

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.

Focus The Department of Cable and Consumer Services is the umbrella agency for three distinct functions: Consumer Services, Communications Policy and Regulation, and Communications Productions. 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). Consumer Services is 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.

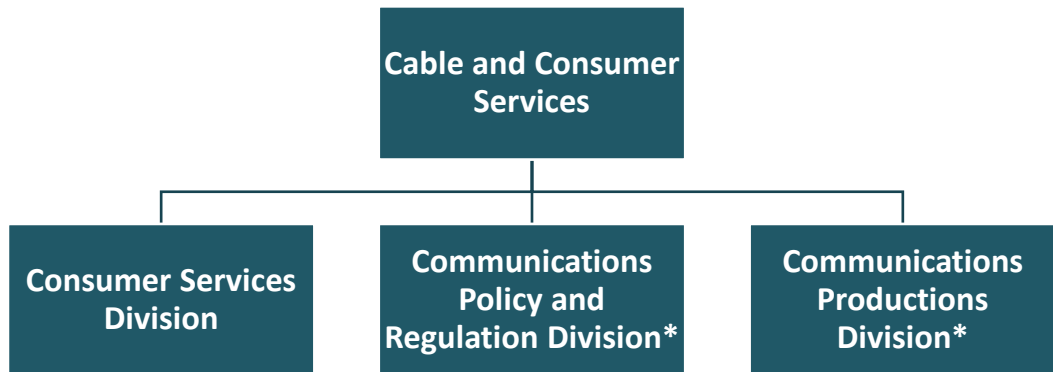
Regulation and Licensing is responsible for issuing licenses, permits, certificates, or registrations to taxicab operators, taxicab drivers, canvassers, peddlers, solicitors, vendors, promoters, massage establishments and therapists, pawn brokers, precious metal and gem dealers, going out-of-business sales, solicitors representing charitable organizations, trespass tow operators, and shared mobility devices for hire operators. Regulation and Licensing also conducts taxicab inspections to ensure vehicle safety and accuracy of taximeters. 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 complaints and develops rate recommendations for taxicab services and certain rate recommendations for 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.

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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 reservation requests, stages furnishings and equipment, and configures meeting rooms for an average of 39 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.

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, 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.

Organizational Chart



* All staffing and operating support for the Communications Policy and Regulation Division, as well as the Communications Productions Division, is found in Fund 40030, Cable Communications, in Volume 2.

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Budget and Staff Resources

Category	FY 2021 Actual	FY 2022 Adopted	FY 2022 Revised	FY 2023 Advertised	FY 2023 Adopted
FUNDING					
Expenditures:					
Personnel Services	\$612,773	\$591,833	\$598,833	\$683,306	\$683,306
Operating Expenses	154,688	174,747	174,804	175,711	175,711
Total Expenditures	\$767,461	\$766,580	\$773,637	\$859,017	\$859,017
Income:					
Massage Therapy Permits	\$43,075	\$55,182	\$55,182	\$55,182	\$55,182
Precious Metal Dealers Licenses	7,550	8,625	8,625	8,625	8,625
Solicitors Licenses	6,555	8,961	8,961	8,961	8,961
Taxicab Licenses	8,765	76,600	76,600	76,600	76,600
Towing Permits	1,050	1,500	1,500	1,500	1,500
Total Income	\$66,995	\$150,868	\$150,868	\$150,868	\$150,868
NET COST TO THE COUNTY	\$700,466	\$615,712	\$622,769	\$708,149	\$708,149
AUTHORIZED POSITIONS/FULL-TIME EQUIVALENT (FTE)					
Regular	9 / 9	9 / 9	8 / 8	8 / 8	8 / 8

FY 2023 Funding Adjustments

The following funding adjustments from the FY 2022 Adopted Budget Plan are necessary to support the FY 2023 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 10, 2022.

Employee Compensation \$91,473

An increase of \$91,473 in Personnel Services includes \$23,732 for a 4.01 percent market rate adjustment (MRA) for all employees and \$12,952 for performance-based and longevity increases for non-uniformed merit employees, both effective July 2022. The remaining \$54,789 is due to adjustments based on historical trends in personnel expenditures.

Department of Vehicle Services Charges \$964

An increase of \$964 in Department of Vehicle Services Charges is based on anticipated billings for maintenance and operating-related charges.

Changes to FY 2022 Adopted Budget Plan

The following funding adjustments reflect all approved changes in the FY 2022 Revised Budget Plan since passage of the FY 2022 Adopted Budget Plan. Included are all adjustments made as part of the FY 2021 Carryover Review, FY 2022 Mid-Year Review, FY 2022 Third Quarter Review, and all other approved changes through April 30, 2022.

Carryover Adjustments \$7,057

As part of the FY 2021 Carryover Review, the Board of Supervisors approved funding of \$7,057 including \$7,000 in Personnel Services for a one-time compensation adjustment of \$1,000 for merit employees and \$500 for non-merit employees paid in November 2021, and \$57 in encumbered funding in Operating Expenses primarily associated with translation services.

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Position Reduction

\$0

A review of positions for potential reduction was conducted as part of the *FY 2021 Carryover Review*, and 1/1.0 FTE position was eliminated in Agency 04, Department of Cable and Consumer Services, as a result of this review. Based on current budget constraints, this position was unfunded and could be eliminated without adversely impacting agency operations.

Position Detail

The FY 2023 Adopted Budget Plan includes the following positions:

DEPARTMENT OF CABLE AND CONSUMER SERVICES - 8 Positions			
Consumer Services Division			
1	Director, Consumer Services Division*		
Consumer Affairs			
1	Consumer Specialist III	1	Administrative Assistant II
2	Consumer Specialists II	1	Consumer Specialist II*
2	Consumer Specialists I	1	Consumer Specialist I*
1	Administrative Assistant IV	2	Administrative Assistants II*
Regulation and Licensing			
1	Consumer Specialist III	2	Administrative Assistants III*
Administrative Services			
1	Financial Specialist III*	1	Financial Specialist II*
Conference Center			
1	Administrative Associate*	1	Administrative Assistant III*
1	Video Engineer*	1	Administrative Assistant II*
*	Positions are supported by Fund 40030, Cable Communications		

Performance Measurement Results

Consumer Affairs responded to 5,499 case inquiries in FY 2021, which was a decrease of 35 percent from FY 2020, due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Consumer Affairs conducted 109 consumer educational seminars in FY 2021. The COVID-19 pandemic impacted the ability for in-person events to take place. However, staff was able to participate in some virtual outreach events. Additionally, staff worked with Fairfax County Public Schools to develop a virtual curriculum for a high school consumer program which launched in 2021 and continues to be available. 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 98 percent, and recovering \$404,649 for consumers in FY 2021.

Regulation and Licensing issued 1,295 permanent licenses in FY 2021, a decrease of two percent from FY 2020. Some fluctuation occurs among the various types of licenses issued year to year, with most of the change occurring within the taxicab industry.

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Meeting Space Management and Event Support processed 12,548 reservations in FY 2021, an increase of 41 percent from FY 2020, due to the Health Department vaccination clinic being activated at the Government Center in January 2021. Due to the reduction and cancellation of most regularly scheduled reservations, the department did not conduct the FY 2021 Customer Satisfaction Survey.

Accounting and Finance processed 1,336 fiscal documents with 99 percent accuracy in FY 2021. The decrease in documents processed was due mostly to the reduction of non-emergency spending in FY 2021.

Indicator	FY 2019 Actual	FY 2020 Actual	FY 2021 Estimate	FY 2021 Actual	FY 2022 Estimate	FY 2023 Estimate
Consumer Services						
Percent of case inquiries closed	98%	98%	98%	98%	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%	100%	100%
Percent of reservation requests scheduled	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

A complete list of performance measures can be viewed at
<https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/budget/fy-2023-adopted-performance-measures-pm>