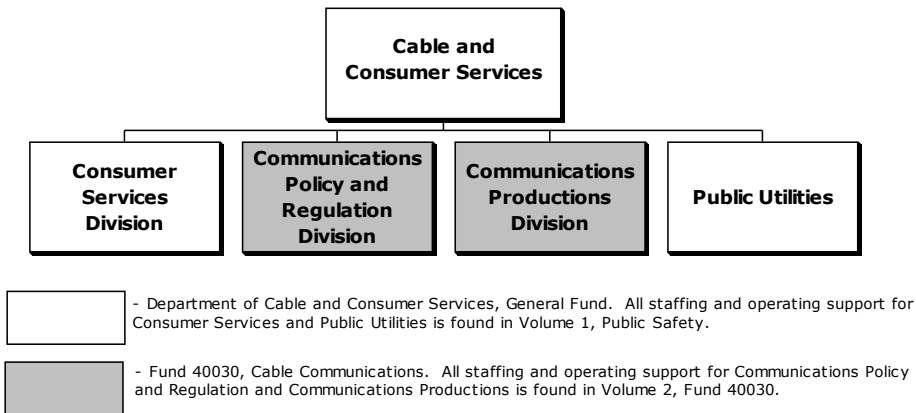


# Department of Cable and Consumer Services



## Mission

To mediate consumer and tenant-landlord issues, provide consumer educational information, regulate taxi and towing industries, and issue licenses for certain business activities. To support County and community meetings and events at the Fairfax County Government Center. To protect and maintain the fiscal integrity and financial solvency of the department. To participate in utility rate cases on behalf of County consumers.

## Focus

The Department of Cable and Consumer Services is the umbrella agency for four distinct functions: Communications Policy and Regulation, Communications Productions, Consumer Services, and Public Utilities. The total agency staff is distributed over two funding sources, the Cable Communications Fund and the General Fund. Communications Policy and Regulation and Communications Productions are presented in Fund 40030 (Volume 2). Fund 40030 is supported principally by revenue received from local cable operators through franchise agreements. Consumer Services and Public Utilities are presented within the General Fund (Volume 1). The diverse functions of the Department of Cable and Consumer Services provide quality customer service to the community and work collaboratively with County agencies, neighboring jurisdictions, and professional organizations.

Consumer Services includes Consumer Affairs, Regulation and Licensing, Meeting Space Management and Event Support, and Administrative Services.

Consumer Affairs investigates and mediates consumer complaints, tenant-landlord disputes, and cable television issues. Staff works with businesses and consumers to resolve complaints to the satisfaction of both parties. In addition to mediation, staff develops conciliation agreements to resolve complex disputes, offers binding arbitration when mediation efforts are exhausted, and provides an advice line for consumers to speak directly to staff about consumer issues. Consumer Affairs provides education to the community by conducting presentations and distributing educational information on a variety of consumer topics. Educational meetings are conducted with the public to provide information about current consumer trends and ways to avoid consumer scams, frauds, and other problems. Consumer Affairs publishes the quarterly *Informed Consumer* e-Newsletter and posts weekly tips on Facebook; provides staff support to the Consumer Protection Commission and the Tenant-Landlord Commission; educates and supports over 2,000 homeowner, condominium, and civic associations; publishes an annual *Community Association Supplement Guide* with information on current common interest community laws and services; and hosts the *Your Community You're Connected* television program shown on Fairfax County Government Channel 16 and the *Consumer Connection* program shown on Facebook.

## Department of Cable and Consumer Services

Regulation and Licensing is responsible for issuing licenses, permits, certificates, or registrations to taxicab operators, taxicab drivers, canvassers, peddlers, solicitors, vendors, promoters, massage establishments and therapists, pawn brokers, precious metal and gem dealers, going out-of-business sales, solicitors representing charitable organizations, and trespass tow operators. Regulation and Licensing also conducts taxicab inspections to ensure vehicle safety and accuracy of taximeters. In coordination with Public Utilities, Regulation and Licensing reviews new taxicab certificate applications and recommends to the Consumer Protection Commission and Board of Supervisors the appropriate number of taxicabs required to service transportation needs in the County. Regulation and Licensing investigates taxicab and trespass towing complaints, and with Public Utilities, develops rate recommendations for taxicab and trespass towing within the County. Regulation and Licensing provides staff support to the Trespass Towing Advisory Board which makes recommendations to the Board of Supervisors on towing industry regulations and rates.

Meeting Space Management and Event Support provides reservation and scheduling services and meeting support for spaces throughout the Government Center Campus, supporting the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors; Fairfax County boards, authorities, and commissions; County agencies and non-profit organizations. Staff processes all reservation requests, stages furnishings and equipment, and configures meeting rooms for an average of 30 meetings and events each day. Technical support for presentations, conference calls, audio-visual playback, public address systems, and assistive listening for individuals with hearing impairments is also provided during meetings and events. Engineering staff oversees the J. Hamilton Lambert Conference Center audio-visual systems and staff identifies requirements; recommends solutions; and installs, tests, and maintains audio-visual equipment. Meeting Space Management and Event Support also provides after-hours support for weekday evening and Saturday events.

### The Department of Cable and Consumer Services supports the following County Vision Elements:



***Maintaining Safe and Caring Communities***



***Connecting People and Places***



***Exercising Corporate Stewardship***



***Maintaining Healthy Economies***

Administrative Services develops and oversees the agency-wide budgets and is responsible for fiscal administration of both the agency General Fund and the Cable Communications Special Revenue Fund. Administrative Services directs all purchasing and contract activities, overseeing the department procurement card program, office supply program, and accountable equipment inventory. Administrative Services includes the role of department Human Resources Manager, with responsibilities in the areas of human resource management, training and development, compensation, and employee relations. Administrative Services coordinates the training and development activities for the department. Administrative Services manages the agency computer replacement programs and assists with information technology requests and acquisitions. Administrative Services leads the strategic planning efforts for the agency, including the development and coordination of agency performance management, the strategy map, and the balanced scorecard.

# Department of Cable and Consumer Services

Public Utilities protects and advances the interests of both County residents and County government in matters involving regulated utilities, particularly in the areas of energy and transportation. Public Utilities monitors and intervenes in regulatory proceedings before the State Corporation Commission involving energy utilities serving Fairfax County and works directly with these utilities to encourage the development of policies and practices that benefit and safeguard consumer interests. Public Utilities meets with utilities, taxicab companies, and drivers to resolve service issues; provides staff support for the County's Energy Efficiency and Conservation Coordinating Committee; and serves in a leadership capacity in the Virginia Energy Purchasing Governmental Association (VEPGA). Public Utilities conducts negotiations for electric service with both Dominion Energy Virginia and Northern Virginia Electric Cooperative, which has resulted in favorable contract terms at the lowest cost for all County government agencies. Public Utilities develops and presents expert testimony before federal, state, and local governmental bodies on behalf of the Board of Supervisors and the public. In addition, Public Utilities serves as project manager of the County's residential and business energy education and outreach efforts.

## Budget and Staff Resources

Category	FY 2018 Actual	FY 2019 Adopted	FY 2019 Revised	FY 2020 Advertised
<b>FUNDING</b>				
<b>Expenditures:</b>				
Personnel Services	\$665,055	\$685,691	\$685,691	\$578,428
Operating Expenses	144,229	174,747	174,903	174,747
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>\$809,284</b>	<b>\$860,438</b>	<b>\$860,594</b>	<b>\$753,175</b>
<b>Income:</b>				
Massage Therapy Permits	\$54,975	\$54,100	\$54,100	\$55,182
Precious Metal Dealers Licenses	9,000	11,850	9,400	9,400
Solicitors Licenses	9,920	11,550	9,920	9,920
Taxicab Licenses	94,945	129,960	94,945	94,945
Towing Permits	1,200	1,500	1,500	1,500
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$170,040</b>	<b>\$208,960</b>	<b>\$169,865</b>	<b>\$170,947</b>
<b>NET COST TO THE COUNTY</b>	<b>\$639,244</b>	<b>\$651,478</b>	<b>\$690,729</b>	<b>\$582,228</b>

### AUTHORIZED POSITIONS/FULL-TIME EQUIVALENT (FTE)

Public Safety Regular	10 / 10	10 / 10	10 / 10	9 / 9
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<u>Consumer Services Division</u>	<u>Regulation and Licensing</u>	<u>Administrative Services</u>
1 <b>Director, Consumer Services Division</b>	1 Consumer Specialist III	1 <b>Financial Specialist III</b>
1 <b>Administrative Assistant IV</b>	1 Consumer Specialist II	1 <b>Financial Specialist II</b>
	2 <b>Administrative Assistants III</b>	
<u>Consumer Affairs</u>	<u>Public Utilities</u>	<u>Conference Center</u>
1 Consumer Specialist III	0 Senior Utilities Analysts (-1T)	1 <b>Administrative Associate</b>
2 Consumer Specialists II	2 <b>Utilities Analysts</b>	1 <b>Video Engineer</b>
2 Consumer Specialists I		1 <b>Administrative Assistant III</b>
1 Administrative Assistant IV		1 <b>Administrative Assistant II</b>
1 Administrative Assistant II		
1 <b>Consumer Specialist II</b>		
1 <b>Consumer Specialist I</b>		
2 <b>Administrative Assistants II</b>		

#### TOTAL POSITIONS

9 Positions (-1T) / 9.0 FTE (-1.0T)

T Denotes Transferred Positions

\* Positions in bold are supported by Fund 40030, Cable Communications

# Department of Cable and Consumer Services

## FY 2020 Funding Adjustments

The following funding adjustments from the FY 2019 Adopted Budget Plan are necessary to support the FY 2020 program.

- ◆ **Employee Compensation** **\$19,242**  
 An increase of \$19,242 in Personnel Services includes \$6,857 for a 1.0 percent market rate adjustment (MRA) for all employees and \$12,385 for performance-based and longevity increases for non-uniformed merit employees, both effective July 2019.
- ◆ **Office of Environmental Energy and Coordination** **(\$126,505)**  
 A decrease of \$126,505 in Personnel Services and 1/1.0 FTE position is associated with the creation of the new Office of Environmental Energy and Coordination. The office will support environmental policy and legislative issues, organization-wide energy use and community engagement, and education about environmental and sustainability issues.

## Changes to FY 2019 Adopted Budget Plan

The following funding adjustments reflect all approved changes in the FY 2019 Revised Budget Plan since passage of the FY 2019 Adopted Budget Plan. Included are all adjustments made as part of the FY 2018 Carryover Review, and all other approved changes through December 31, 2018.

- ◆ **Carryover Adjustments** **\$156**  
 As part of the FY 2018 Carryover Review, the Board of Supervisors approved funding of \$156 for encumbered carryover in Operating Expenses associated with translation services and delayed delivery of supplies.

## Key Performance Measures

Indicator	Prior Year Actuals			Current Estimate	Future Estimate
	FY 2016 Actual	FY 2017 Actual	FY 2018 Estimate/Actual	FY 2019	FY 2020
<b>Consumer Services</b>					
Percent of case inquiries closed	99%	98%	98%/99%	98%	98%
Percent of consumer educational seminars meeting objectives	100%	100%	100%/100%	100%	100%
Percent of permanent licenses issued within 60 calendar days of application	100%	100%	98%/100%	98%	98%
Cumulative County savings due to utility case intervention (in millions)	\$117	\$117	\$122/\$122	\$122	\$122
Percent of reservation requests scheduled	99%	100%	96%/100%	98%	100%

A complete list of performance measures can be viewed at  
<https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/budget/fy-2020-advertised-performance-measures-pm>

# Department of Cable and Consumer Services

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## Performance Measurement Results

The Accounting and Finance Branch processed 1,897 fiscal documents with 98.5 percent accuracy in FY 2018 which exceeded the performance target. The FY 2020 estimate for documents processed within three days has been adjusted to reflect the branch becoming fully staffed during FY 2019.

The Consumer Affairs Branch responded to 7,991 case inquiries in FY 2018, a decrease of six percent from FY 2017. However, Consumer Affairs conducted 265 consumer educational seminars, an increase of 20 percent from FY 2017. These outreach events provide information about current consumer trends and ways to avoid consumer scams, frauds, and other problems, which in turn, can reduce the number of consumer inquiries filed with Consumer Affairs. Staff responded to all case inquiries within 48 hours, closing 99 percent and recovering \$545,844 for consumers, an increase of 11 percent from FY 2017. The Consumer Affairs Branch uses mediation and arbitration to recover financial funds requested by consumers on their complaints.

The Regulation and Licensing Branch issued 1,923 permanent licenses in FY 2018, a decrease of six percent from FY 2017. Some fluctuation occurs among the various types of licenses issued year to year. However, staff projects an overall decrease in the number of licenses to be issued in FY 2020.

The Public Utilities Branch has saved Fairfax County ratepayers (residents and businesses) a cumulative total of over \$122 million on the basis of recurring utility cost savings achieved over the past 23 years.