

Fairfax County Public Library

LOB #92:

COMMUNITY SERVICES

Purpose

The Community Services LOB demonstrates that the community is at the heart of FCPL. Personal interactions in library branches, targeted publicity designed to reach both current and future customers, participation in assessing satisfaction, and planning for future needs are all encompassed in this customer centric LOB. Residents using FCPL require and expect direct customer service from staff during all open hours. Materials must be processed efficiently and made quickly available and customers need to identify and be aware of the services, policies, and programs the Library offers. FCPL surveys and gathers data from users and from other libraries to aid in identifying and developing concrete plans for FCPL's future. It is the Library's mission to provide what the community needs and wants for work, school and pleasure.

Description

This LOB is comprised of three discrete programs: Circulation Services, Marketing and Communications, and Strategic Planning. These three programs are bundled because the focus is on reaching and planning for community needs. The information world is a fast-paced, complex organism, and FCPL must plan for and reach the community through in-person, traditional print, and online interactions.

1. **Circulation Services.** Staff in the circulation services program provides direct public service interacting with customers on issues related to library accounts and library cards including issues related to fines and fees. Staff ensures materials are managed accurately and within an industry standard timeframe, staff processes materials customer requests, and provides directional assistance and account assistance at the payment kiosk. In FY 2015, the Library checked in and checked out 1,075,037 materials, and managed approximately 500,000 library card holder accounts.

This program is provided in the libraries, both in the public areas and in the work rooms. The majority of work is performed during open library hours. Quick turnaround in checking in borrowed materials and putting them back on shelves is a necessity to ensure materials circulate among customers frequently.

The program is performed by library staff and volunteers. It has been a provided service since the Fairfax County Public Library was formally established in 1939.

2. **Marketing and Communications.** Staff in the marketing and communication program develop strategies and materials that directly support FCPL resources, programs, services, and mission thereby expanding the use of these resources by existing and new customers. Strategies employed include, but are not limited to, print, the library's website, and various social media platforms. Staff in this program also provide direct services to library staff, the Library Board, library friends' groups, and the Library Foundation related to internal and external communications, promotion, and community events.

The service is provided from a central office and may include extended hours where matters involving the press or other events are concerned.

The program is performed by library staff and has been operational since the 1980s.

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3. **Strategic Planning.** The staff in this program capture and analyze statistics for the agency, County, state, and federal programs plus researches best practices and library trends; coordinates and prepares strategic plans, mission, vision and value statements for the agency; measures use of identified core services; anticipates and monitors community demographics to assist in prioritizing resources and services and anticipating needs; and works with the Library Board on statistical and survey questions and the interpretation of surveys.

The service is provided from a central office and is usually performed during regular business hours.

The program is performed by library staff and has been operational since the 1980s.

Benefits

The Library performs this LOB in order to meet its mission of enriching individual and community life by making library materials freely available to every resident of Fairfax County. Fairfax County is a diverse County including varied income levels, demographic and language backgrounds. FCPL's community service LOB helps to equalize access to print, audio, and visual materials to people from all backgrounds. Further, libraries are an integral piece of a larger complement of quality services that promote the quality of life enjoyed by County residents. The Library's customer service standards promote a professional and welcoming experience with every customer interaction. This LOB customizes materials and services based on strategic planning and customer assessment, makes books available on branch shelves, and ensures County residents are eligible to access materials and services by providing Library cards. In addition, this LOB keeps County residents informed of the materials, services, and branches they can access as residents of Fairfax County.

The Community Services LOB supports the following Vision Elements: Maintaining Safe and Caring Communities, Building Livable Spaces, Connecting People and Places, Maintaining Health Economies, Practicing Environmental Stewardship, and Creating a Culture of Engagement.

Mandates

This Line of Business is not mandated.

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Trends and Challenges

Trends: The current trend, especially in the Washington, D.C. area, of people connecting through personal devices, contributes to the sense of information overload. While users can stay connected to the larger world, much of the connection is impersonal, leaving people to search for personal connections. Libraries are considered to be centers of the community, places where people make connections to their neighbors, government, and civic organizations. Residents expect personalized service and need one-on-one assistance to make connections to information and to the community. Other trends include the inclusion of library cards on mobile devices and ever expanding information portals used to reach customers and including new technology and social media.

Challenges: The largest challenge, for FCPL and libraries across the country, is how libraries will change to meet future demands and remain relevant. Fairfax County is increasingly diverse and as plans for future library services are formulated, it must be recognized that each person's ideal library is different. The Library's customer base is a dynamic, divergent constituency which is constantly changing. Also, providing library marketing information in multiple formats is difficult with limited resources. There is extensive manual labor involved with physically managing millions of books. County residents will continue to have high expectations for quality library services and expect the libraries to be open longer hours.

As technology platforms change, customer expectations continue to increase. For example, even while the Library continues to maintain robust circulation of its print collection, technologically savvy users demand access to electronic materials on a variety of different platforms. Managing the challenges of providing a full complement of services from the traditional to the modern in order to meet customer expectations will be key to success.

Resources

Category	FY 2014 Actual	FY 2015 Actual	FY 2016 Adopted
LOB #92: Community Services			
FUNDING			
<u>Expenditures:</u>			
Compensation	\$6,354,861	\$6,029,115	\$6,271,248
Operating Expenses	327,400	362,691	359,197
Capital Equipment	21,103	0	0
Total Expenditures	\$6,703,364	\$6,391,806	\$6,630,445
General Fund Revenue	\$1,369,482	\$1,167,049	\$1,277,251
Net Cost/(Savings) to General Fund	\$5,333,882	\$5,224,757	\$5,353,194
POSITIONS			
Authorized Positions/Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs)			
<u>Positions:</u>			
Regular	160 / 155	160 / 155	146 / 141.5
Total Positions	160 / 155	160 / 155	146 / 141.5

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Metrics

Metric Indicator	FY 2013 Actual	FY 2014 Actual	FY 2015 Actual	FY 2016 Estimate	FY 2017 Estimate
Circulation per Capita	11.5	11.3	10.6	10.1	9.6
Library Internet Website User Visits	4,342,332	4,764,081	4,757,428	4,751,000	4,748,000
Holdings Filled	1,084,224	1,085,794	1,289,963	1,309,000	1,329,000
Percent of Employees Satisfied with Internal Communications	NA	NA	85%	85%	85%

Since library circulation reached an all-time high in FY 2009, two key factors have combined to decrease library circulation: continued budget constraints have limited the libraries ability to purchase materials while at the same time, the service area population continues to increase (an average of 1.4 percent annually since FY 2009). This downward trend is reflected in public libraries nationally according to a 2012 survey of public libraries in the United States by the Institute of Library and Museum Services (IMLS). The library's circulation per capita in FY 2015 was 10.6 and is expected to decrease in FY 2016 and FY 2017 for the two key factors outlined above.

The volume of library Internet website user visits has remained high for the past several years. With nearly 5 million user visits in FY 2015 (4,757,428), the library's website is consistently among the most visited of Fairfax County government's websites. FCPL provides access to a number of online services and resources through its website including the online catalog which recorded nearly 10 million hits alone in FY 2015. FCPL expects visits to its website to remain high in the future.

The library's holds policy allows customers to reserve an item in the collection and have it delivered to their preferred branch library for pickup anywhere in the system. Library staff filled nearly 1.3 million holds placed by customers on library materials in FY 2015. The number of holds filled by library staff is expected to continue to increase over the next several years as customers continue to take advantage of this very popular service.

FCPL strives to keep staff informed of library and Fairfax County government news and information on a regular and ongoing basis. A recent survey of library staff showed that 85 percent of employees reported being satisfied with the library's internal communication. FY 2015 was the initial year for the library's internal communication survey which will be conducted annually moving forward. Employee satisfaction with the library's internal communication is expected to remain high over the next several years.