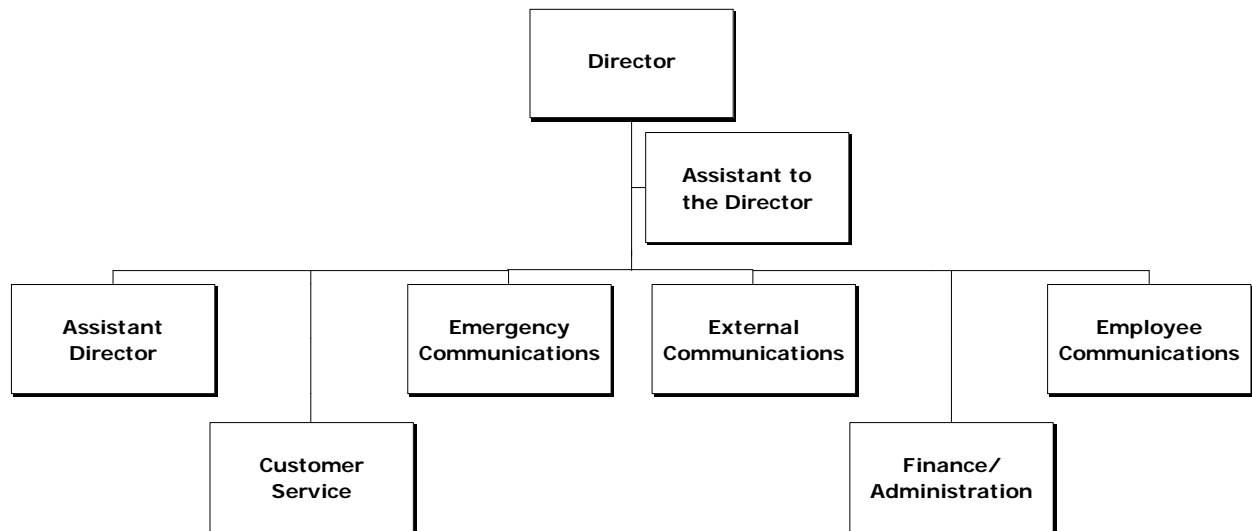


# Office of Public Affairs



## Mission

To lead coordinated communications and customer service from a countywide perspective that connects our residents with information about their government’s services, operations and policies. To increase public awareness of hazards and to communicate appropriate actions to take before, during and after emergencies. To ensure clear, open and timely communications to and from our employees in order to maintain an informed and motivated workforce.

<b>AGENCY DASHBOARD</b>			
Key Data	FY 2014	FY 2015	FY 2016
1. Facebook Reach (all County accounts)	11,603,306	28,313,758	58,827,954
2. Twitter Reach (all County accounts)	14,746,461	23,550,698	56,295,975
3. NewsCenter Page Views <sup>1</sup>	NA	NA	706,391
4. County YouTube Minutes Watched	278,726	408,656	558,436
5. Emergency Information Blog Views <sup>2</sup>	499,967	349,977	343,718
6. 703-FAIRFAX Customer Service Interactions	59,652	62,816	61,977
7. NewsWire Posts	1,754	1,869	2,459
8. NewsLink Emails to Employees	246	246	248
9. Team Fairfax Insider Issues	22	24	22

(1) NewsCenter began August 2015 (FY 2016); therefore, FY 2016 data represents 11 months.

(2) FY 2014 Emergency Information Blog Views were primarily related to snowstorms. Over the next two fiscal years, use of Facebook and Twitter as sources of information during weather-related events steadily increased.

# Office of Public Affairs

## Focus

The Office of Public Affairs (OPA) provides essential information to the public, elected and appointed officials, County agencies and the media concerning County programs and services and is the central communications office for the County. The Director serves as the County media spokesperson, and as a liaison with the County Executive and the Board of Supervisors.

OPA coordinates a comprehensive, centralized public affairs program for the County and also provides communications consulting to other agencies. Employee internal communications, countywide Web content management, social media, customer service and emergency communications are also part of the agency's critical functions.

OPA is organized to provide focus in three main areas: external, internal and emergency communications. This structure facilitates the best use of OPA staffing to provide for the following strategic issues which will be addressed over the next few years: enhance access to information both internally and externally; improve crisis and emergency communications; publish content through numerous tools and engage the public; provide information proactively to the media; and deliver communication consulting to agencies without public information officers, as well as support those agencies with communications staff. Strategies to address these critical issues include increasing collaboration with agencies; enhancing information on the County's intranet and internet; and continuing to explore tools for reaching diverse audiences.

In FY 2017 and FY 2018, OPA, in conjunction with the Department of Information Technology (DIT), will play a major role in the redesign of the County website to enhance user experience and customer service. The two agencies will develop the website's structure, design new webpages, migrate content from the existing site, train County staff on how to use the new web content management software, and lead usability testing with members of the public.

OPA remains proactive in anticipating the needs of the public and media by providing timely information. In addition to maintaining the County's presence on [www.fairfaxcounty.gov](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov), OPA oversees the use of several social media sites, including Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram and Flickr, allowing the County to communicate directly with the public. The reach through these tools has grown exponentially over the past few years and enables the amplification of a common message through multiple channels.

**The Office of Public Affairs supports the following County Vision Elements:**



***Maintaining Safe and Caring Communities***



***Creating a Culture of Engagement***



***Connecting People and Places***



***Practicing Environmental Stewardship***



***Maintaining Healthy Economies***



***Building Livable Spaces***



***Exercising Corporate Stewardship***

# Office of Public Affairs

## External Communications

OPA performs a critical role for many external audiences about important issues, deadlines and events. This includes serving County residents, the business community, nonprofits, faith communities, media and many other key groups by sharing relevant, timely and actionable information through the following tools:

- [www.fairfaxcounty.gov](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov)
- Fairfax County NewsCenter
- NewsWire
- Facebook
- Twitter
- Instagram
- YouTube
- Flickr
- SlideShare
- Nextdoor
- Surveys
- Media
- 703-FAIRFAX Phone and Email Customer Service
- Mobile Apps
- Ask Fairfax! Online Discussions
- Podcasts
- SoundCloud
- Fairfax County Government Radio
- Email Newsletters
- Printed Materials

In FY 2016, OPA launched a new countywide news website, Fairfax County Government NewsCenter, which serves as the central focal point for publishing news for residents. OPA's vision for NewsCenter is simple: to selectively package, promote and publish relevant, timely and actionable audience-focused information for our community. Most of the content focuses on the needs of residents and what is practical in their daily lives. NewsCenter yielded more than 800,000 page views in its first full year (August 2015 to August 2016), compared with 1.5 million page views over four years for a previous news presence. NewsCenter was recognized with several awards, serving as a testament to its effectiveness. Among the awards, NewsCenter earned a Governor's Technology Award and a National Association of Counties Achievement Award.

OPA continues its social media oversight role, approving new accounts, analyzing metrics from all County accounts, setting standards and working in partnership with more than 50 social media publishers across the County. This role is critical as social media tools constantly evolve and change. For example, Facebook Live and Periscope are two new live video streaming options OPA began to use in FY 2016. OPA is also taking the lead to ensure social media content meets Virginia Freedom of Information (VFOIA) requirements. With the addition of 3/3.0 FTE positions which were approved by the Board of Supervisors as part of the *FY 2016 Carryover Review*, including a Countywide FOIA Officer that is mandated by a new state law to coordinate the County's FOIA program, OPA will assume responsibility for ensuring Fairfax County's compliance with VFOIA requirements.

## Office of Public Affairs

OPA also works to ensure important information from across all County agencies is shared on a variety of platforms (web, mobile, customer and social) through many different tools daily. By engaging the public every day in answering questions and providing information, OPA enables Fairfax County residents to better understand how their government works and the services it provides. For example, Facebook surveys show that more than 85 percent of respondents agree that OPA's use of social media helps them understand their government better. During the January 2016 blizzard, that satisfaction number reached 95 percent.

Both the media and the public's use of social media to access information about Fairfax County continues to increase significantly. Consequently, OPA will continue to measure the effectiveness of the various tools in order to make the best use of resources.

### **Employee Communications**

OPA is focused on providing timely information to employees on important matters such as the budget, benefits, training, career management and communications from the County Executive. Beyond these traditional workplace communication topics, OPA also works to cultivate a sense of community and engagement among the members of Team Fairfax by highlighting individual accomplishments, personal initiatives and undertakings, and other human interest stories.

OPA continues to support the information and collaboration needs of the County workforce, primarily through the use of FairfaxNet. In addition to designing collaborative workspaces for high-profile projects such as the Fairfax First initiative and Health and Human Services, which put hundreds of employees literally on the same page, OPA provides extensive consultative support that allows agencies to maximize their tools and more effectively reach their employees.

One of the ways communicators in the workforce are maximizing their tools is through blogs. OPA has seen a significant uptick in the use of blogs countywide and has facilitated the creation of several new ones by various agencies. Blogs provide immediacy, flexibility and the opportunity for employees to dialogue on a variety of subjects. The Department of Administration for Human Services and the Health Department, both of which include many employees in locations throughout the County, are among those that have replaced their print newsletter with a blog and more are planning to do so in the coming months.

Over the past year, OPA continued to support the information needs of an engaged, motivated and productive workforce. In addition to creating and managing countywide FairfaxNet content and providing consultation to agencies, OPA partnered with DIT to reinstitute the employee classifieds Marketplace. After the first iteration of employee classifieds was eliminated due to resource issues several years ago, employees regularly requested the return of such a tool. Working with DIT, OPA identified a tool that could provide the same service with much less intensive management requirements. Hundreds of employees have utilized the FairfaxNet Marketplace since its launch in early 2016.

Considerable effort continues to be devoted to the print and digital versions of Team Fairfax Insider (TFI), the County's biweekly employee newsletter. TFI has become a valued source of information for employees, complementing online tools such as NewsLink and FairfaxNet, and addressing the "digital divide" for employees who do not have access to a computer as part of their regular duties. A portion of the content generated for TFI is also repurposed for public dissemination through NewsCenter, maximizing its value.

## Office of Public Affairs

Each workday, OPA distributes the NewsLink electronic newsletter, highlighting important announcements, classes, events and resources, upcoming retirements and leave donation requests. In addition, it incorporates NewsWire headlines, giving employees an overview of what the County is communicating to the public. NewsLink also features an exhaustive compendium of links to Fairfax County media coverage. This valuable resource, in concert with NewsWire, gives employees a comprehensive picture of how Fairfax County is being discussed in the community.

OPA continues to maintain a countywide calendar of key dates and events for employees and implements and coordinates additional products and tools for internal communications reflecting the attributes of a high-performance 21<sup>st</sup> century workforce.

### **Emergency Communications**

As required by the Fairfax County Emergency Operations Plan, OPA coordinates and disseminates all emergency information related to major incidents affecting more than two County agencies. As such, OPA continues to recognize emergency communications as one of its major lines of business and the need for increased emphasis on emergency communications and dissemination of emergency information to the public, Board of Supervisors, County employees, and other partner agencies and stakeholders, including the media.

During activations of the Emergency Operations Center (EOC), OPA staff are key players in the incident command organizational structure, serving as the EOC Command and General Staff Public Information Officer (PIO), while the Director of OPA serves in the Senior Policy Group of key County leadership. Additional OPA staff serve in the Joint Information Center (JIC) as assistant PIOs, creating and disseminating all emergency-related content during an EOC activation. OPA activates the County's JIC, which serves as the central clearinghouse for emergency information, whenever the EOC is activated.

The emergency information blog ([www.fairfaxcounty.gov/emergency/blog](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/emergency/blog)) and continued use of social media tools confirm the changing world that government communicators must recognize and adapt to in order to distribute emergency news and information to various audiences and stakeholders. To that end, OPA uses multiple communication tools and channels. These tools include the blog and County website; Facebook and Twitter (both County and agency-specific accounts), especially the new Facebook Live and Periscope features; YouTube; Flickr; SoundCloud; emails, text and pager messages from Fairfax Alerts and the Emergency Alert Network (EAN) for employees; Fairfax County Government Radio online; the emergency information hotline as well as internal hotline numbers for County employees; RSS news feeds; video (in addition to YouTube, OPA utilizes video online and on Channel 16); media interviews; the County app; regional websites (such as [www.ReadyNOVA.org](http://www.ReadyNOVA.org)); conference calls; and Ask Fairfax online chats before, during and after emergencies to communicate with target audiences.

Emergency blog views have remained relatively steady the past two years and are greatly influenced by weather events and other emergencies. Views were up substantially in January and February 2016 due to severe weather and snowstorms those two months. Worth noting about blog views is that in addition to the actual number of views of the blog, each time an article/update is published, nearly 5,000 subscribers (email and WordPress notification) receive the complete article and therefore do not need to visit the blog for the information. While a valuable service for residents, this distribution does decrease the number of views/visitors to the blog since all the information from that post is in the recipient's email inbox.

In addition, the Emergency Information Officer – and other OPA staff as necessary – continue to be involved in all County tabletop and functional exercises and exercise planning to ensure smooth operations during any actual emergencies.

# Office of Public Affairs

## Budget and Staff Resources

Category	FY 2016 Actual	FY 2017 Adopted	FY 2017 Revised	FY 2018 Advertised	FY 2018 Adopted
<b>FUNDING</b>					
Expenditures:					
Personnel Services	\$1,343,240	\$1,400,287	\$1,554,981	\$1,680,574	\$1,680,574
Operating Expenses	133,505	111,501	243,008	122,501	122,501
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>\$1,476,745</b>	<b>\$1,511,788</b>	<b>\$1,797,989</b>	<b>\$1,803,075</b>	<b>\$1,803,075</b>
Less:					
Recovered Costs	(\$266,524)	(\$239,882)	(\$239,882)	(\$239,882)	(\$239,882)
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>\$1,210,221</b>	<b>\$1,271,906</b>	<b>\$1,558,107</b>	<b>\$1,563,193</b>	<b>\$1,563,193</b>
<b>AUTHORIZED POSITIONS/FULL-TIME EQUIVALENT (FTE)</b>					
Regular	17 / 17	17 / 17	20 / 20	20 / 20	20 / 20
1 Director	2 Information Officers IV	2 Information Officers I			
1 Assistant Director	1 Public Safety Information Officer IV	1 Administrative Assistant V			
2 Management Analysts IV	4 Information Officers III	2 Administrative Assistants IV			
1 Management Analyst II	2 Information Officers II	1 Administrative Assistant III			
<b>TOTAL POSITIONS</b>					
20 Positions / 20.0 FTE					

## FY 2018 Funding Adjustments

The following funding adjustments from the FY 2017 Adopted Budget Plan are necessary to support the FY 2018 program. Included are all adjustments recommended by the County Executive that were approved by the Board of Supervisors, as well as any additional Board of Supervisors' actions, as approved in the adoption of the budget on May 2, 2017.

- ◆ **Employee Compensation** **\$24,687**  
 An increase of \$24,687 in Personnel Services is for performance-based and longevity increases for non-uniformed merit employees effective July 2017.
- ◆ **Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Related Staffing** **\$270,600**  
 An increase of \$255,600 in Personnel Services and \$15,000 in Operating Expenses is included to support full-year funding for 3/3.0 FTE positions associated with Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requirements, as discussed below. It should be noted that an increase of \$119,007 in Fringe Benefits funding is included in Agency 89, Employee Benefits, for a total cost of \$389,607 in FY 2018. For further information on Fringe Benefits, please refer to the Agency 89, Employee Benefits, narrative in the Nondepartmental program area section in Volume 1.

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◆ **Reductions** **(\$4,000)**

A decrease of \$4,000 reflects reductions utilized to balance the FY 2018 budget. The following table provides details on the specific reductions:

Title	Impact	Posn	FTE	Reduction
Reduce Translation Services	A decrease of \$2,000 will require the agency to reduce translation services. This reduction would have a manageable impact as an agency employee at the main information desk is fluent in Spanish which has reduced the agency's utilization of translation services.	0	0.0	\$2,000
Eliminate Outside Training and Professional Contracts	A decrease of \$2,000 will require the agency to eliminate outside training and professional contracts. As a result, the agency would be required to rely solely on the countywide training program for staff development and would not have the flexibility to hire an outside photographer.	0	0.0	\$2,000

### Changes to FY 2017 Adopted Budget Plan

*The following funding adjustments reflect all approved changes in the FY 2017 Revised Budget Plan since passage of the FY 2017 Adopted Budget Plan. Included are all adjustments made as part of the FY 2016 Carryover Review, FY 2017 Third Quarter Review, and all other approved changes through April 30, 2017.*

◆ **Carryover Adjustments** **\$294,054**

As part of the FY 2016 Carryover Review, the Board of Supervisors approved encumbered funding of \$18,654 in Operating Expenses for inspection and repair of radio sites throughout the County. In addition, the Board approved one-time funding of \$105,000 to cover costs associated with the preparation and distribution of an informational pamphlet regarding the Meals Tax Referendum that appeared on the November 2016 ballot. Finally, the Board approved funding of \$170,400 and 3/3.0 FTE positions associated with recently passed state legislative changes that place the burden on the County to provide a more comprehensive, centralized Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) program, including the designation of one or more FOIA Officers, whose responsibility it will be to act as a point of contact for members of the public requesting public records and to coordinate the County's compliance with the provisions of the Act. The FOIA Officer position is being placed in the Office of Public Affairs and will oversee policy, procedures, operations and training. This individual will be supported by a management analyst who will design, develop and run reports from the system, analyze data, formulate recommendations and assist the FOIA officer as required, and an administrative position who will provide required administrative assistance for the program. Additional positions supporting the County's enhanced FOIA program are included in the Office of the County Attorney (2/2.0 FTE) and the Department of Information Technology (1/1.0 FTE).

◆ **Incentive Reinvestment Initiative** **(\$7,853)**

A net decrease of \$7,853 reflects 50 percent of the savings generated as the result of careful management of agency expenditures during the fiscal year and was returned to the General Fund as part of the FY 2017 Third Quarter Review. The remaining 50 percent was retained by the agency to be reinvested in employee training, conferences and other employee development and succession planning opportunities.

# Office of Public Affairs

## Key Performance Measures

Indicator	Prior Year Actuals			Current Estimate	Future Estimate
	FY 2014 Actual	FY 2015 Actual	FY 2016 Estimate/Actual	FY 2017	FY 2018
<b>Office of Public Affairs:</b>					
Percent change in Facebook reach (main account)	31.4%	107.2%	11.6%/74.5%	2.3%	12.5%

A complete list of performance measures can be viewed at [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dmb/fy2018/adopted/pm/13.pdf](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dmb/fy2018/adopted/pm/13.pdf)

## Performance Measurement Results

OPA’s platforms to deliver information continue to undergo dramatic changes to meet the public’s changing expectations and to successfully leverage technology to address constrained resources. Of particular note is the tremendous growth in the use of social media. From NewsCenter, a countywide news and engagement website, to social media tools such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Flickr and SlideShare, OPA strives to provide a variety of means for the public and the media to receive County-related information and engage with their local government.

The County’s main Facebook account is currently used as a performance measurement indicator to track the growth in use of that social media tool for customers – the public and the media – to obtain important information about Fairfax County. Growth in the use of this tool has been astounding. Although projected to increase by 11.6 percent in FY 2016, the reach of the County’s main Facebook account greatly exceeded that by growing 74.5 percent.

The percentage of respondents satisfied with the County’s main Facebook information increased from 85 percent in FY 2015 to 97 percent in FY 2016. OPA is expanding the use of Facebook through Facebook Live to stream live events. In addition to collaborating with agencies to identify the appropriate mix of tools to communicate information, OPA will continue to seek ways to identify and meet the public’s expectations with regard to this and other social media tools.