDING			
<u>Expenditures:</u>			
Compensation	\$82,047	\$76,616	\$81,273
Operating Expenses	7,077	7,776	6,690
Total Expenditures	\$89,124	\$84,392	\$87,963
General Fund Revenue	\$0	\$0	\$0
Net Cost/(Savings) to General Fund	\$89,124	\$84,392	\$87,963
POSITIONS			
Authorized Positions/Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs)			
<u>Positions:</u>			
Regular	1 / 1.08	1 / 1.08	1 / 1.02
Total Positions	1 / 1.08	1 / 1.08	1 / 1.02

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Metrics

Metric Indicator	FY 2013 Actual	FY 2014 Actual	FY 2015 Actual	FY 2016 Estimate	FY 2017 Estimate
Shopping carts processed	22	34	24	24	24
P-Card reconciliations prepared/reviewed	52	52	52	52	52
Marketplace reconciliations prepared/reviewed	52	52	52	52	52
Payroll reconciliations prepared/reviewed	12	12	12	12	12
Financial reconciliations prepared/reviewed	12	12	12	12	12

As a very small line of business with only 1/1.02 FTE dedicated to performing the administrative functions for the Office of Public Affairs, staff must ensure that OPA adheres to strict separation of duties, e.g., the person who initiates a human resources, procurement or financial transaction cannot be the same person to approve it.

During FY 2015, the Office of Internal Audit performed a Business Process Audit on OPA's financial and procurement activities. The results showed a very sound operation with the only comment being a new form needed on file. That audit report can be found at:

http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/audit/pdf/reports/2015reports/15-12-09_opa_bpa_final.pdf

The workload of this LOB is fairly static, with little variation from year to year. However, it is crucial to the agency's operation, without which OPA would not have the resources to perform the work of the other seven LOBs, whether it is hiring staff or procuring supplies and services. OPA has a fairly low number of shopping carts, as the agency is able to use the procurement card for a large portion of its needs since they are under the dollar threshold and this tool is highly efficient for quick purchases. It also benefits the County in rebates from the credit card company.

The other static workload is associated with the County's requirement for regular reconciliations to detect any issues whether it is for payroll or financial processing. Internal Audit noted in its Business Process Audit, "Reconciliations were independently performed and were completed in a timely manner."