

Response to Questions on the FY 2010 County's Line of Business & Schools Program Review Processes Fall 2008

Request By: Supervisor McKay

Question: Please provide comparison data with other jurisdictions on how Fairfax County compares with regards to court security provided by the Office of the Sheriff.

Response: The security of the courts is provided through two sections: Courtroom Security and Facility Security. The following table is a comparison of courtroom security staffing to the number of judges in the larger Virginia jurisdictions:

Table: Courtroom Security Staffing in Virginia

	Number of Judges	Staffing	Staff per Judge
Richmond	24	81	3.38
Chesapeake	13	40	3.08
Norfolk	20	58	2.90
Hampton	9	26	2.89
Alexandria	7	20	2.86
Fairfax	35	87	2.49
Arlington	10	17	1.70

Facility Security comparison to other court complexes is difficult due to the size, physical location and services provided by security staff in Fairfax. For example, the Jennings Building in Fairfax is the seventh largest in the United States at 565,000 square feet and last year 1.1 million people visited the Fairfax courts. In comparison, the largest facility in the Tidewater area had just over 10 percent of that number of visitors. The only facilities with the similar number of visitors are Arlington (450,000) and Alexandria (235,000).

It should be noted that due to the size and physical location away from the nation's capital, the facilities in the southern portion of the state do not provide facility security except during specific occasions and periods of perceived high risk, for which they have no regularly assigned staff for these functions.

Among the other jurisdictions, the Arlington facility is the most similar in volume to Fairfax; however, the courts are located in a complex shared by the Police Department (which generally reports centrally) so there is less of a need for security beyond the single entrance and a camera control booth during regular hours. In Fairfax, the Sheriff's Office provides security for the 52.5 acre complex which includes four public entrances, extended hours and a camera control booth. In addition, Fairfax provides full courtroom services such as: serving warrants, providing background checks, providing jury escorts, processing prisoners into custody and Livescan processing of prisoners released to the Sheriff before being released. No other facility security staff provides all the services

that are provided in Fairfax. Although each jurisdiction provides most of these services, they are usually provided by the Police Department or jail staff.