

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.

Connection to the Countywide Strategic Plan

The Fairfax County Board of Supervisors adopted the first-ever Countywide Strategic Plan on October 5, 2021. The Countywide Strategic Plan serves as a road map to help guide future work, focusing on the 10 Community Outcome Areas that represent the issues of greatest importance to the community, and uses our One Fairfax equity policy to invest in people and places that have limited access to opportunity. On February 20, 2024, the second Annual Report on the work of the strategic plan was released to the public. The report contains point-in-time progress highlights for each of the community outcome areas, plus three data dashboards and data stories that are being replicated across all of the outcome areas, and a number of additional initiatives to embed the elements of the plan within department-level work. The report also includes a Year Three Implementation Model, which will engage hundreds of County subject-matter experts to identify and champion the specific strategies that will move forward to implementation under the guidance of the Board of Supervisors. For more information on the Countywide Strategic Plan, please visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/strategicplan. The Department of Cable and Consumer Services primarily supports the following Community Outcome Areas:



Community Outcome Area	Vision Statement
Effective and Efficient Government	<i>All people trust that their government responsibly manages resources, is responsive to their needs, provides exceptional services and equitably represents them.</i>
Safety and Security	<i>All people feel safe at home, school, work and in the community.</i>

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, Fund 40030, Cable Communications and Agency 04, Department of Cable and Consumer Services in the General Fund. Communications Policy and Regulation and Communications Productions are presented in Fund 40030 (Volume 2) while 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.

Department of Cable and Consumer Services

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 consumers and businesses to resolve complaints to the satisfaction of both parties. In addition to mediation, staff provides an advice line for consumers to speak directly to staff about consumer issues, develops conciliation agreements to resolve complex disputes, and offers binding arbitration when mediation efforts are exhausted. Consumer Affairs provides education to the community by conducting presentations and distributing educational information on a variety of consumer topics, including a *Consumer Affairs* brochure available in English, Spanish, Arabic, Korean, Vietnamese, and Chinese. Educational outreach events 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 tips and resources on Facebook, hosts the *Consumer Connection* program shown on Facebook, and provides staff support to the Consumer Protection Commission and the Tenant-Landlord Commission. In addition, Consumer Affairs publishes an annual *Community Association Supplement Guide* with information on common interest community laws and services, serving as a resource to over 2,400 Fairfax County homeowner, condominium, and civic associations.

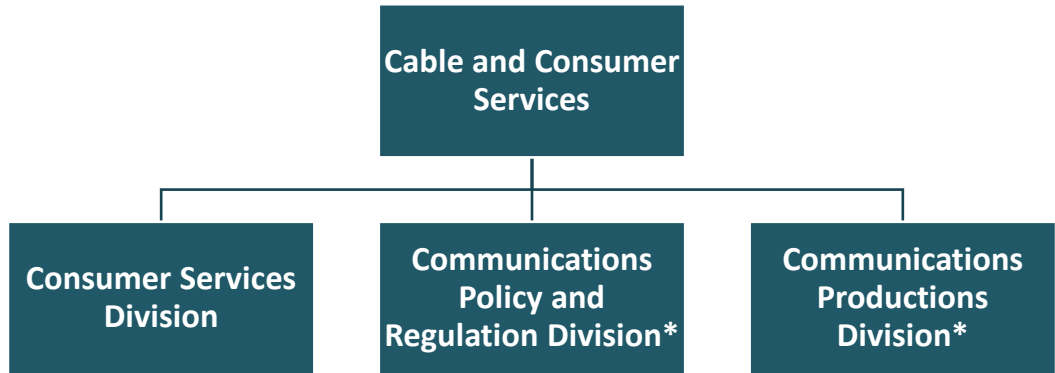
Regulation and Licensing is responsible for issuing licenses, permits, certificates, or registrations to taxicab operators, taxicab drivers, canvassers, peddlers, solicitors, vendors, promoters, massage establishments and therapists, pawnbrokers, precious metal and gem dealers, going out-of-business 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 on licensed businesses 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.

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 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. Staff oversees the J. Hamilton Lambert Conference Center audio-visual systems and 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 Fund; directs all purchasing and contract activities, overseeing the department procurement card program, office supply program, and accountable equipment inventory; manages agency human resources and employee relations; and coordinates the training and development activities for the department. Administrative Services also manages the agency's computer inventory and assists with information technology requests and acquisitions and leads the strategic planning efforts for the agency, including the development and coordination of agency performance management.

Department of Cable and Consumer Services

Organizational Chart



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

Budget and Staff Resources

Category	FY 2023 Actual	FY 2024 Adopted	FY 2024 Revised	FY 2025 Advertised
FUNDING				
Expenditures:				
Personnel Services	\$585,527	\$729,851	\$729,851	\$689,374
Operating Expenses	142,207	176,905	177,103	178,276
Total Expenditures	\$727,734	\$906,756	\$906,954	\$867,650
Income:				
Massage Therapy Permits	\$43,950	\$44,615	\$44,615	\$44,615
Precious Metal Dealers Licenses	8,820	8,625	8,625	8,840
Solicitors Licenses	6,700	8,961	6,700	6,700
Taxicab Licenses	6,420	32,835	6,420	6,420
Towing Permits	2,400	1,050	1,050	1,050
Total Income	\$68,290	\$96,086	\$67,410	\$67,625
NET COST TO THE COUNTY	\$659,444	\$810,670	\$839,544	\$800,025
AUTHORIZED POSITIONS/FULL-TIME EQUIVALENT (FTE)				
Regular	8 / 8	7 / 7	7 / 7	6 / 6

FY 2025 Funding Adjustments

The following funding adjustments from the FY 2024 Adopted Budget Plan are necessary to support the FY 2025 program:

Employee Compensation \$23,023

An increase of \$23,023 in Personnel Services includes \$14,598 for a 2.00 percent market rate adjustment (MRA) for all employees and \$8,217 for performance-based and longevity increases for non-uniformed merit employees, both effective July 2024. The remaining increase of \$208 is included for employee pay increases for specific job classes identified in the County's benchmark class survey of comparator jurisdictions.

Department of Vehicle Services Charges \$1,371

An increase of \$1,371 in Department of Vehicle Services charges is based on anticipated billings for fuel, maintenance, and operating-related charges.

Department of Cable and Consumer Services

Reductions (\$63,500)

A decrease of \$63,500 and 1/1.0 FTE position reflects reductions utilized to balance the FY 2025 budget. The following table provides details on the specific reduction:

Title	Impact	Positions	FTE	Reduction
Eliminate Vacant Administrative Assistant II Position	The Department of Cable and Consumer Services has been able to streamline agency operations and realize efficiencies, thus eliminating the need for a vacant Administrative Assistant II position. Since this position is vacant and the workload has been absorbed by the remaining staff, it is not anticipated this reduction will have a negative impact on the agency.	1	1.0	\$63,500

Changes to FY 2024 Adopted Budget Plan

The following funding adjustments reflect all approved changes in the FY 2024 Revised Budget Plan since passage of the FY 2024 Adopted Budget Plan. Included are all adjustments made as part of the FY 2023 Carryover Review and all other approved changes through December 31, 2023.

Carryover Adjustments \$198

As part of the FY 2023 Carryover Review, the Board of Supervisors approved funding of \$198 in encumbered carryover in Operating Expenses.

Position Detail

The FY 2025 Advertised Budget Plan includes the following positions:

DEPARTMENT OF CABLE AND CONSUMER SERVICES - 6 Positions			
Consumer Services Division			
1	Director, Consumer Services Division*		
Consumer Affairs			
1	Consumer Specialist III	1	Consumer Specialist II*
2	Consumer Specialists II	1	Consumer Specialist I*
2	Consumer Specialists I	2	Administrative Assistants II*
0	Administrative Assistants II [-1]		
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		
-	Denotes Abolished Position(s) due to Budget Reductions		

**Performance
Measurement
Results by
Community
Outcome Area**

Effective and Efficient Government

Consumer Affairs responded to 7,745 case inquiries in FY 2023, a 53 percent increase from FY 2022, and a return to the pre-pandemic level of service. Consumer Affairs conducted 149 consumer educational seminars in FY 2023. These outreach events provide information about current consumer trends and ways to avoid consumer scams, frauds, and other problems, which can reduce the number of consumer inquiries filed with Consumer Affairs. Staff responded to all case inquiries within 48 hours, closing 97 percent, and recovering \$454,834 for consumers in FY 2023.

Meeting Space Management and Event Support processed 7,900 reservations in FY 2023, a decrease of 19 percent from FY 2022. This was primarily due to the closing of the Health Department vaccination clinic at the Government Center on December 31, 2022. As a result of the disruption of service caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the Customer Satisfaction Survey has been discontinued. The agency is identifying an alternative measure of service quality and customer satisfaction.

Accounting and Finance processed 1,703 fiscal documents with 99 percent accuracy in FY 2023.

Safety and Security

Regulation and Licensing issued 1,214 permanent licenses in FY 2023, a decrease of 2 percent from FY 2022; 100 percent were issued within 60 calendar days of application. Some fluctuation occurs among the various types of licenses issued from year to year, with most of the change occurring within the solicitor industry.

Community Outcome Area	FY 2021 Actual	FY 2022 Actual	FY 2023 Estimate	FY 2023 Actual	FY 2024 Estimate	FY 2025 Estimate
Effective and Efficient Government						
Customer Satisfaction with County Services						
Percent of case inquiries closed	98%	94%	98%	97%	98%	97%
Percent of consumer educational seminars meeting objectives	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Effective Technology and Quality Facilities						
Percent of reservation requests scheduled	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Safety and Security						
Following Laws and Regulations						
Percent of permanent licenses issued within 60 calendar days of application	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

A complete list of performance measures can be viewed at <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/budget/fy-2025-advertised-performance-measures-pm>