

# Office of Public Affairs

## Mission

To lead coordinated communications, customer service, language access and Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests from a countywide perspective that connects County 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, transparent, and timely communications to and from employees to maintain an informed and motivated workforce.

## 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 the County's One Fairfax policy to invest in people and places that have limited access to opportunity. On February 17, 2026, the fourth 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 a number of additional initiatives to embed the elements of the plan within department-level work. The report also includes eight data dashboards and data stories that are being replicated across all of the outcome areas. In addition to helping engage residents, these dashboards will serve as a resource to leadership who can utilize the data to focus and guide the overall work of the County. For more information on the Countywide Strategic Plan, please visit [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/strategicplan](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/strategicplan). The Office of Public Affairs primarily supports the following Community Outcome Area:



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>

## Focus

The Office of Public Affairs (OPA) is the central communications office for the County and provides essential information to the public, elected and appointed officials, County employees, and the media concerning County programs and services. The Director serves as the County media spokesperson, and as a liaison with the County Executive and the Board of Supervisors. OPA also manages countywide editorial planning, social media, website content, emergency communications, compliance with the Virginia Freedom of Information Act (VFOIA), language access, and customer service.

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

OPA focuses on three main areas of communication: external, employee, and emergency. This structure facilitates the best use of OPA staffing to address the following strategic issues: enhancing access to information both internally and externally; improving crisis and emergency communications; publishing content through numerous tools and engaging the public; providing information proactively to the media; and supporting agencies that do not have their own public information staff, as well as coordinating with those agencies that do have embedded communications staff. Strategies to address these critical issues include increasing collaboration with agencies, enhancing information on the County's intranet and internet websites, and continuing to explore tools for reaching diverse audiences.

OPA remains proactive in anticipating the needs of the public and media by providing timely information. In addition to managing the content on the County's website at [www.fairfaxcounty.gov](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov), OPA oversees the use of several social media sites, including Facebook, X (formerly Twitter), YouTube, Instagram, and Nextdoor, allowing direct communication 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.

OPA is also responsible for coordinating countywide compliance with the Virginia Freedom of Information Act, promoting the County's commitment to transparency, improving the efficiency of the VFOIA response process, monitoring requests, and enhancing accountability. Strategies to address these goals include ensuring agency compliance with a countywide FOIA policy, VFOIA, and other state and federal records laws; providing quarterly training on these laws and policies to County employees; ensuring open and collaborative communication with designated agency points of contact; and administering a centralized system to track all FOIA requests.

Finally, OPA oversees the County's language access program to ensure that equitable considerations are given when developing policies, practices, and budget decisions. The program addresses language barriers residents face by providing equal access to County services, programs, benefits, and information to all residents, regardless of their English language proficiency. It also promotes cultural competency, enhances the efficiency of the County's translation process, and strengthens partnerships to meet the needs of the County's multilingual and cultural communities.

### External Communications

OPA provides leadership and counsel in communicating with 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 [www.fairfaxcounty.gov](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov) and the County app; various social media platforms; the Public Input inclusive community engagement platform; email newsletters; media relations; podcasts, internet radio, and SoundCloud; and printed materials.

Key External Communications services and highlights include:

- **NewsCenter** ([www.fairfaxcounty.gov/news](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/news)), the County's central focal point for publishing news articles, has been recognized with several awards, including a Governor's Technology Award and a National Association of Counties Achievement Award. Over 2,000 articles are posted to the County's NewsWire each year.
- **Daily and weekly emails** reach more than 16,500 subscribers, up from 15,000 at the beginning of FY 2025. The NewsCenter Daily Update provides timely and relevant news distributed every afternoon to residents, media, and other subscribers, while the Weekender newsletter, sent every Thursday, highlights events and activities happening Friday through Sunday.

- OPA continues its **social media** publishing role, leading daily information dissemination on multiple County platforms that reach the community, while also monitoring social media for questions, misinformation and proactive support. OPA also leads the entire County social media program, including oversight, approving new accounts, analyzing metrics from all County accounts, setting standards, and working in partnership with more than 80 social media publishers across the County. In FY 2025, over 32,000 posts were published across the County's social media accounts yielding 186 million impressions.
- OPA supports the **County website** ([www.fairfaxcounty.gov](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov)) in many ways, including managing key pages, setting content policy, tracking metrics, providing accessibility support, conducting usability testing, consulting with agencies, and working with the Department of Information Technology to plan the site's next phases and features. Though the majority of web content is managed by departments, most countywide content is managed by OPA. OPA is leading County efforts to meet a new U.S. Department of Justice rule for content accessibility by April 2026; this work is aligned with One Fairfax and the Digital Equity Action Plan.
- OPA has taken on a leadership role for **Inclusive Community Engagement** in partnership with One Fairfax and the Department of Neighborhood and Community Services. This work has led to process improvements, standards, coordination and ensuring a more equitable way for the County to engage the community. OPA oversees the County's online public engagement platform, Public Input. In FY 2025, County departments using Public Input published 155 projects that yielded more than 508,000 responses.
- OPA's **digital team** develops policies and governance for the website, social media, and related digital tools; provides strategic and tactical counsel; trains digital publishers; maintains a suite of metrics; and enhances capabilities during emergencies and public health crises. The team is also integrating, testing and experimenting with Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) to produce more efficiencies in the digital content space.

### Customer Service

OPA's customer service team serves County residents, often as their first point of contact, through the 703-FAIRFAX (324-7329) telephone line and voice mailbox, the 703-FAIRFAX and Public Affairs email inboxes, and the Customer Service Center located in the Government Center building. The customer service team often serves as a bridge, linking residents to the appropriate agency to assist them with their needs, and connecting them with the services and programs they need.

In FY 2025, 703-FAIRFAX received 36,207 phone calls, representing a 3.5 percent increase compared to the prior year, with the number of callers using the Spanish language prompt continuing to grow. Additionally, the Information Desk recorded 15,499 in-person walk-ups, a 29 percent increase from FY 2024, reflecting a significant and growing preference among residents for face-to-face interactions.

The customer service team also maintains a list of 2,344 Community and Homeowners Associations, which County agencies use to share information with residents. The team also publishes and maintains the Public Meetings Calendar, ensuring residents are informed about important discussions and decisions. In addition, the team oversees a Customer Relationship Management database with contact information for County, state, and local agencies, allowing staff to quickly connect the public to the right services. Finally, the team manages an equipment loan program, providing essential items for County events such as groundbreakings and ribbon-cutting ceremonies.

At the end of FY 2025, OPA expanded its customer service offerings to include notary services for residents. This new service makes it easier for residents to get official documents notarized quickly

and conveniently. By incorporating notary services into the suite of offerings at the Government Center, OPA continues to strengthen its role as a one-stop resource for residents seeking essential information and support.

### **Employee Communications**

OPA serves as the central hub for countywide internal communications, addressing the diverse needs of individual agencies and employees. Through strategic consultation and executive communications management, OPA ensures employees remain informed and engaged. OPA collaborates with internal partners such as the Department of Human Resources, the Department of Information Technology, the Facilities Management Department and others to deliver essential information about programs, services and benefits.

OPA manages the County's intranet, FairfaxNet, which averages nearly 13,000 unique visits monthly and serves as a primary resource for employee information. The daily newsletter, NewsLink, reaches over 12,000 employees each workday, while a countywide calendar provides easy access to key dates and online events.

### **Emergency Communications**

As required by the Fairfax County Emergency Operations Plan (EOP), OPA coordinates and disseminates all emergency information related to major incidents affecting more than two County agencies. 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 on 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 opens the County's JIC, which serves as the central clearinghouse for emergency information, whenever the EOC is activated above a monitoring level.

The increased use of communication tools and the changing way residents receive information means that OPA must continue to recognize and adapt to effectively distribute emergency news and information to various audiences and stakeholders. As such, OPA uses multiple communication tools and channels. These include the emergency information blog ([www.fairfaxcounty.gov/emergency/blog](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/emergency/blog)); County website; County and agency Facebook and X accounts; YouTube; Instagram; Nextdoor; SoundCloud; emails, text and pager messages from Fairfax Alerts and the Employee Alert Network (EAN); online Fairfax County Government Radio ([www.fairfaxcounty.gov/radio](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/radio)); numerous podcasts; the emergency information hotline and internal hotline numbers for County employees; video (online and on Channel 16); media interviews; and the County mobile app. Each post to the blog is automatically shared via email with over 7,740 subscribers.

### **Virginia Freedom of Information Act**

OPA provides the public and media access to Fairfax County information and public records through the countywide FOIA program. The countywide FOIA Officer serves as Fairfax County's main point of contact for FOIA requests, coordinates the County's compliance with VFOIA, and provides strategy and direction to agencies on how to efficiently respond to the growing volume and complexity of FOIA requests.

The goals of the countywide FOIA program are to 1) coordinate compliance with VFOIA; 2) promote the County's commitment to transparency; 3) improve the efficiency of the FOIA response process; and 4) enhance monitoring and accountability of FOIA requests. In order to achieve these goals, OPA conducts compliance training; works with County agencies to improve the FOIA response process; administers the countywide FOIA tracking application and generates annual reports; and provides subject matter expertise to County agencies, Boards, Authorities, and Commissions; and

Board of Supervisors' offices. In FY 2025, OPA offered 27 FOIA training and outreach events to staff and managed 1,424 of the 17,724 total FOIA requests received by the County. Additional performance metrics and data are published annually in the FOIA Annual Report, which is available on the OPA website.

### **Language Access Program**

The County's Language Access Program (LAP) helps to ensure the equitable distribution of communication of benefits, services, and resources to all County residents, regardless of their English proficiency. It aims to serve the 31.4 percent of County residents who are immigrants, of which 13.6 percent have limited English proficiency (LEP) and report speaking English "less than very well."

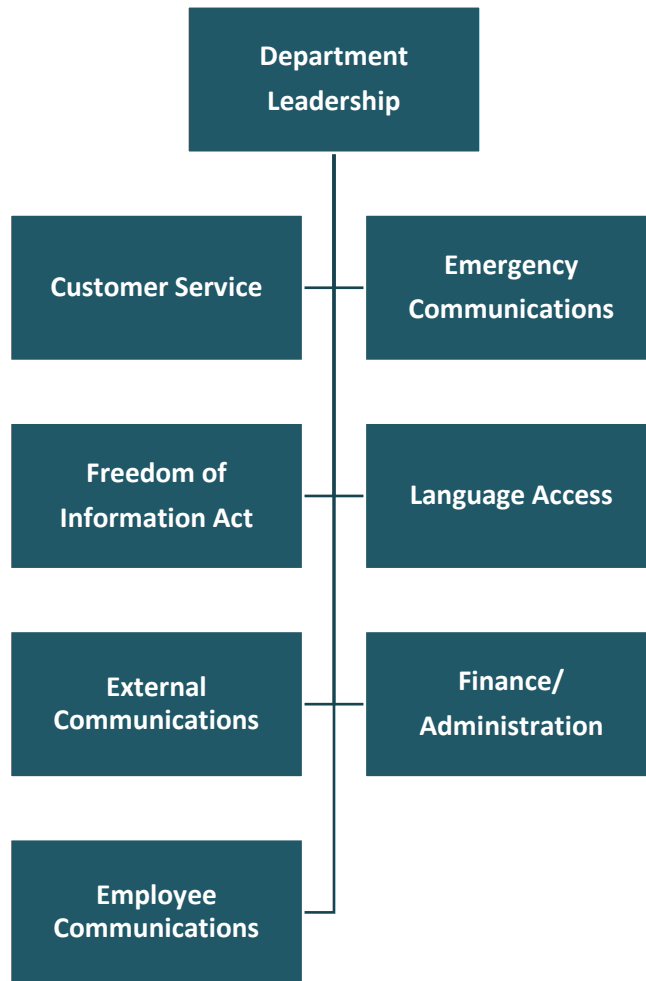
The LAP is centered around the four goals of 1) addressing language barriers by providing equal access to County services, programs, benefits and information to all residents, regardless of their English language proficiency; 2) promoting cultural competency; 3) enhancing the efficiency of the County's translation process; and 4) strengthening partnerships to meet the needs of the County's multilingual and cultural communities. These goals are supported by oral interpretation, written translation, and other resources. OPA's Language Access Program team includes two in-house Spanish and Korean translators, providing translation services to County agencies and reducing reliance on outside vendors. In FY 2025, the team completed 420 Spanish and 186 Korean translations. Having dedicated in-house translators not only increases efficiency but also ensures consistency in terminology across County communications.

LAP staff offer interpretation and translation qualification assessments to identify bilingual employees capable of providing services and reviewing vendor-translated documents. The LAP offers employee training on the importance of providing language access services; policies and procedures related to providing language access services; effectively and respectfully communicating and interacting with LEP individuals; procedures to request and work with an interpreter; using the language access database to record and capture data; and using plain language when writing any content.

OPA has hosted Spanish-language Facebook and X pages since 2020. Additionally, an emphasis on in-language media has led to regular coverage of County news and services by Spanish-language networks Univision, Telemundo, and other media outlets. In March 2024, the County launched Korean language Instagram and Facebook accounts, as the second largest population of foreign-born residents in Fairfax County are from Korea. These platforms give residents direct access to information on County programs and services. In FY 2025, the Korean Instagram account featured 306 posts, and the Facebook account 267 posts.

In April 2025, the Office of Public Affairs also introduced NotiCentro, the County's first monthly newsletter in Spanish. With more than 500 subscribers to date, each edition delivers key County news, events, activities and resources straight to subscribers' inboxes. Together, these services strengthen the County's connection with Spanish and Korean speaking communities and ensure that vital information is shared equitably.

## Organizational Chart



## Budget and Staff Resources

Category	FY 2025 Actual	FY 2026 Adopted	FY 2026 Revised	FY 2027 Advertised
<b>FUNDING</b>				
<b>Expenditures:</b>				
Personnel Services	\$2,246,279	\$2,693,482	\$2,693,482	\$2,799,484
Operating Expenses	305,544	355,361	357,340	324,361
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>\$2,551,823</b>	<b>\$3,048,843</b>	<b>\$3,050,822</b>	<b>\$3,123,845</b>
<b>AUTHORIZED POSITIONS/FULL-TIME EQUIVALENT (FTE)</b>				
Regular	25 / 25	24 / 24	24 / 24	24 / 24



## FY 2027 Funding Adjustments

The following funding adjustments from the FY 2026 Adopted Budget Plan are necessary to support the FY 2027 program:

### Employee Compensation \$106,002

An increase of \$106,002 in Personnel Services is required to reflect the cost of employee compensation increases. This amount includes \$51,377 for a 2.00 percent cost of living adjustment (COLA) for all eligible employees, effective the first full pay period in July 2026. Also included is \$54,625 for performance-based and longevity increases for non-uniformed merit employees, effective the first full pay period in July 2026, as well as other compensation adjustments for non-uniformed employees. For more information on the County's compensation plans as well as specific details for those employees covered under the Collective Bargaining Agreements, please see the Advertised Budget Summary in the Overview Volume.

### Reductions (\$31,000)

A decrease of \$31,000 reflects reductions utilized to balance the FY 2027 budget. The following table provides details on the specific reduction:

Title	Impact	Positions	FTE	Reduction
Reduce Contracted Staff as a Result of Service Redesigns	This reduction realizes savings from service redesigns that leverage existing staff in place of contracted staff. Due to recent staff realignments as well as new hires, OPA can now cover front desk duties at the Government Center Building utilizing existing staff. In addition, OPA has hired two full-time language access staff who provide most translation services for OPA and other agencies. Both of these changes have reduced OPA's reliance on external vendors and thus generated savings.	0	0.0	\$31,000

## Changes to FY 2026 Adopted Budget Plan

The following funding adjustments reflect all approved changes in the FY 2026 Revised Budget Plan since passage of the FY 2026 Adopted Budget Plan. Included are all adjustments made as part of the FY 2025 Carryover Review and all other approved changes through December 31, 2025.

### Carryover Adjustments \$1,979

As part of the FY 2025 Carryover Review, the Board of Supervisors approved funding of \$1,979 in encumbered carryover in Operating Expenses.

## Position Detail

The FY 2027 Advertised Budget Plan includes the following positions:

OFFICE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS – 24 Positions			
1	Director	5	Management Analysts II
1	Deputy Director	3	Information Officers II
1	Management Analyst IV	2	Information Officers I
1	FOIA Officer	1	Administrative Assistant V
2	Information Officers IV	2	Administrative Assistants IV
1	Public Safety Information Officer IV	1	Administrative Assistant III
3	Information Officers III		

## Performance Measurement Results by Community Outcome Area

### Effective and Efficient Government

The County's main Facebook account serves as a key performance indicator for tracking the public's and media's reliance on this predominant social media platform for important information about Fairfax County. However, ongoing changes to Facebook's algorithm and content delivery have posed challenges, especially in sustaining year-over-year organic reach. In response, OPA has shifted its focus to prioritizing engaging, reliable content to maintain current reach rather than emphasizing growth metrics, given the unpredictable nature of the platform. Despite challenges, Facebook remains a critical platform for the County's 20+ accounts to share information. OPA will continue publishing content on the main account, as well as the Disabilities, Environment, and Spanish-language Facebook pages, while maintaining oversight of all social media accounts.

Community Outcome Area	FY 2023 Actual	FY 2024 Actual	FY 2025 Estimate	FY 2025 Actual	FY 2026 Estimate	FY 2027 Estimate
Effective and Efficient Government						
Effective Technology and Quality Facilities						
Percent change in Facebook reach (main account)	30.5%	(14.1%)	1.7%	20.2%	(6.3%)	0.0%

A complete list of performance measures can be viewed at  
<https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/budget/fy-2027-advertised-performance-measures-pm>