

Office of Public Affairs



Department Overview

The Office of Public Affairs (OPA) is the central communication office for Fairfax County and provides essential news and information to the public, elected and appointed officials, County agencies and the media regarding County programs, services and emergency information. The OPA Director serves as the County media spokesperson and as a liaison with the County Executive and the Board of Supervisors.

OPA takes the lead on communicating many countywide issues and planning countywide events. It also oversees media relations, communications, marketing, news releases, social media, web content, publications, etc. OPA develops policy and strategy for the County's social media use and trains staff from other agencies on how to use tools such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube effectively. In addition, OPA works closely with the Department of Information Technology to manage the content published on the County's public website.

OPA is structured to allow for flexibility in staffing which provides opportunities for teamwork, cross-training and collaboration. With a staff of 17 positions, there is much crossover in employee assignments, particularly when needed to cover in the event of turnover or absences and provide essential staffing during emergencies.

Whenever the Emergency Operations Center is activated (weather-related or other emergency or special event, e.g., Inauguration or World Police and Fire Games), OPA is required to staff the Joint Information Center (JIC). With significant events such as the Derecho or Tropical Storm Sandy, staff provides 24-hour coverage by working 12-hour shifts in the JIC to monitor social media and the media, respond to inquiries, disseminate important information to the public such as downed trees and power outages, and staff a hotline for the public to call if they have questions. These emergency-related responsibilities are in addition to the emergency preparedness communication, coordination and planning that OPA staff performs year-round.

Another key function that OPA provides is coordinating employee communications for the County. With over 12,000 merit employees spread throughout approximately 400 miles in Fairfax County, it is essential to have a central point to keep them up to date on developments, policies and initiatives so that employees have information they need to do their jobs. This is accomplished through a number of countywide tools including FairfaxNet, NewsLinks and Team Fairfax Insider, the employee newsletter.

As the information connection for Fairfax County, staff manages the Information Desk at the Government Center. Customer service staff responds to a wide range of telephone calls, emails and walk-in visitors. They responded to over 62,000 of these inquiries, comments and requests during FY 2015.

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OPA supports the Board of Supervisors by coordinating presentations made to residents, businesses, employees, nonprofits and other organizations. Typically, but not always, these proclamations, resolutions and certificates are presented at Board meetings to recognize and celebrate the achievements of individuals and organizations in support of Fairfax County's strategic vision.

Finally, the agency's Planning and Administrative Support staff address OPA's strategic planning; human capital management; budget preparation and monitoring; financial processing, reporting and reconciliation; procurement; and other administrative duties.

OPA's lines of business support all seven of the County's vision elements, whether it is through communications support of the agencies that provide the direct service related to each vision element or whether it is through OPA's direct efforts. The following summarizes OPA's contributions to the vision elements.

Maintaining Safe and Caring Communities: By leading the County's communication before, during and after emergencies, OPA gives residents the information they need to prepare for and be safe during events such as severe weather.

Building Livable Spaces: Through communications support of countywide planning initiatives in Tysons and Springfield and for agencies such as the Department of Public Works and Environmental Services and the Department of Planning and Zoning, OPA helps to craft messages that inform the public about initiatives the County is undertaking to "create a sense of place" that reflects Fairfax County, as well as lets the public know how they can be involved in those efforts.

Connecting People and Places: It is not necessary for the public to drive to the Government Center to obtain information or services. OPA's Social Media and Web Content LOB works with agencies to make as much information available online as possible in a mobile-friendly format and ensure that the information is in an easy-to-find, user-friendly design. In addition, the County is constantly making more services available online to enable residents to access their local government 24/7 in many instances.

Maintaining Healthy Economies: The Office of Public Affairs promotes key events such as the release of the advertised budget, public hearings and budget adoption to help the public understand the impact of the County's budget. OPA also serves as the communications lead for the County's Economic Success Initiative to disseminate information about this effort. In addition, experience has shown that when a disaster strikes, it not only has an immediate impact on a community, but the effects can linger if there is significant infrastructure damage that shuts down businesses for extended periods of time. OPA's efforts to educate the public in steps they can take to protect critical infrastructure such as businesses in the event of natural or man-made disasters are crucial to maintaining a vibrant and productive economy.

Practicing Environmental Stewardship: OPA is continually seeking ways to amplify agencies' messages regarding environmental initiatives and how the public can share the responsibility for protecting the quality of life in Fairfax County.

Creating a Culture of Engagement: By supporting the Board of Supervisors in their recognition of residents, businesses, nonprofits or other organizations, OPA helps publicize how they can make a difference in their community. OPA also manages social media tools such as Facebook and Twitter, which allow residents to interact with their government on a daily basis.

Exercising Corporate Stewardship: In addition to the administrative functions that OPA staff performs in accordance with County policies and procedures, staff also responds to Virginia Freedom of Information Act (VFOIA) requests in a timely manner. These requests can come in through the County's 703Fairfax telephone line or email account, as well as direct requests from the media. OPA ensures that they are handled in a timely and responsive manner.

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Department Resources

Category	FY 2014 Actual	FY 2015 Actual	FY 2016 Adopted
FUNDING			
Expenditures:			
Compensation	\$1,367,454	\$1,276,931	\$1,354,543
Operating Expenses	117,957	129,605	111,501
Work Performed for Others	(255,151)	(259,848)	(239,882)
Total Expenditures	\$1,230,260	\$1,146,688	\$1,226,162
General Fund Revenue	\$0	\$0	\$0
Net Cost/(Savings) to General Fund	\$1,230,260	\$1,146,688	\$1,226,162
POSITIONS			
<i>Authorized Positions/Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs)</i>			
Positions:			
Regular	18 / 18	18 / 18	17 / 17
Total Positions	18 / 18	18 / 18	17 / 17

Lines of Business Summary

LOB #	LOB Title	FY 2016 Adopted	
		Disbursements	Positions
36	Employee Communications	\$175,925	2
37	Communications Management, Coordination and Support for Agencies / Countywide Initiatives	371,064	5
38	Customer Service	175,925	2
39	Media Relations	146,604	2
40	Social Media and Web Content	50,970	2
41	Emergency Communications and Planning	100,427	2
42	Department Planning and Administrative Support	87,963	1
43	Board Support	117,284	1
Total		\$1,226,162	17

Lines of Business

LOB #36:

EMPLOYEE COMMUNICATIONS

Purpose

The Office of Public Affairs is the lead County agency for internal communications, providing essential news and information to more than 16,000 employees, including merit, part-time and seasonal staff. Employees look to OPA to provide timely and accurate information that impacts the County, their agencies, their jobs and their personal lives.

Description

Among the tools used to provide information to County employees are:

- Team Fairfax Insider (generally produced twice a month)
- NewsLink (daily email to all employees)
- FairfaxNet (intranet)
- Emails and other communications from the County Executive

Topics/issues to communicate include:

- Compensation
- Benefits
- Personnel policy changes
- Training and development
- Succession planning
- Emergency preparedness
- Ethics/conduct
- Information technology news/help
- Safety and security information
- County/agency events/activities
- Media coverage of County government
- Awards and honors
- Employee/agency profiles

The Employee Communications LOB supports the information needs of an engaged, motivated and productive workforce. In addition to the ongoing development of FairfaxNet, an intranet and collaboration platform that replaced the County's Infoweb, considerable effort has been focused on the print and digital versions of Team Fairfax Insider (TFI), the County's biweekly employee newsletter. TFI has been integrated into OPA's suite of internal communications tools, joining NewsLink and FairfaxNet online, while helping to bridge the "digital divide" for employees whose work does not include regular computer access.

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In its role coordinating countywide internal communications, OPA works with subject matter experts to help publicize major internal initiatives such as benefits open enrollment and a dialogue on employee compensation. Internal communications also highlight the achievements and interests of employees, fostering a sense of community within the workforce.

With increased emphasis on employee involvement for the FY 2016 Budget and beyond, OPA developed and supported the Mission: Savings program, focused on engaging employees in the budget process and soliciting input on reducing costs and improving efficiencies. OPA established a strategy and new tools, including a blog and online suggestion submission, to make it easier for employees to get involved. OPA also established opportunities for employees to engage with County leadership online and in-person throughout the budget process, including Ask Fairfax Insider! chats and brown-bag meetings. Nearly 300 employee suggestions were received, resulting in over \$900,000 in savings identified.

OPA also expanded the use of video as a tool for sharing information with County employees. Major meetings of countywide interest are broadcast online for those unable to attend and OPA continues to coordinate video communications from the County Executive. This takes advantage of an additional tool to keep the workforce informed and engaged, and provides an opportunity for the County Executive to communicate directly with employees regardless of location.

OPA maintains a countywide calendar of key dates and events for employees and is developing and coordinating additional products and tools for internal communications including blogs, a knowledge base where employees can share information and start discussions, and a personalized space for each employee to share what they're working on and follow people, sites and documents.

Team Fairfax Insider

Biweekly issues of this employee newsletter (four or eight pages per issue) are published between 22 and 24 times a year, on most payday Fridays. OPA produces TFI as a vehicle to deliver news and information for and about County employees. Policy and programmatic changes are highlighted and agencies are profiled to help eliminate stovepipes and broaden employee knowledge of County services and the people who provide them.

Two staff members are assigned primary responsibility for planning, layout, editing and production of this newsletter. Various other OPA staff contribute by writing articles for each issue.

NewsLink

This email newsletter is produced and distributed by OPA to all County employees each business day. It provides timely County news, announcements and information of general interest, including alerts and explanation of the lowering of the U.S., state and/or County flags. It fills an information gap that TFI cannot due to its deadline, publication schedule and space restrictions. NewsLink also includes a comprehensive review of Fairfax County media coverage.

In addition to the NewsLink editor, OPA staff support NewsLink by searching online media outlets to identify and assemble coverage of Fairfax County. This provides further enterprise-wide awareness of issues, events and other developments related to Fairfax County government.

FairfaxNet

FairfaxNet, the County's intranet, replaced the previous Infoweb system with a robust array of features for information provision and sharing, discussion, team building and project management. In addition to a central location for countywide and agency-specific news and information, FairfaxNet hosts forms, policies, applications, training materials, discussion space and other resources, all easily accessible through a powerful search tool. FairfaxNet also includes workspaces for agencies, teams, groups and projects and resources for automation of forms and workflows.

OPA and the Department of Information Technology (DIT) work collaboratively on FairfaxNet, with OPA providing content oversight, site design and creation, consultation and training for department and agency FairfaxNet administrators. During FY 2015, OPA and DIT implemented an extensive update to FairfaxNet. OPA consulted on new features and tools throughout the process and managed communications for the update.

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Email/Communications from the County Executive

At the request of the County Executive, OPA drafts emails and other communications to County employees for distribution under the County Executive's signature.

There are 2/2.04 FTE positions associated with this line of business. However, rather than one person, it includes parts of several OPA employees' time.

Benefits

This line of business is the primary source of countywide information for employees. Regular communication such as the daily NewsLink or Team Fairfax Insider generally every pay period, provides employees with timely information about County programs, accomplishments by fellow employees, events or other developments that may affect them. This awareness contributes to more engaged and effective employees.

FairfaxNet is the go-to source for information about County policies, procedures, forms and programs. With the recent upgrade, employees have access to a workspace which allows for greater collaboration, resulting in a more productive workforce.

Mandates

This Line of Business is not mandated.

Trends and Challenges

With the growing number of retirements, the coming years will see a larger number of new employees coming on board, increasing the need for providing information necessary to help function at a high level. Estimates done by the Office of the Financial and Program Auditor in September 2014 are that 20 percent of current merit employees are eligible to retire in 2016. By 2020, that number increases to 35 percent and is 49 percent for 2024 – fewer than 10 years away.

The numbers are even greater for senior managers: 54 percent are eligible to retire in 2016, 69 percent in 2020 and 83 percent in 2024. When long-term employees leave, there is a knowledge gap. Bringing new employees up to speed on County policies, programs and other information they need to do their jobs is accomplished not only within the employee's agency, but is done on the countywide level as well.

Studies have shown that if people are communicated to regularly and in an effective manner, they are much more engaged with the organization and have a more positive attitude toward their work and their customers.

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Resources

Category	FY 2014 Actual	FY 2015 Actual	FY 2016 Adopted
LOB #36: Employee Communications			
FUNDING			
<u>Expenditures:</u>			
Compensation	\$164,095	\$153,232	\$162,545
Operating Expenses	14,155	15,553	13,380
Total Expenditures	\$178,250	\$168,785	\$175,925
General Fund Revenue	\$0	\$0	\$0
Net Cost/(Savings) to General Fund	\$178,250	\$168,785	\$175,925
POSITIONS			
Authorized Positions/Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs)			
<u>Positions:</u>			
Regular	2 / 2.16	2 / 2.16	2 / 2.04
Total Positions	2 / 2.16	2 / 2.16	2 / 2.04

Metrics

Metric Indicator	FY 2013 Actual	FY 2014 Actual	FY 2015 Actual	FY 2016 Estimate	FY 2017 Estimate
Team Fairfax Insider (employee newsletter) issues	12	22	24	24	24
NewsLink emails to employees	244	246	246	251	249
FairfaxNet home page visits	NA	NA	3,472,098	3,475,000	3,475,000
Average time on FairfaxNet (minutes) per day	NA	NA	7.10	7.15	7.15

The workload for this line of business is fairly static and predictable. The 2/2.04 FTE who plan, coordinate and develop employee communications are tasked with producing a NewsLink email each workday the County is open. Generally there are between 244 to 249 NewsLink emails annually. However, if the County is closed for severe weather or another significant event, NewsLink is not produced. In those cases, staff is typically diverted to assist with emergency communications.

In addition to the part of an employee's time spent as the NewsLink editor who coordinates announcements and other useful information for County employees, other staff from the Office of Public Affairs take turns collecting the media links each morning to keep the workforce informed.

This LOB is also responsible for producing the employee newsletter, Team Fairfax Insider. It generally comes out each pay period; however in a few months, there is only one issue. Staff researches as well as interviews employees for articles for the newsletter. Since resuming the employee newsletter in mid-FY 2013, there have been 22 to 24 issues each year.

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Also included in this LOB is content production and management for FairfaxNet, the County intranet. In addition to providing extensive consultation for agencies that wish to maximize their use of FairfaxNet collaborative workspaces and team sites, OPA works in partnership with DIT on design and functionality and maintains all countywide content (news, policies and procedures, awards slideshows, org charts and other high-level pages.)

Over the course of the year, the FairfaxNet home page receives an average of over 3 million visits annually, with employees spending an average of seven minutes and 10 seconds on the site, per visit. In the context of the organization's intranet, it is important to strike a balance between an efficient and effective experience that supports employee productivity, and maximum awareness/utilization of the content and services provided.

LOB #37:

COMMUNICATIONS MANAGEMENT, COORDINATION AND SUPPORT FOR AGENCIES / COUNTYWIDE INITIATIVES

Purpose

The Office of Public Affairs assigns its staff to support County agencies that do not have their own public information officers (PIOs) or communications specialists. OPA communicators support those agencies with media relations, communications strategy, marketing, news releases, publications, events, etc. OPA currently has 11 staff members assigned as communications consultants to the 29 agencies listed below. However, it should be noted that none of these staff is assigned full-time to these duties; they all also contribute to OPA's other Lines of Business (LOBs). There are 5/5.10 FTE positions associated with this LOB.

- Administration for Human Services
- Board of Supervisors
- Cable Communications and Consumer Protection
- Civil Service Commission
- Clerk of the Circuit Court
- Clerk of the General District Court
- Code Compliance
- Community Revitalization and Reinvestment
- County Attorney's Office
- County Executive's Office
- Elections
- Emergency Management
- Facilities Management
- Financial and Program Auditor
- Finance
- Human Resources
- Human Rights and Equity Programs
- Information Technology (including Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act Compliance Manager)
- Internal Audit
- Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court
- Management and Budget
- Planning Commission
- Planning and Zoning
- Prevent and End Homelessness
- Public Safety Communications
- Public Works and Environmental Services
- Purchasing and Supply Management
- Tax Administration
- Vehicle Services

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OPA also supports agencies that have their own communications staff to ensure there is a common message across the entire County and to provide strategic guidance on complex issues.

Description

Responsibilities of this LOB include the following:

Communication/Media Support for BOS Meetings and Committee Meetings

The Director of OPA or an OPA staff member is always in attendance at the Board of Supervisors meetings to gather information on County issues in order to respond to questions from residents, the media and County staff. At the conclusion of each Board meeting, the OPA Director writes and distributes an email summarizing the highlights of the meeting. The email is sent to the BOS, the Senior Management Team and lead communicators in the County. That script is also used to record a podcast of the meeting highlights that is distributed to the public. In addition, an OPA staff member is present at Board committee meetings to respond to media inquiries related to the Board agenda and committee issues.

Public Information Officer Support

All public information officers and communications specialists in the County have a dotted-line reporting relationship to the OPA director. With this structure, the OPA director is able to provide guidance and support to County communicators on a day-to-day basis in addition to emergency situations when more than two agencies are involved. The OPA director holds monthly meetings with all County communications staff to ensure PIOs and Communications Specialists can discuss key issues with each other. In addition, agencies that do not have their own communications staff are supported by OPA to provide strategic guidance and handle many day-to-day communications issues.

Communication Seminars/Training

To support the BOS' emphasis on marketing the County, OPA coordinates media relations training, social media training and occasional professional development seminars for County staff. The media relations training provides tips to staff on how to handle interviews with the media, including what rights and responsibilities both the reporter and interviewee have. The social media training provides an overview of emerging technologies that employees need to be aware of, as well as what the County policy is for utilizing this media. All County staff that are responsible for managing a social media platform for their agency must complete this OPA training. Previous seminars have included "A Marketing Toolbox," "Successful Media Relations" and "How to Plan an Event."

Publication, Editing and Design

OPA designs, writes, reviews and edits brochures, newsletters, correspondence and other printed and online materials for individual County agencies and for countywide initiatives. Recent examples include designing logos and assisting with communications for the "Slow Down" and "Shovel Your Snow" campaigns.

Special Events

OPA coordinates ribbon cuttings, groundbreakings, and dedication ceremonies for other agencies, in addition to countywide events such as summits and the inauguration for the Board of Supervisors, the Sheriff, the Clerk of the Court, the Commonwealth's Attorney and the members of the Northern Virginia Soil and Water Conservation District. Responsibilities include planning; scheduling; logistics; designing, creating and distributing invitations; designing and creating programs; marketing; coordinating with Board members and other County staff; and other duties as necessary.

Audiovisual Equipment

OPA maintains an inventory of audiovisual equipment (e.g., podiums and microphones) as well as ceremonial supplies to loan to Board members and other agencies.

Photographic Services

OPA coordinates photographic services for a wide variety of events that are posted on the County's website; the Intranet site; the employee newsletter, Team Fairfax Insider; on the County's photo gallery sites, Flickr and Instagram; and distributed to the media.

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Benefits

OPA performs a critical role for many external audiences regarding important issues, deadlines and events. This includes serving County residents, the business community, nonprofits, faith communities, media and many other key stakeholders by sharing relevant, timely and actionable information through the following tools:

- County website
- NewsWire
- NewsCenter
- Emergency blog
- Mobile apps
- Facebook
- Twitter
- YouTube
- Channel 16
- Periscope
- Flickr
- SlideShare
- Surveys
- Podcasts
- Media Outreach
- 703-FAIRFAX Phone and Email
- Ask Fairfax! Online Discussions
- SoundCloud
- Fairfax County Government Radio
- Email Newsletters
- Printed Materials

In FY 2014 and FY 2015, the Office of Public Affairs led and or coordinated external communications for many countywide topics, including public safety issues, the opening of the Dulles Rail Silver Line; development in Tysons, Springfield and Lorton; elections; budget; human service; taxes; a neighborhood anti-speeding initiative; shoveling snow; and more.

OPA ensures that County communicators adhere to the “common message, many voices” philosophy by sharing information in a timely manner with PIOs and communications specialists in all agencies. OPA also supports all agencies, whether or not they have a designated communicator, by providing strategic guidance in the areas of messaging, websites, media guidance, social media policies and training, coordination across agency lines, audio (podcasts and radio) and visual (YouTube) training, and more. Agencies, and the County as a whole, benefit when OPA is at the table for key issues to ensure that all areas of communications are addressed at the beginning of an initiative. Additionally, OPA holds a monthly meeting for lead PIOs to regularly share information.

OPA also plays a key role in the region as its staff either chairs or vice chairs R-ESF (Regional Emergency Support Function) 15, which brings together communicators from many jurisdictions in Northern Virginia, Washington, D.C. and Maryland.

Mandates

This Line of Business is not mandated.

Trends and Challenges

With the appointment of a new director in early 2015, there have been several changes in the past year and a half, including additional emphasis on collaboration across County agencies. OPA now holds editorial meetings three times per week to plan how the County will communicate about key issues and message development. Personnel from other agencies, including the Police Department, Fire and Rescue Department, Health Department and Channel 16, attend these meetings on a regular basis to share news from their areas and to coordinate messages on upcoming topics. Other agencies participate when appropriate.

A recent trend has been increased strategic communications planning with the County's public safety agencies. OPA has partnered with the relevant agencies to provide guidance and assistance on several issues in the recent past.

OPA has also worked closely with a number of County agencies on internal communications issues, including FairfaxNet. When the intranet migrated to SharePoint, OPA and DIT were chiefly responsible for ensuring agency content was migrated correctly. This involved training nearly every agency on the proper procedures and offering guidance on their content. These efforts continue to this day as FairfaxNet evolves and adds additional capabilities.

OPA also maintains the Communications Toolkit which is governed by the Communications Policy, both of which are available for employee review on FairfaxNet. The Communications Toolkit gives employees quick access to County procedures, standards and guidelines about communications. The goal is to ensure that County communications have a cohesive look, feel and message. It contains information about out-of-office email and voicemail standards; business card, letterhead and memo templates; required elements for publications; online and social media policies; photo, audio and video guidelines; resources for communicators; and more. It was renamed from the Communications Strategy and redesigned in 2013 so employees could more easily get information that is relevant to their daily jobs. It is an ongoing challenge to enforce the contents of the Toolkit, but OPA has increased its efforts to educate staff, including speaking at every New Employee Orientation – Part 1 session.

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Resources

Category	FY 2014 Actual	FY 2015 Actual	FY 2016 Adopted
LOB #37: Communications Management, Coordination and Support for Agencies / Countywide Initiatives			
FUNDING			
<u>Expenditures:</u>			
Compensation	\$410,236	\$383,079	\$406,363
Operating Expenses	35,387	38,882	33,451
Work Performed for Others	(73,126)	(74,476)	(68,750)
Total Expenditures	\$372,497	\$347,485	\$371,064
General Fund Revenue	\$0	\$0	\$0
Net Cost/(Savings) to General Fund	\$372,497	\$347,485	\$371,064
POSITIONS			
Authorized Positions/Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs)			
<u>Positions:</u>			
Regular	6 / 5.4	6 / 5.4	5 / 5.1
Total Positions	6 / 5.4	6 / 5.4	5 / 5.1

Metrics

Metric Indicator	FY 2013 Actual	FY 2014 Actual	FY 2015 Actual	FY 2016 Estimate	FY 2017 Estimate
NewsWire Posts	1,762	1,754	1,869	1,800	1,800
Average Monthly Communications Toolkit Users	NA	NA	NA	659	660
Agency satisfaction with services OPA provides	NA	NA	8.74	9.00	9.00
Ask Fairfax Chat questions answered	407	147	255	250	250

The number of NewsWire Posts has remained fairly constant over the past few years, although there was a 6.6 percent increase from FY 2014 to FY 2015, likely due to higher than usual media and community interest in public safety issues such as police use-of-force incidents and an in-custody death investigation, as well as public health issues such as measles and Ebola. With the introduction of NewsCenter at the beginning of FY 2016, which will address some of the topics that previously would have been covered in NewsWire, the Office of Public Affairs (OPA) does not anticipate significant growth in NewsWire. Still, it will remain a valuable means of rapidly disseminating important information to the public and the media. As OPA develops more experience with NewsCenter, additional metrics will be developed to measure the efficacy of that tool.

OPA maintains a Communications Toolkit with countywide standards on FairfaxNet that employees can access to ensure that they are in compliance with County communication policy. Staff from OPA attends each monthly New Employee Orientation – Part 1 session to let new employees know about this valuable source of information. In addition, OPA only recently obtained a report to measure the number of Communications Toolkit users, which is anticipated to remain relatively static over the next few years.

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Although a trend analysis on customer satisfaction is difficult to establish because of the lack of survey data from previous years, the results from the FY 2015 OPA survey will establish a baseline for future years. The results show that internal customers (including other agency public information officers, members of the senior management team and employees throughout the County who have utilized the services provided by OPA) are very satisfied with the assistance they have received. Overall, on a scale of 1-10, with 1 being poor and 10 being excellent, the average response on the level of satisfaction with service received was 8.74.

According to the survey, the top five services, and the percentage of people who used them, are:

- Social media (65 percent)
- Support for countywide initiatives (60 percent)
- Employee/internal communications (52 percent)
- Web content (50 percent)
- Media relations (46 percent)

The majority of the people who completed the survey (44 percent) noted that they worked with OPA 1-3 times over the past year, while nearly 30 percent said they partnered with OPA more than 10 times during the year, and another 19 percent fell in the 7-10 times during the year category.

The majority of survey respondents indicated that OPA helped them reach their communications goal, with 86 percent saying that they were satisfied with the outcome and only 7 percent were not. The other 7 percent did not answer that question. OPA plans to administer the survey annually to continue to improve service to agencies.

As another means to connect with the public, OPA has been holding online “Ask Fairfax” chats where interested individuals can ask questions and have them answered in real time by County experts. Examples include wildlife, emergency preparedness and transportation, among a wide range of other topics. The number of chats and the corresponding number of questions answered are a function of the issues generating interest in a chat, which fluctuates considerably from year to year with a high of 407 in FY 2013 to only 147 in FY 2014, but increasing to 255 in FY 2015. OPA will continue to remain responsive to interest from the public and input from agencies on topics of interest for these chats.

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LOB #38:

CUSTOMER SERVICE

Purpose

The Office of Public Affairs (OPA) is the information connection for Fairfax County government. As with every agency in the County government, this line of business strives to exceed customer service expectations when serving County residents. The primary objective of staff is to respond quickly and accurately to a wide range of information requests from the public over the telephone, face-to-face in the Government Center and by email.

Description

This line of business provides customer service through the following:

- 703-Fairfax (324-7329) Telephone Inbox – For FY 2015, OPA answered **33,250** telephone calls.
- 703-Fairfax Email Inbox – For FY 2015, OPA responded to **5,655** emails.
- Customer Contact Center – OPA staffs the main information desk in the Government Center to answer questions for walk-in visitors. For FY 2015, OPA assisted **23,911** walk-in customers.

The Customer Service Team tracks not only the volume of information requests but also the context. The resulting trend analysis provides insights to the public information officers so issues can be anticipated and addressed in a timely manner.

Additional functions handled by the customer service team include:

- **Homeowners Association List** – OPA maintains a list of more than 1,700 Community and Homeowners Associations. This list is used by County agencies to communicate with residents. OPA also receives telephone calls and emails from the public requesting this contact information.
- **Public Meetings Calendar** – Staff maintains and serves as approver for the Public Meetings Calendar on the County website which lists all public meetings. This meets requirements of the VFOIA to post public meetings.
- **Siebel Customer Management System** – Customer service staff updates and maintains the Siebel database, which is the primary system that the customer service team uses to look up contact information for County agencies, as well as other state and local agencies in order to connect the public with the appropriate organization to assist them.
- **Equipment Loan Program** – OPA maintains a loan program consisting of podiums, sound systems, cameras and accessories that agencies can borrow for various types of events such as ground-breakings and ribbon-cuttings.
- **Telework Space** – OPA created a small work space behind the Information Desk, and monitors and maintains this space for County employees. Customer service staff at the Government Center created this space after receiving a number of requests from County employees who do not work at the Government Center, but may be here for training and meetings, expressed a need to have access to a small workspace to check their email. Since its creation in March 2015, the telework space has accommodated over 30 County employees.

There are 2/2.04 FTE positions associated with this line of business. However, rather than one person, it includes parts of several OPA employees' time. There are two employees who staff the main information desk in the lobby of the Government Center to respond to questions/comments by walk-ins, telephone calls and email. The majority of foreign language requests are for Spanish and one of these employees is a native Spanish speaker. When other languages are required, the agency uses a language line for the necessary

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translation services. However, when those staff are in training or on leave, other OPA staff are required to fill in to provide continuous service to County residents.

Benefits

Direct face-to-face contact with the residents and employees of Fairfax County, non-residents, media and elected officials, allows the customer service staff to provide service with a personal touch. Often callers or those who walk in are frustrated because they might not know how to reach the appropriate agency and perceive that they have been transferred around without getting a resolution. Some are angry if they believe their needs are not being met. It takes well-trained and empathetic staff to de-escalate these types of situations.

The customer service team also often serves as a bridge, linking residents that do not own a computer or cannot navigate the County website, to the appropriate agency that can assist them. Many of these customers are repeat callers. Some are seniors, while others may have language or other challenges. They depend on OPA to be there to help them navigate Fairfax County government.

OPA's customer service team provides value-added assistance to residents by saving their time and assuming ownership of their unique situation by working on their behalf to connect them to the appropriate agency. Many times, a question requires speaking with numerous agencies to find the correct entity to address the question or concern. In those cases, OPA will assist by researching on the client's behalf using the resources that Fairfax County provides.

OPA also has a team member that speaks and writes Spanish fluently. This is a huge benefit to customers since English is a second language for a large segment of the County population.

Mandates

The aspect of the Customer Service LOB that is mandated is associated with responding to Virginia Freedom of Information Act (VFOIA) requests. For the most part, these requests come through the 703Fairfax email inbox but are sometimes received through the 703-Fairfax telephone line. In addition, staff maintains the Public Meetings Calendar on the County website which lists all public meetings to comply with VFOIA requirements.

For FY 2015, OPA received and coordinated 179 VFOIA requests with the appropriate agency to respond.

Trends and Challenges

As the County's population grows, so too do the expectations and demands for services, many of which funnel through the Office of Public Affairs' customer service line of business. Other demographic conditions that drive the workload for this LOB include:

- Demand for services continues to increase, e.g., public assistance, food stamps, housing, etc. Many residents start with OPA's customer service staff to be directed to the appropriate agency or turn to OPA if they have been on hold with the other agencies and/or do not believe their needs are being met.
- The public has high expectations for Fairfax County to respond whether or not it is a County responsibility, e.g., roads maintained by VDOT, trees on private property, etc. These calls cannot be ignored and it is often time-consuming to explain the situation to customers and direct them to the appropriate resources.
- An aging population, many of whom do not use a computer regularly or at all, contact the County to connect them with services they need/want.

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- Budget cuts throughout Fairfax County have impacted service levels, resulting in residents contacting OPA's customer service staff to complain or inquire about some service they believe should be provided and is not, or the delay in providing the service.
- The ever-increasing diversity of the population creates communications challenges as English is a second language for many Fairfax County residents.

Resources

Category	FY 2014 Actual	FY 2015 Actual	FY 2016 Adopted
LOB #38: Customer Service			
FUNDING			
<u>Expenditures:</u>			
Compensation	\$164,095	\$153,232	\$162,545
Operating Expenses	14,155	15,553	13,380
Total Expenditures	\$178,250	\$168,785	\$175,925
General Fund Revenue	\$0	\$0	\$0
Net Cost/(Savings) to General Fund	\$178,250	\$168,785	\$175,925
POSITIONS			
<i>Authorized Positions/Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs)</i>			
<u>Positions:</u>			
Regular	2 / 2.16	2 / 2.16	2 / 2.04
Total Positions	2 / 2.16	2 / 2.16	2 / 2.04

Metrics

Metric Indicator	FY 2013 Actual	FY 2014 Actual	FY 2015 Actual	FY 2016 Estimate	FY 2017 Estimate
Total 703-Fairfax Customer Service interactions handled	45,330	59,652	62,816	65,957	69,255
703-Fairfax telephone calls responded to	NA	NA	33,250	34,913	36,658
Walk-in customers assisted	NA	NA	23,911	25,106	26,362
703-Fairfax emails handled	NA	NA	5,655	5,938	6,235
Total 703-Fairfax Customer Service interactions handled per FTE	22,221	29,241	30,792	32,332	33,949

From FY 2014 to FY 2015, the customer service line of business saw a 5.3 percent increase in the number of telephone calls, walk-in inquiries and emails to the 703-Fairfax telephone line, lobby desk and email inbox. This is the main point of contact for the public to access County information and/or be directed to the agencies that can assist them. This desk is staffed by 2/2.04 FTE from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday-Friday.

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In FY 2015, over 33,000 telephone calls were answered. The customer service staff address a wide range of questions from animals to zoning. In many cases, they transfer the caller to the agency that can assist them. In other situations, they look up the information directly. There are many times when the information is available online but the caller is either not able (doesn't have a computer or doesn't know how to use one or how to navigate the County's website) or isn't willing to look on their own, so Office of Public Affairs staff work to deliver a high level of service by getting them the information they need.

Almost 24,000 walk-ins were served at the Government Center lobby desk in FY 2015. Inquiries can be as simple as directions within the building to other more complex questions such as what they need to do to start a business. Many people come to the Government Center thinking all County programs (and even some non-County ones) are located here. Staff must frequently direct customers to the Fairfax County Courthouse, the Pennino or Herrity Buildings, or even federal or state agencies such as the Social Security Administration's Fairfax office or the Virginia Employment Commission's office.

The 703-Fairfax inbox allows the public to send an email to Fairfax County when it is convenient for them. However, the staff who answer the emails are the same ones who respond to the telephone calls and walk-ins so they must also find time to answer the emails, 5,655 of which were received during FY 2015, during the same work hours Monday-Friday. Consequently they have very high workloads – each FTE handled a total of over 30,000 telephone calls, walk-ins and emails during FY 2015.

There is also a spike in telephone calls, walk-ins and emails during certain times of the year, e.g., when personal property or real estate taxes are due or right before elections. In addition, if agencies such as the Department of Family Services have a backlog in their main line to call for public assistance, callers turn to the County's 703-Fairfax line thinking OPA can get them through to the programs they want. Sometimes staff receive considerable abuse from callers who have not gotten what they want (either because they were not eligible or there is a wait to speak with someone from that agency). Nevertheless, OPA staff continually work to ensure that all customers are served in a timely and courteous manner.

As the County's population increases and as the number of people needing assistance in one way or another also rises, the workload of this small customer service staff can be expected to increase accordingly.

Office of Public Affairs

LOB #39:

MEDIA RELATIONS

Purpose

The Fairfax County Office of Public Affairs (OPA) handles media relations for the County 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. The OPA director is the primary County spokesperson to the media. Media relations demand a significant time investment from OPA developing media relations strategies, message development, contact and follow-up.

Today's media expects constant response including weekends and holidays. OPA also monitors and responds extensively to the media through multiple social media channels such as Facebook and Twitter.

Due to our proximity to the nation's capital, OPA regularly provides information to local, regional, national and international media outlets. For this reason, media relations demand a considerable time investment from the Office of Public Affairs.

Description

There are 2/1.70 FTE positions associated with this line of business.

OPA approaches media relations in two ways: proactive and reactive. Every effort is made to proactively tell the County's positive stories and to make use of traditional, social and specialized media to provide residents with information on programs, services and initiatives.

Outreach to traditional media includes pitching stories to newspapers, radio stations, television stations and blogs. Reaching out to social media includes targeting messages toward Twitter, Facebook, blogs and discussion forums. Outreach to specialized media, such as trade publications, allows the County to promote stories in narrowly focused outlets that help reach a particular target audience.

The following activities are designed to building strong media relations:

Media Spokesperson

The Director of OPA serves as County spokesperson for the County with OPA staff filling this role in his absence. The office responds to an average of 50 media calls each month, which require an average of nearly 20 minutes each to complete. All non-OPA communicators in the County have a dotted-line reporting relationship with the OPA Director. In the event that there is an incident involving more than two County agencies, OPA takes the lead in coordinating communications.

Communications Policies and Procedures

OPA writes or revises policies and procedures to reflect changing priorities. The main objective is to ensure that countywide communications reflect the County's strategic priorities and the "common message, many voices" philosophy.

Media Database

OPA maintains a current list of more than 150 reporters and media outlets. This list is shared with other County agencies to ensure that information is disseminated to the same audience throughout Fairfax County.

Proactive Media Contacts

OPA researches, writes, edits and distributes NewsWire and social media posts to print, broadcast and online media to inform them of County events and issues. The information is also posted online with a "Really Simple Syndication" (RSS) feed to allow the public immediate access to the news as well. OPA also pitches stories proactively through email and telephone to individual reporters on various topics.

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FOIA Meeting Schedule

OPA prepares and distributes a weekly FOIA meeting notice to media, as mandated by Virginia Code §§ 2.2-3707 through 3708 and 3714 requiring publishing notices of public meetings. The notice highlights all County meetings where more than two members of the Board of Supervisors may be present.

FOIA Requests

OPA coordinates responses to all FOIA requests from the media, as mandated by Virginia Code §§ 2.2-3700, 3701, 3702, 3703, 3703.1, 3704, 3705.1, 3705.2, 3705.3, 3705.4, 3705.5, 3705.6, 3705.7, 3705.8, 3706 and 3714.

24/7 Media Contacts System

OPA ensures its availability to the media through an on-call system, which provides the media with access to the OPA Director or designated staff member 24 hours a day/seven days a week. The system allows the caller to leave a message and someone responds as soon as possible.

Media Satisfaction Survey

To gauge the quality of its media relations efforts, OPA surveys media representatives in order to obtain their feedback on the effectiveness of OPA's efforts as well as to determine any area of media relations that needs improvement.

News Conferences/Media Events

OPA provides support to the Board of Supervisors and County agencies to plan news conferences, media conferences and ceremonies such as the inauguration ceremony for newly elected Board members or other elected officials. An example of a high-profile event is the annual news conference with the County Executive and other senior managers on the proposed budget.

Social Media

OPA monitors online media outlets, such as blogs and discussion forums, to stay up-to-date on the pulse of the Fairfax County community. This media provides the County with instant feedback on current topics and allows the County to respond in a timely and effective manner when necessary. OPA also created a social media policy outlining how County agencies can utilize social media, including blogs, discussion forums, social networking sites, photo-sharing websites, video-sharing websites, wikis, virtual reality, podcasts and RSS feeds.

Benefits

Developing and maintaining a strong relationship with the media enables Fairfax County to share news, information and messages proactively, as well as respond quickly with information when needed. An effective relationship with the media also helps the Office of Public Affairs react quickly to developing stories and/or correct information on social media. This benefits our community and helps the public be more informed, especially during an emergency.

Strong relationships with the media also build credibility and integrity, and establish knowledgeable connections between the government, media and the public. Having a lead communications agency ensures that messages reflect the County's strategic priorities, that OPA is open and transparent, and speaks with one consistent voice. OPA places strong emphasis on the "common message, many voices" strategy.

OPA also works extensively with all County agencies, setting policy and providing guidance for developing media strategies and message development. OPA regularly connects with each agency to make sure responses are rapid, transparent and provide updated information. Most importantly, OPA must ensure all agencies are communicating the same message.

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Mandates

OPA coordinates responses to all Virginia Freedom of Information Act (VFOIA) requests from the media as mandated by Virginia Code §§ 2.2-3700, 3701, 3702, 3703, 3703.1, 3704, 3705.1, 3705.2, 3705.3, 3705.4, 3705.5, 3705.6, 3705.7, 3705.8, 3706 and 3714.

In addition, OPA prepares and distributes a weekly FOIA meeting notice to media, as mandated by Virginia Code §§ 2.2-3707 through 3708 and 3714 requiring publishing notices of public meetings.

Trends and Challenges

The Office of Public Affairs now operates in a 24/7 environment where information is shared instantly via social media. OPA provides news to the media and the public via social media at all times of the day, every day.

Also, partially due to cutbacks in traditional media as well as the availability of technology, many more people now publish news via blogs, websites and social media so OPA constantly works with multiple smaller news sites and must respond to them the same way as large media outlets.

In addition, almost everyone has access to mobile phones. As a result, pictures and video can be shot by anyone and turned into news. OPA faces the challenges of continuing to evolve and respond to this new age of news gathering.

Resources

Category	FY 2014 Actual	FY 2015 Actual	FY 2016 Adopted
LOB #39: Media Relations			
FUNDING			
<u>Expenditures:</u>			
Compensation	\$136,745	\$127,693	\$135,454
Operating Expenses	11,796	12,960	11,150
Total Expenditures	\$148,541	\$140,653	\$146,604
General Fund Revenue	\$0	\$0	\$0
Net Cost/(Savings) to General Fund	\$148,541	\$140,653	\$146,604
POSITIONS			
Authorized Positions/Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs)			
<u>Positions:</u>			
Regular	2 / 1.8	2 / 1.8	2 / 1.7
Total Positions	2 / 1.8	2 / 1.8	2 / 1.7

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Metrics

Metric Indicator	FY 2013 Actual	FY 2014 Actual	FY 2015 Actual	FY 2016 Estimate	FY 2017 Estimate
General VFOIA requests processed through OPA	NA	115	211	200	200
Media VFOIA requests processed through OPA	NA	9	17	15	15
Responses to media inquiries	396	228	610	500	500
Media satisfaction with OPA services	NA	NA	7.76	8.00	8.50

The trend of increased media requests of in FY 2015 was largely driven by multiple public safety-related issues that generated higher than usual media attention. OPA is now consistently advising the Fairfax County Commonwealth's Attorney, County Attorney, Police Department and Sheriff with media relations strategy development and messaging.

Moving forward, our workload will likely remain the same. A high media interest in police-related issues will continue in near future as this topic has become a national concern. The County also will implement many of the recommendations of the Ad Hoc Police Review Commission in 2015/16, resulting in additional media interest.

In addition, OPA staff will continue to manage a higher level of VFOIA requests related to public safety and other issues that arise. This trend will also continue as OPA helps organize, put into context the information provided and reply to all VFOIA requests received.

Media relations, media response, strategy development and messaging are among OPA's highest priorities and one of our most important Lines of Business. OPA will continue to dedicate the necessary resources to successfully manage media relations at the highest level.

LOB #40:

SOCIAL MEDIA AND WEB CONTENT

Purpose

The Office of Public Affairs (OPA) is on the forefront of communications change in today's world. Through social media and web content, OPA serves the County and its residents by creating, coordinating and sharing relevant, timely and actionable information through news updates, Facebook posts or Twitter updates, and thousands of fairfaxcounty.gov web pages.

OPA plays a pivotal role in creating and managing the County's social media and web presences to residents and to the world. OPA's social media and web content purpose is simple: convey the County's mission and business effectively and efficiently. Social media and web content are both independent of each other, yet connected. Social media tools feature precise ways to execute successful content in a social setting, while the website has specific processes, too. Social media and web content come together on sites such as the Fairfax County Government NewsCenter, which is a new approach to communications with a core philosophy that in today's world, government can serve as direct publishers of information.

Fairfax County's web presence is managed at the highest level by two County agencies – OPA and DIT. OPA is ultimately responsible for the content published on the public website serving as planner, creator and coordinator. The County's website is a strategic asset that is crucial to the County's success.

Description

Among the responsibilities associated with the LOB are:

SOCIAL MEDIA

OPA leads Fairfax County's successful social media presence and its purpose has been validated each fiscal year:

Facebook "reach" for all Official County Facebook Pages ("reach" means number of times County content appeared in someone's Facebook feed):

- FY 2012: 2,088,753
- FY 2013: 6,659,856
- FY 2014: 11,603,306
- FY 2015: 28,313,758

Twitter Impressions for all Official County Twitter Accounts ("impression" means number of times County content appeared in someone's Twitter feed):

- FY 2014: 14,746,461
- FY 2015: 23,550,698

On both key social media platforms, the community has expressed its satisfaction through ongoing surveys:

- Facebook satisfaction: 85 percent
- Twitter satisfaction: 84 percent

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In this same satisfaction survey, the community also has expressed the educational benefits of the County's social media presence through this question: "Have you learned more about your local government, its programs and services through our use of (Facebook/Twitter)?"

- Facebook: Yes, 82 percent
- Twitter: Yes, 74 percent

General Oversight

OPA leads the County's social media presence. From publishing content to the main County government accounts to training each agency on how best to use Facebook and Twitter, OPA's imprint is over almost every aspect of County social media. OPA leads the development of overarching strategy – explaining and educating on each social tool, as well as creating all social media accounts from Facebook pages to Twitter accounts to the police and fire news blogs. OPA plays a silent, yet critical role on-stage and behind the scenes. OPA also carefully monitors metrics of all accounts in order to sense trends, find opportunities and address struggling accounts. OPA provides constant counsel to all agencies on the best approaches to address emerging issues or planned campaigns.

Strategy and Policy

OPA recently led the completion of a new social media strategy that features six philosophies of the County's approach to social media:

1. Publish, engage and provide customer service with relevant, timely and actionable information, while promoting core services and key events.
2. Establish our voice to build confidence that we are a trusted source for information, especially during emergencies.
3. Use social media aggressively during emergencies and emerging incidents to empower information ambassadors, listen to community first informers and share critical information.
4. Listen to conversations about government services/programs and participate in individual, neighborhood, local, regional, state and/or national conversations.
5. Ensure the security of our social media accounts and prevent cyber vandalism.
6. Integrate social media with other ways to deliver and share content, such as paid, earned and owned media opportunities.

This new strategy also features cross-County coordination and requirements – all accounts must submit annual goals, as well as meet certain output standards.

Approving Accounts

Since 2010, OPA has led the process for departments to apply for social media accounts. It is not acceptable to simply allow agencies to create social media accounts. Other local governments allow accounts to be created that quickly become dormant, uncoordinated or compromised. OPA requires business cases, training, metrics checks, specific security settings and general oversight. In total, OPA has stood up 30+ Facebook and Twitter accounts in five years.

Training and Educating

Training is a crucial component of social media since the landscape changes so frequently. OPA conducts workshops with staff from each new account that has been approved in order to convey the importance and nuance of managing an official County government communications tool. OPA provides constant updates to the 50+ staff that has publishing access to official social media accounts.

Publishing and Listening

OPA serves as the publisher and voice of the County's primary social media accounts on the following platforms: Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Flickr, Instagram, Periscope, SoundCloud, SlideShare and select blogs. This daily work requires a dedicated team effort to create and share content so the community can be further educated about Fairfax County government. OPA also plays the critical role of "eyes and ears" on social media and alerts County leadership and key stakeholders of emerging trends and conversations.

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Emergency Information

According to the County's Emergency Operations Plan, OPA is mandated as the lead communications agency during major emergencies. One primary reason OPA began using social media in 2008 was for emergencies – County information needed to be on platforms people use. Social media is absolutely critical to successful emergency and crisis communications today; otherwise, the County would be unable to share key information directly with the public. With 51 million total impressions on Facebook and Twitter for all County accounts in FY 2015, the opportunity is there and OPA has seized it year after year during major events such as snowstorms, severe summer storms and by aiding other agencies such as the Police Department during the escaped prisoner manhunt (communications for that event were successful because of social media).

WEB CONTENT

OPA plays a key, vigilant role in coordinating content and ensuring that the public can access information in a usable format without always knowing which specific agency controls the topic.

Creating and Coordinating Web Content

OPA's unique role as the County's central communications office extends to the web. OPA knows the County's big picture and conveys this on the web through timely publishing of key information. OPA has created hundreds of web pages, ensuring a consistent message that includes all County agency information on a topic. OPA coordinates content between agencies that may be working on the same topic, but not aware there are relevant web pages elsewhere. More than 200 County employees publish content to the public website. However, the level of training, the priority of web content in their job portfolios and the intuition to link to other County efforts is often inconsistent. OPA achieves coordination in three ways:

1. Facilitating (and often creating) cross-agency web content such as ad hoc police commission, bond referenda, economic success, financial transparency, bipartisan election commission, meals tax, Fairfax Alerts, Silver Line and Tysons.
2. Consulting on a daily basis with all County agencies on short and long-term web content issues. OPA has consulted with nearly every agency on web content, including agency web page redesigns for the Office of Elections, the Department of Tax Administration, Police Department, General District Court, Office of Emergency Management and the Department of Family Services, to name just a few.
3. Leading the web content review process that began in FY 2015, which systematically seeks consistency and compliance in all agencies.

User Testing and Public Involvement

Testing and assessing are critical to successful websites. An example of testing is when OPA designed, conducted and reported on usability for the County's financial transparency application to ensure that those who are not familiar with the County's financial structure would still be able to search and obtain the information they want. Findings and subsequent changes made the product more effective and efficient.

Emergency Information

OPA uses the web as one way to communicate critical information during emergencies. In recent years, information has been published online for the Derecho, Tropical Storm Sandy, numerous snow/ice events and other storm and health-related events. OPA web staff is available at any hour to publish critical information.

Policy

OPA, in consultation with the E-Government Steering Committee and DIT, provides the policy framework for the County's web content as outlined in Procedural Memorandum No. 13-04.

Benefits

SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media growth, as outlined with the metrics on the first page of this description, has expanded each year as more people use social media; as the County selectively approves more accounts; and as government culture becomes more comfortable with social media.

Five years ago, it was not possible for County messages to be viewed 51 million times. In FY 2015, the collective “reach” of Facebook and “impressions” on Twitter for all official accounts reached that lofty number. The satisfaction with official social media accounts is over 80 percent. In qualitative comments, survey respondents consistently cite the abundance of useful posts Fairfax County shares on social media. The public has also provided insight that it relies on Fairfax County as a first source of information. People see the County government as publishers, much like a newspaper or broadcast journalist. With social media today, if done well and correctly, organizations such as Fairfax County can serve as a primary publisher to a community of interested people. Everyone who follows County accounts chooses to follow those accounts. People want Fairfax County government information on the tools they use today. It is indicative of the power of social media that County information was consumed 51.8 million times across two of the major social media sites in today’s communications world – a 97 percent increase from 26.3 million in FY 2014.

The benefits are also stated more starkly – if the County government exclusively relied on news releases, news conferences and media relations, then the County could not effectively tell its story directly to residents. This is a time of vast change in communications and during these tumultuous times, OPA has worked to keep the County moving forward by staying apprised of the latest tools and tactics. There is always room for improvement, but Fairfax County’s robust, detailed, centralized and methodical approach to social media has become an extremely important facet in achieving the County’s vision element of creating a culture of engagement.

WEB CONTENT

Managing web content from the countywide perspective benefits residents because OPA works to ensure that County stovepipes are not replicated on the website. While many stovepipes still exist, it is essential that a centralized office serve as the reactive and proactive content managing presence for the whole County. It is also important for staff to have resources and expertise available for consultation, which benefits agencies and ultimately, the whole County and its residents.

OPA is currently leading the countywide web content review process where OPA works with each agency individually to ensure the content on their web pages is timely, accurate and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessible.

The benefits of publishing news and information directly to the community (either through web content or social media) is a clear benefit to the public because it can rely on its County government as a direct source of information. That benefit cannot be understated in a world of a million messages, distractions and niche interests. By publishing, coordinating and facilitating web content, OPA plays a critical gate keeper role to help ensure the digital presence of the County is expressed with clarity and purpose.

Mandates

While this LOB is not mandated, if the County publishes material to the fairfaxcounty.gov website, it must be in compliance with ADA accessibility requirements.

Trends and Challenges

The one, overarching trend/challenge for both social media and web content is the continued rapid growth of mobile devices. While Fairfax County has made some inroads with mobile through the leadership of DIT and OPA, County staff must recognize the fundamental change in how people consume information online – and that’s through a mobile device. According to recent research, mobile device web/app browsing exceeds visiting a website on a “traditional” desktop computer.

This trend poses a challenge to County information creators, who must think mobile first, not as an afterthought. Are County web pages designed for mobile devices or, instead, do they feature long paragraphs of information that are unfriendly to read on mobile devices? Can transactions be easily accomplished on a mobile device? Do County staff members, when proposing content for Twitter, realize that the great majority of tweets will be read on a smartphone? This overarching trend presents the challenge and OPA has an opportunity to be part of the solution when educating staff about mobile-first information presentation that needs to be executed well.

SOCIAL MEDIA

The single biggest challenge with social media is the pace of change. Tools and tactics change every week and keeping apprised of the best methods is challenging as relevant information must then be conveyed to all agency publishers. The pace of change and the introduction of new tools will not cease given the world in which we live, so Fairfax County will have to be judicious in deciding how best to grow a social media presence efficiently and effectively.

The biggest trend that is tied to the challenge above is the continued demographic breakdown of so many social media tools. One researcher recently wrote that mass marketing/communications is becoming a “mass of niches.” Popular theory today says Facebook is for people age 30+; LinkedIn is for a professional audience; Instagram is best for a younger crowd; Pinterest is generally for women; and new tools such as Snapchat appeal to even different slices of residents. It will be a challenge to stand up social profiles on all platforms deemed worthy to pursue (today the County does not have a presence on all key platforms).

OPA will continue to play its leadership role in nurturing social media while also being attentive to where we can find our audience, but it will be a challenge to support more than a handful of sites. The County’s choices in platforms must meet business goals and objectives.

WEB CONTENT

Web content faces many ongoing challenges that OPA and DIT continue to address jointly. Issues include content publishing system, ADA requirements, lack of usability testing for key sites and trying to ensure consistency across thousands of County web pages. The detailed work required to address these challenges takes time, resources and cooperation from across the County.

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Resources

Category	FY 2014 Actual	FY 2015 Actual	FY 2016 Adopted
LOB #40: Social Media and Web Content			
FUNDING			
<u>Expenditures:</u>			
Compensation	\$164,095	\$153,232	\$162,545
Operating Expenses	14,155	15,553	13,380
Work Performed for Others	(132,908)	(135,355)	(124,955)
Total Expenditures	\$45,342	\$33,430	\$50,970
General Fund Revenue	\$0	\$0	\$0
Net Cost/(Savings) to General Fund	\$45,342	\$33,430	\$50,970
POSITIONS			
Authorized Positions/Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs)			
<u>Positions:</u>			
Regular	2 / 2.16	2 / 2.16	2 / 2.04
Total Positions	2 / 2.16	2 / 2.16	2 / 2.04

Metrics

Metric Indicator	FY 2013 Actual	FY 2014 Actual	FY 2015 Actual	FY 2016 Estimate	FY 2017 Estimate
Twitter reach (all County accounts)	NA	14,746,461	23,550,698	28,000,000	30,000,000
Facebook reach (all County accounts)	6,659,856	11,603,306	28,313,758	34,000,000	37,000,000
Facebook reach (main account)	1,644,911	2,161,533	4,478,701	5,000,000	6,500,000
Facebook reach per dedicated FTE (main account)	657,964	864,613	1,791,480	2,000,000	2,600,000
Percent satisfied with County Facebook information (main account)	80%	92%	85%	85%	85%
County YouTube minutes watched	183,136	278,726	408,656	500,000	525,000

Social media is the easiest form of communications to measure. All of the major tools the County uses include a suite of metrics behind the scenes. As the numbers in the metrics indicate, all of County social media properties are growing year over year. On Facebook, the County more than doubled its reach from 11 million in FY 2014 to 28 million in FY 2015. This number will continue to increase as more County Facebook pages are introduced and as more of our residents choose to connect with the County on social media.

Overall, the Office of Public Affairs, in its countywide leadership role for social media, fully expects all social media metrics to continue growing. More residents are finding County, police, fire, environment, animal and parks information, among the nearly 30 social accounts the County currently hosts on tools such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and Flickr. The County's mere presence on social media, coupled with the disciplined training OPA requires each agency to adhere to, are two factors contributing to this performance. Our residents expect us on these platforms.

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There are a few factors restricting performance. For example, on Facebook the County is at the mercy of that social media platform's algorithm, which means Facebook decides who sees what information in their individual news feeds based on hundreds of factors. So if a resident has not interacted with a County page in a while, then it is unlikely the resident will see many future updates. On Twitter, the lifespan of a tweet is generally one to two hours, so if accounts do not constantly share the same updates multiple times, then key audiences will be missed. Each social media tool has nuances that OPA stays on top of so the County can maximize its presence and relay information and engage with the community.

The County's website at www.fairfaxcounty.gov continues to be the prime information source the County directly controls and its stats have been consistent the last few years at around 19 million visits. It's a challenge to "expect" a metric on a website as large as the County's because people visit for so many different reasons; however, it is essential to note that the majority of website traffic goes to a few top areas: library, taxes, police and parks. While other areas are important, these four topics are among the most visited on fairfaxcounty.gov, primarily because of the transaction-based nature of renewing library books or paying taxes online.

LOB #41:

EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS AND PLANNING

Purpose

As required by the Fairfax County Emergency Operations Plan, OPA coordinates and disseminates all emergency information related to major incidents affecting more than two County agencies. As such, OPA continues to recognize emergency communications as one of its major Lines of Business and the need for increased emphasis on emergency communications and dissemination of emergency information to the public, County employees, Board of Supervisors, and other partner agencies and stakeholders, including the media.

Emergency communications encompass:

- Crisis Communications – Planning appropriate actions and coordinating the dissemination of information in response to high-profile or sensitive issues such as on-the-job employee death or employee actions that result in criminal charges.
- Risk Communications – Providing the public with information that reduces anxiety and fear and also provides suggestions for planning that will assist in responding to an emergency event (or pending crisis). Risk communications are intended to do no harm to the current situation, ease public concern and provide guidance on how to respond to the situation.
- Emergency Situations – Predicted or actual events that have the potential to affect the safety, health and welfare of the population such as drinking water contamination or widespread exposure to infectious disease or hazardous materials.
- Staff Support in Emergency Events – Consulting with other agencies to assist in planning actions and collecting, analyzing and disseminating key information to residents, employees and media during emergency or critical incidents.
- Weather Alerts – Predicted or actual weather events such as hurricanes, tornadoes, derechos, severe snow or ice, or other hazardous weather conditions affecting County residents.

Description

OPA is the lead agency in providing emergency public information to Fairfax County residents and businesses as well as County employees. According to the Fairfax County Emergency Operations Plan, this responsibility is defined as Emergency Support Function (ESF) 15: External Affairs. As the lead agency for ESF 15, OPA's mission is:

“To monitor and provide timely and accurate information to the public, media, private sector, and Fairfax County elected officials and employees during emergencies or threatened emergencies and to provide protective action guidance as appropriate to save lives and protect property.”

The Emergency Operations Plan also states that “when three or more County agencies are involved in emergency operations, the Office of Public Affairs, as the coordinating agency of ESF 15, will serve as the primary point-of-contact for the release of information to the media and public, and the monitoring and engagement between the County and its various stakeholders.”

In the event of a mass fatality incident (as detailed in the Fairfax County Emergency Operations Plan), ESF 15 also provides support to the Family Assistance Center to include family and media briefings, website and emergency blog postings, news releases and other public information efforts, as well as facilitates communications with family members. OPA is also involved and assists in delivering public information when the Office of Emergency Management establishes Service Information Centers (SICs) in response to emergency events.

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During activations of the Emergency Operations Center (EOC), OPA staff are key players in the EOC organizational structure, serving as the EOC Command and General Staff Public Information Officer (PIO), while the Director of OPA serves in 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 activates the County's JIC, which serves as the central clearinghouse for emergency information distribution, whenever the EOC is activated.

The emergency information blog (www.fairfaxcounty.gov/emergency/blog) and continued use of social media tools confirm the changing world that government communicators must recognize and adapt to in order to distribute emergency news and information to our various audiences and stakeholders. To that end, OPA uses multiple communication tools and channels. These tools include the blog and County website; Facebook and Twitter (both County and agency-specific accounts); YouTube; SoundCloud; emails, text and pager messages from Fairfax Alerts, which replaced the Community Emergency Alert Network (CEAN) in the summer of 2014, and for employees, the Employee Alert Network (EAN); Fairfax County Government Radio (www.fairfaxcounty.gov/radio); the emergency information hotline as well as internal hotline numbers for County employees; Flickr; RSS news feeds; video (in addition to YouTube, OPA utilizes video online and on Channel 16); media interviews; the County app; regional websites (such as www.capitalregionupdates.gov); conference calls; and Ask Fairfax online chats to communicate with target audiences.

Other responsibilities include the following:

County Spokesperson

The Director of OPA serves as the County's spokesperson on a day-to-day basis. During emergencies, the OPA Director can also serve in this role or depending on the level of the incident, may relinquish that role and provide support and guidance for either the Chairman of the Board of Supervisors or the County Executive (or designee). During emergency events, the OPA Director also serves as a member of the County's Emergency Management Team, consulting with the County Executive and senior management to assist in planning the County's emergency response. The OPA Director is on call 24/7 to respond to emergencies and handle media inquiries.

Emergency Information Officer

During emergencies, the OPA Emergency Information Officer (Public Safety Information Officer IV) serves as operations lead for OPA staff in the response to the incident. This position also supports emergency planning functions for the agency and County, as well as provides support to the OPA Director, Chairman's Office, County Executive and other agencies in responding to emergency incidents.

OPA Staff

Classified as "essential personnel" during times of crisis, OPA staff are available and prepared to respond to emergencies 24 hours a day. Each week, OPA assembles a "Red/Blue" team staffing plan with every member of the agency assigned to an emergency role for a 12-hour shift to ensure that the public affairs function can be staffed during a prolonged emergency event. OPA staff know their roles and responsibilities for emergency communications on a weekly basis and are expected to respond if necessary.

NIMS and ICS

All OPA staff are trained in basic National Incident Management System (NIMS) and Incident Management System (ICS) courses – ICS 100, ICS 200, ICS 700 and ICS 800. Some OPA staff, including the Emergency Information Officer and other senior-level staff, have also been trained in higher level courses such as ICS 232: Effective Communication; ICS 300: Intermediate ICS for Expanding Incidents; and ICS 400: Advanced ICS for Command and General Staff, Complex Incidents and Multiagency Coordination System (MACS).

WebEOC

During emergencies, OPA uses the WebEOC software, as does every other County agency, for incident management tracking and resource requests. All OPA staff are trained in WebEOC and are capable of filling WebEOC/admin positions in the Emergency Operations Center (EOC), Alternate Emergency Operations Center (AEOC), the Emergency Line Call Center or the OPA Operations Center.

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Emergency Planning and Exercises

The agency's Emergency Information Officer serves on numerous countywide efforts in the area of emergency preparedness as well as emergency planning and exercise groups. OPA, due to its lead role in coordinating emergency communications for the County, is one of the few County agencies that is most often involved in emergency exercises, real-world events and activation of the EOC. OPA serves on the countywide Continuity of Operations Planning (COOP) Committee, is a member of the County's Emergency Management Coordinating Committee (EMCC) and most recently, OPA's Deputy Director served as liaison to the 2015 World Police and Fire Games. The Emergency Information Officer and other OPA staff as necessary are involved in all County tabletop and functional exercises – including exercise planning for most exercises – such as recent exercises for the World Police and Fire Games and the Virginia Emergency Response Team Exercise (VERTEX).

Emergency Support Function (ESF) 15: External Affairs

As outlined in the Fairfax County Emergency Operations Plan, OPA is responsible for ESF 15: External Affairs, which includes supervising the dissemination of emergency public information, coordinating and disseminating news releases, serving as the lead spokesperson for release of information to the public and the media, and supervising operation of the Fairfax County Government Emergency Information line (to control rumors and ensure accurate information is available). In addition, OPA has and continues to serve in a leadership role on the regional R-ESF 15 committee.

ESF 15 encompasses the full range of external affairs functions including the following:

- **Public information** includes providing incident-related information through the media and other sources to individuals, families, businesses and industries directly or indirectly affected by the incident;
- **Community relations activities** include identifying and communicating with community leaders, e.g., grass roots, political, religious, business, labor and ethnic, as well as neighborhood advocacy groups to ensure a rapid dissemination of information, identify unmet needs and establish an ongoing dialogue and information exchange; and
- **Government affairs** includes establishing and maintaining contact with members of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors and legislative offices representing the affected areas to provide information about the incident and the status of response and recovery activities. It also includes coordinating responses to inquiries from the Board of Supervisors and other elected officials.

PIO Corps

A component of ESF 15 is the County PIO Corps, comprised of all County government public information officers and communication specialists. As the lead for ESF 15: External Affairs, OPA must perform numerous functions during an emergency event or activation of the EOC including:

- Staffing the Joint Information Center (JIC)
- Staffing and/or providing support to field PIOs at multiple locations
- Coordinating messaging across numerous communication platforms, such as Twitter, Facebook, web pages, video, audio, etc.
- Staffing and supervising call-takers for the Emergency Information Line (if activated)

Due to the multitude of responsibilities and the small number of OPA staff, the OPA Director can assign any County PIO to work an emergency incident. The PIO remains the employee of his/her agency, but for the duration of the event, is assigned to emergency communications functions as part of the PIO Corps as directed by the OPA Director.

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Emergency Communication Tools

During Emergency Operations Center (EOC) activations, the Office of Public Affairs opens a Joint Information Center (JIC). The JIC is a physical location – adjacent to the EOC – where OPA communicators and PIOs from various agencies and disciplines (both County and regional) gather to develop messages, talking points and news releases, as well as coordinate emergency communication efforts to contribute to a positive outcome.

If an emergency event includes adjacent jurisdictions or involves the National Capital Region, a regional Joint Information Center may also be established, most often within the jurisdiction where the incident has occurred. OPA may be required to staff such a regional JIC if established. OPA also staffs and currently manages the region's virtual JIC, Capital Region Updates (www.capitalregionupdates.gov) that provides regional news, information and situational awareness for NCR residents and stakeholders.

OPA disseminates emergency information to various audiences using the tools listed below. A more detailed description and the benefits of each follows in the next section.

- Social Media
- Media Outlets
- Emergency Information Blog
- County Website
- Fairfax County Government Radio
- Fairfax Alerts
- Employee Alert Network (EAN)
- 324-SNOW (7669), 246-SNOW (7669) and 87-SNOW-FFX1 (1-877-669-3391)
- RSS Feeds
- Channel 16
- Emergency Information Line
- Medical Needs/Social Needs Registry
- Health and Safety Podcast
- 703-FAIRFAX (324-7329)
- ESF 15 Business/Nonprofit Update
- News Conferences
- Community Meetings
- Door-to-Door Contact (including flyers)

There are 2/1.70 FTE positions associated with this line of business.

Benefits

Social Media – Increasingly, County residents and others are relying on social media such as Twitter and Facebook for news and information, especially during times of crisis. OPA employees are trained in the use of social media and rely on this outlet as a primary way to communicate emergency information quickly to residents as well as the traditional media outlets that follow the County's social media accounts.

Media Outlets – A major role of OPA is to distribute emergency communications to the media which becomes a partner to the County in broadcasting life safety and property conservation messages to residents and businesses. OPA maintains media databases and contact information on redundant systems to maintain the ability to contact the media during an emergency. OPA sends news releases, media advisories

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and photo releases, as well as schedules media briefings and news conferences as needed during an emergency.

Emergency Information Blog – The blog is the primary online platform used for both preparedness information before and news during an emergency event. Information published on the emergency blog is also repurposed and published on social media sites. (www.fairfaxcounty.gov/emergency/blog)

County Website – The web is one of the first places a “wired” community such as Fairfax County turns to for information. In addition to a specific Emergency Information page (www.fairfaxcounty.gov/emergency/), OPA posts emergency communications to the home page of the County website during severe weather events and other emergencies. From this home page announcement, web visitors have the opportunity to click to another more detailed page about the current situation that features detailed information, where to find assistance, numbers to call, etc.

Fairfax County Government Radio – Following Hurricane Isabel, the County learned that commercial radio outlets simply could not broadcast the amount and depth of information our residents needed and since this area’s media serve the National Capital Region, which includes Northern Virginia, the District of Columbia and Southern Maryland, many jurisdictions had competing messages that caused confusion for residents. Subsequently, OPA developed an internet radio station (www.fairfaxcounty.gov/radio/) that broadcasts 24/7 where OPA has the capability to tailor messages especially for Fairfax County residents. In addition, those without a computer can call 571-350-2160 to listen to the online stream (station) via telephone.

Fairfax Alerts – This network delivers important emergency alerts, notifications and updates during a major crisis or emergency, in addition to day-to-day notices about severe weather and traffic. Messages are delivered to email accounts, cellphones, text pagers and wireless devices. In addition, this tool can be used for non-emergency messages; e.g., residents can sign up to receive alerts about tax due dates, etc. (www.fairfaxcounty.gov/alerts).

Employee Alert Network (EAN) – Similar to Fairfax Alerts, this is the County’s internal alerting and communication tool for providing emergency alerts to County employees.

324-SNOW (7669), 246-SNOW (7669) and 87-SNOW-FFX1 (1-877-669-3391) – When snow/ice or other emergency events occur, the County’s workforce, a number of whom travel to Fairfax County from outlying jurisdictions, need timely information on County closures or delayed openings. These dedicated telephone lines feature automated messages that are recorded by OPA staff to provide emergency communications to County employees.

RSS Feeds – RSS, which stands for “Really Simple Syndication,” is a way to publish frequently-updated content such as news headlines, podcasts or online blogs, making it possible to keep up with information in an automated manner that’s easier than checking websites manually. County residents, media, businesses, nonprofits and other interested audiences can sign up to receive the feeds automatically. This is especially useful during an emergency such as a severe weather event where conditions change rapidly.

Channel 16 – OPA uses the County government’s Channel 16 to disseminate emergency information through “crawl” messages that scroll across the television screen. OPA also has the ability in a severe emergency situation to broadcast a full screen of life safety information to Channel 16 viewers.

Emergency Information Line – The County’s Emergency Information Line (703-817-7771) features three pre-recorded emergency preparedness messages callers can listen to. During an incident, the welcome message includes updates on the situation with instructions and information. The line is answered during normal business hours (8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.) and during an emergency situation where it is staffed at the McConnell Public Safety and Transportation Operations Center (MPSTOC). Call-takers, typically Police or Fire and Rescue recruits or other staff, augment OPA staff in providing emergency information to residents through 20 telephone lines for incoming calls.

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Medical Needs/Social Needs Registry – The County’s website contains an online registration area where individuals with medical needs and organizations serving people with social needs can pre-identify themselves so the County can communicate with them during an emergency. OPA was part of the committee that created this registry and also developed the communication plan when this service was launched in 2007.

Health and Safety Podcast – This tool is designed to provide emergency preparedness information but can also be used during an emergency incident. The podcast is produced on average twice monthly and features various emergency preparedness news and information from the Office of Emergency Management, Police Department, Fire and Rescue Department, Sheriff’s Office and the Health Department. The OPA Emergency Information Officer writes and records this podcast which can be listened to via the County’s website or downloaded and listened to on a portable device such as an iPod. (www.fairfaxcounty.gov/podcasts/health-and-safety.htm)

703-Fairfax (324-7329) – This day-to-day information and referral line, staffed by OPA, is also used during emergency events. Depending on the time of the incident or emergency, the line will either be staffed (8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.) or feature a recorded message with emergency information and resources residents can use to get more details.

ESF 15 Business/Nonprofit Update – OPA created and maintains a list of business and nonprofit organization contacts throughout the County and produces a monthly email newsletter – the ESF 15 Business/Nonprofit Update. This newsletter includes information of interest for ESF 15, as well as articles of interest from national media, upcoming training, and a section featuring emergency preparedness information and news.

News Conferences – Another important tool OPA uses during crises is news conferences. These allow key County leadership to address multiple media outlets simultaneously. While often conducted at MPSTOC, news conferences are also held onsite at event locations and coordinated with PIOs on the scene.

Community Meetings – An important part of healing within a community is the ability for residents to come together and hear the latest news about an incident affecting their neighborhood. As ESF 15 lead, OPA is responsible for organizing these events. This includes ensuring representatives from all related County agencies are present, coordinating the meeting location and time with the Chairman and/or the Supervisor of the magisterial district in which the emergency occurred, publicizing the event, scheduling transportation services as needed, working with the media covering the event, etc.

Door-to-Door Contact (including flyers) – Many times, the most effective way of communicating with a targeted geographic area is the door-to-door delivery of news and information to County residents. This is done due to the immediacy of a situation or to address language barriers. OPA coordinates production of the message and then works with public safety agencies – most often the Fire and Rescue Department and the Police Department – to walk through a neighborhood to deliver critical life safety/property conservation messages house-by-house. The most common example of this is in the Belleview, Huntington and New Alexandria areas when flooding is anticipated.

Mandates

While not mandated by the federal or state governments, the Office of Public Affairs, according to the Fairfax County Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) is directed to coordinate communications “when three or more County agencies are involved in emergency operations.” The EOP states that OPA, as the coordinating agency of ESF 15, will “serve as the primary point-of-contact for the release of information to the media and public, and the monitoring and engagement between the County and its various stakeholders.”

Trends and Challenges

Fairfax County is the most populous county in Virginia, and with a number of Fortune 500 companies located here, major shopping and entertainment venues, and our proximity to nation's capital, potential terrorist threats are a real concern for our public safety agencies. Unfortunately, terror threats by recognized groups and lone wolf attacks are an increasing concern and one Fairfax County needs to be ready to respond to and communicate public safety messages to our residents.

Weather events, however, can have just as much, if not more, effect on our residents as terrorist attacks because of their frequency. From thunderstorms and flooding, extreme heat and cold temperatures, snow and ice, tornadoes and even earthquakes, OPA must be ready to communicate safety information for all types of hazards to our residents and stakeholder organizations, as well as our employees. Weather events also impact travel in the County and region, which is a growing area for communications, as residents constantly want and need to know what roads might be affected by weather events and how they can continue their travels.

The diverse needs of the County's population also bring added challenges to delivering emergency communications. Our residents need to receive information during emergencies – not just in a manner they want to receive it, such as via social media, print, online or by audio or video – but the message must also be tailored to how they can understand it, i.e., in their native language, etc. Additional considerations such as an aging population, computer access and functional needs continue to impact County communications as both populations continue to grow in numbers across the area.

Additionally, the proliferation of communications methods that residents use on a day-to-day basis impacts OPA's ability to deliver timely, actionable and relevant information. These social tools create opportunities for Fairfax County to reach residents where they are – but they also require an increasing amount of time as staff are needed to monitor and respond/engage as appropriate through the various tools.

Many residents rely on social media, especially Twitter and Facebook, for their news and information, foregoing the nightly television news broadcast. Tools such as Pinterest, Instagram, LinkedIn, YouTube, Snapchat, Tumblr, Vine, Google+, Meetup, Ning, Orkut and Badoo (among others) are where many residents choose to go for news and information. And new social tools such as Periscope and Meerkat that allow users to live stream video – either officially by Fairfax County or from a bystander at the scene of an emergency – are constantly being developed, adding to the challenge of constantly learning, monitoring and publishing to these channels.

Radio is increasingly important as more and more residents are in their cars or on public transportation going to and from work, listening via streaming audio services and radio station apps. OPA recently developed a 24/7 Internet stream to provide news and information to residents on a day-to-day basis, as well as provide critical life safety news during times of crisis. Radio, as well as visual communications – photos and video – will continue to increase in importance, as well as continue to impact the workload of OPA staff.

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Resources

Category	FY 2014 Actual	FY 2015 Actual	FY 2016 Adopted
LOB #41: Emergency Communications and Planning			
FUNDING			
<u>Expenditures:</u>			
Compensation	\$136,745	\$127,693	\$135,454
Operating Expenses	11,796	12,960	11,150
Work Performed for Others	(49,117)	(50,017)	(46,177)
Total Expenditures	\$99,424	\$90,636	\$100,427
General Fund Revenue	\$0	\$0	\$0
Net Cost/(Savings) to General Fund	\$99,424	\$90,636	\$100,427
POSITIONS			
Authorized Positions/Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs)			
<u>Positions:</u>			
Regular	2 / 1.8	2 / 1.8	2 / 1.7
Total Positions	2 / 1.8	2 / 1.8	2 / 1.7

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Metrics

Metric Indicator	FY 2013 Actual	FY 2014 Actual	FY 2015 Actual	FY 2016 Estimate	FY 2017 Estimate
Emergency Information Blog views	648,125	499,967	349,977	367,476	385,850
Fairfax Internet Radio - total number of listeners	NA	NA	1,730	1,817	1,907
Fairfax Internet Radio - total number of listening hours	NA	NA	8,342	8,760	9,197
Emergency Preparedness Outreach Newsletter	12	12	12	12	12

Some of the measurements for emergency communications depend on outside factors, such as extreme weather or man-made events. For instance, emergency blog views were exceptionally high in fiscal year 2013 due to the Derecho that affected Fairfax County, as well as Tropical Storm Sandy later that year. Fortunately, the County has have been spared from damaging weather events the past few years, which reflects a decrease in blog views.

But while blog views may be averaging out over the past several years, we anticipate the number of listeners and minutes listened to Fairfax County Government Radio (online) to increase as more residents become aware of the service, which can be utilized 24/7 to get Fairfax County news, weather and event information – both during emergencies, as well as on a day-to-day basis. OPA anticipates listenership to increase as more residents adopt the use of mobile technology, listening to the online stream via their smartphones and various listening apps. Additional listenership could be attained if the radio stream was fully incorporated into the County’s current app for smartphones enabling listening through the app versus redirecting to the web page. Increased promotion of the station could also increase listenership.

Remaining steady is the number of “Emergency Preparedness” newsletters produced in cooperation with the Office of Emergency Management since this is a monthly publication. It is also anticipated that the number of staff hours devoted to emergency communications and planning – including everything from early morning snow calls and messaging during inclement weather to emergency communications planning for exercises (tabletop, functional and full-scale) – should remain fairly consistent, barring an extremely difficult winter.

LOB #42:

DEPARTMENT PLANNING AND ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT

Purpose

The purpose of this line of business is to ensure that the Office of Public Affairs (OPA) fulfills its planning and administrative duties through strategic and work planning; human capital management including workforce and succession planning; training monitoring; budget preparation and monitoring; financial processing, reporting and reconciliation; and procurement.

Description

Among the functions handled through this LOB are:

Strategic Planning and Work Planning

Agency management and the senior staff team periodically update OPA's strategic plan and develop annual work plans to support OPA's mission. It is an ongoing process to support results-based decision-making, planning and budgeting.

Human Capital Management

In addition to the day-to-day human capital management activities such as time management, OPA also focuses on strategic challenges associated with recruitment and staff development, particularly in light of the County's succession planning initiative and workforce planning to ensure that OPA has "the right number of people in the right jobs with the right competencies at the right time." With the County's priority on succession planning, given the high number of employees eligible to retire in the next few years countywide, staff in this LOB is responsible for preparing OPA's plan and participating in the succession planning community of practice. Another duty is the completion of the annual Diversity Report required by the Office of Human Rights and Equity Programs.

Training Monitoring

Staff associated with this line of business is also responsible for tracking mandatory training to ensure that OPA is in compliance with County requirements. In addition to countywide mandated training such as Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Prevention of Sexual Harassment, etc., there are a number of courses required, e.g., incident command systems training, for OPA employees to staff the Joint Information Center in the event of an activation of the Emergency Operations Center. It is crucial that staff have the appropriate training to enable them to perform satisfactorily in such situations. In addition, given changing technology and communication techniques, it is imperative that employees consistently upgrade their skills in order to ensure a high performance workforce to be able to deliver the level of service County residents have come to expect.

Budget Preparation/Monitoring

OPA's Financial Operations Manager prepares, justifies and manages the agency's annual budget as well as prepares the Third Quarter and Carryover Review submissions. Regular budget monitoring is also accomplished to ensure that OPA does not exceed its appropriation. Periodic updates are provided to OPA senior staff to provide a clear financial picture to allow for efficient and effective management of agency resources.

Financial Processing/Reporting/Reconciliation

The Financial Operations Manager is also responsible for submitting financial reports as well as preparing OPA's monthly financial reconciliation as required by Accounting Technical Bulletin (ATB) 020. In addition, when the agency has grants, staff is responsible for completing and submitting the required reports to the Department of Finance and the Department of Management and Budget, as well as the grantor, with regard to the establishment of grants, monitoring during the life cycle of the grants and completing the appropriate steps to close out grants when necessary.

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Procurement

To comply with the County's separation of duties requirements, the Administrative Assistant V initiates orders which are then approved by the Financial Operations Manager. This includes processing shopping carts and purchase orders through the County's FOCUS system, as well as managing OPA's use of the procurement card to ensure compliance with all applicable policies and procedures. These staff also prepare and review the weekly p-card and marketplace reconciliations as required by County policy.

There is 1/1.02 FTE position associated with this line of business. However, rather than one person, it includes parts of several OPA employees' time. This division of duties is primarily due to the need for separation of duties, e.g., one person cannot perform all the processes within a particular function, e.g., financial processing and reconciliation, procurement and human capital management.

Benefits

A strong infrastructure resulting from the activities of this line of business enables the Office of Public Affairs to run efficiently and effectively, thus benefiting the entire County. It ensures the optimum application of both financial and human resources in providing services for which the agency is responsible.

Ensuring that OPA is in compliance with the County's internal controls regarding human resources, finance, budgeting and procurement reduces Fairfax County's risk exposure for waste, fraud and abuse and strengthens accountability.

A focus on strategic planning supports the appropriate allocation of scarce resources to meet the communication needs of a growing population.

Mandates

Although the functions performed under this LOB are not mandated by the federal or state governments, there are internal compliance requirements, i.e., separation of duties, regular financial reconciliation, etc.

Trends and Challenges

As is the case for most County agencies, the Office of Public Affairs is challenged with doing more with less. OPA's budget has decreased 7.4 percent over the past 10 years, despite receiving funding for employee raises in six of those years. As a result, it has been necessary to reduce positions and expenditures. It is also important to note that over the past five years, OPA's staffing has decreased from 20 to 17 positions or a 15 percent decrease.

These decreases have meant that remaining staff has had to prioritize strategically and identify means to accomplish the OPA mission with fewer resources, despite a growing population and increased demands for OPA's services.

It also falls to this line of business to identify resources to develop the OPA workforce with limited funding, especially given rapidly changing communications environment – new technology, new tools, etc. on which staff must be trained. Additionally, staff associated with this LOB is responsible for monitoring mandatory training for OPA employees. In addition to countywide mandated training, this includes National Incident Management System (NIMS) and Incident Command Systems (ICS) training that is necessary to prepare staff to staff the Joint Information Center at the Emergency Operations Center which is activated for major emergencies or other events. Given the many other responsibilities assigned to OPA staff, it is challenging to identify time to undertake this valuable training.

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Resources

Category	FY 2014 Actual	FY 2015 Actual	FY 2016 Adopted
LOB #42: Department Planning and Administrative Support			
FUNDING			
<u>Expenditures:</u>			
Compensation	\$82,047	\$76,616	\$81,273
Operating Expenses	7,077	7,776	6,690
Total Expenditures	\$89,124	\$84,392	\$87,963
General Fund Revenue	\$0	\$0	\$0
Net Cost/(Savings) to General Fund	\$89,124	\$84,392	\$87,963
POSITIONS			
Authorized Positions/Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs)			
<u>Positions:</u>			
Regular	1 / 1.08	1 / 1.08	1 / 1.02
Total Positions	1 / 1.08	1 / 1.08	1 / 1.02

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Metrics

Metric Indicator	FY 2013 Actual	FY 2014 Actual	FY 2015 Actual	FY 2016 Estimate	FY 2017 Estimate
Shopping carts processed	22	34	24	24	24
P-Card reconciliations prepared/reviewed	52	52	52	52	52
Marketplace reconciliations prepared/reviewed	52	52	52	52	52
Payroll reconciliations prepared/reviewed	12	12	12	12	12
Financial reconciliations prepared/reviewed	12	12	12	12	12

As a very small line of business with only 1/1.02 FTE dedicated to performing the administrative functions for the Office of Public Affairs, staff must ensure that OPA adheres to strict separation of duties, e.g., the person who initiates a human resources, procurement or financial transaction cannot be the same person to approve it.

During FY 2015, the Office of Internal Audit performed a Business Process Audit on OPA's financial and procurement activities. The results showed a very sound operation with the only comment being a new form needed on file. That audit report can be found at:

http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/audit/pdf/reports/2015reports/15-12-09_opa_bpa_final.pdf

The workload of this LOB is fairly static, with little variation from year to year. However, it is crucial to the agency's operation, without which OPA would not have the resources to perform the work of the other seven LOBs, whether it is hiring staff or procuring supplies and services. OPA has a fairly low number of shopping carts, as the agency is able to use the procurement card for a large portion of its needs since they are under the dollar threshold and this tool is highly efficient for quick purchases. It also benefits the County in rebates from the credit card company.

The other static workload is associated with the County's requirement for regular reconciliations to detect any issues whether it is for payroll or financial processing. Internal Audit noted in its Business Process Audit, "Reconciliations were independently performed and were completed in a timely manner."

Office of Public Affairs

LOB #43:

BOARD SUPPORT

Purpose

The Office of Public Affairs supports the Board of Supervisors by coordinating presentations made to employees, residents, businesses, nonprofits and other organizations. Typically, but not always, these proclamations, resolutions and certificates are presented at Board meetings in order to recognize and celebrate the achievements and contributions of individuals, businesses, nonprofits and faith-based organizations in support of Fairfax County's strategic vision.

Description

OPA coordinates approximately 160 presentations requested by the Board of Supervisors annually for proclamations, resolutions and certifications for hundreds of recipients. This includes:

- Coordinating with the Chairman's office and other Board offices on a regular basis;
- Scheduling all participants who will appear at a Board meeting;
- Writing and distributing guidelines for meeting participation to recipients;
- Preparing items for presentation by researching, writing, coordinating review and producing the final document to be mounted onto a plaque;
- Coordinating the signatures of every document with the appropriate member of the Board;
- Arranging for photographic services, both in print and online; and
- Providing support materials to the Board.

In addition, Board members periodically receive requests to provide presentations to delegations from foreign countries or other organizations such as Boy Scout or Girl Scout troops or Leadership Fairfax. These groups range in size from 1-90 people, depending on the type of organization. If requested by a Board member, OPA coordinates with the appropriate agency for a presentation on the subject matter identified. Often it involves a general overview of Fairfax County, which OPA coordinates, prepares and presents.

Finally, OPA produces a weekly FOIA notice to comply with Virginia law that mandates that all public meetings where more than two Board members are present be publicized at least five business days in advance.

There is 1/1.36 FTE position associated with this line of business. In addition to one employee who handles the majority of this work, other staff provides support by taking photographs at meetings, proofing/editing the documents, and coordinating and providing presentations to foreign delegations as well as local organizations.

Office of Public Affairs

Benefits

The Board of Supervisors recognizes that community engagement is essential to successful local government. One way of engaging the community is to recognize and celebrate contributions and achievements by individuals and organizations including nonprofits, faith-based groups and businesses.

Bringing these people into Board meetings provides an opportunity for others to learn of their accomplishments, whether it is a Fairfax County Public Schools team winning a state championship or an organization providing a program that improves the lives of County residents. Longtime County staff are often recognized for their service to the workforce, and many theme months are highlighted throughout the year, ranging from Hispanic Heritage Month to Fire and Emergency Medical Services Safety, Health and Survival Week.

These presentations are also promoted through a variety of communications channels, including placement on the County's website, pictures in the County's Flickr gallery and discussion on the County's Board of Supervisors podcasts. Highlighting these accomplishments after every meeting helps to emphasize the many positive stories that take place within Fairfax County.

There are also many benefits to hosting delegations from other countries, as well as local groups. These requests come in from local, provincial and national governments from around the world looking to learn how Fairfax County government operates. Providing these jurisdictions with our best practices helps those countries better govern their communities, while at the same time promoting Fairfax County as a positive role model.

Providing presentations to local groups such as Girl Scout and Boy Scout troops and organizations such as Leadership Fairfax affords the opportunity to educate these individuals about their County government. Feedback from the various groups indicates that they come away from the presentation with a clearer idea of how Fairfax County operates, the constraints it is under and the challenges faced, and the wide variety of services provided to residents.

Mandates

OPA prepares and distributes a weekly FOIA meeting notice, as mandated by Virginia Code §§ 2.2-3707 through 3708 and 3714, regarding publishing notices of public meetings.

The notice lists all meetings where more than two members of the Board of Supervisors are present with the potential to discuss County business. It is distributed to the media and public via email, and the meetings are also posted on the County's Public Meetings Calendar online.

Trends and Challenges

The total number of presentations requested by Board members has ranged from 156 to 159 per year over the past three years.

In addition to the presentations that take place at the Board meetings, Board members also requests to have proclamations and certificates presented at individual events throughout the year in their communities. OPA is responsible for preparing these resolutions, in addition to the regular requests for Board meeting presentations. These requests nearly doubled over the past three years – from 13 in FY 2013 to 23 in FY 2015. Those out-of-cycle requests have resulted in an increased workload during non-Board meeting times.

The number of delegations and presentations to other groups fluctuates from year-to-year from a low of 9 in FY 2014 to 16 in FY 2015. Generally, they average one per month. Staff provides these presentations in addition to many other duties.

Office of Public Affairs

Resources

Category	FY 2014 Actual	FY 2015 Actual	FY 2016 Adopted
LOB #43: Board Support			
FUNDING			
<u>Expenditures:</u>			
Compensation	\$109,396	\$102,154	\$108,364
Operating Expenses	9,436	10,368	8,920
Total Expenditures	\$118,832	\$112,522	\$117,284
General Fund Revenue	\$0	\$0	\$0
Net Cost/(Savings) to General Fund	\$118,832	\$112,522	\$117,284
POSITIONS			
Authorized Positions/Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs)			
<u>Positions:</u>			
Regular	1 / 1.44	1 / 1.44	1 / 1.36
Total Positions	1 / 1.44	1 / 1.44	1 / 1.36

Metrics

Metric Indicator	FY 2013 Actual	FY 2014 Actual	FY 2015 Actual	FY 2016 Estimate	FY 2017 Estimate
Proclamations, resolutions and certificates prepared/presented at Board meetings	146	133	133	133	133
Proclamations, resolutions and certificates prepared/sent	13	24	23	30	30
Presentations to delegations and other groups	13	9	16	12	12

The number of proclamations, resolutions and certificates prepared/presented at Board meetings has remained fairly constant over the past few fiscal years, ranging from 133 to 146.

The number prepared and sent increased from FY 2013 to FY 2014 but remained approximately the same for FY 2015. Still as the number of groups seeking recognition increases, the number of these could be expected to increase in the next few years.

Staff from all Board of Supervisors' offices took part in a session in August 2015 to brainstorm ideas to streamline this portion of Board meetings. Valuable suggestions were made that, if adopted, are anticipated to result in holding the line on the number of presentations at Board meetings.

The number of presentations to delegations and other groups (e.g., Leadership Fairfax, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, etc.) fluctuates from year to year – from a low of nine in FY 2014 to 16 in FY 2015. OPA has little control over the number of requests received but strives to accommodate as many as possible in order to share important information about Fairfax County.