

# Department of Cable and Consumer Services

## Mission

To mediate consumer and tenant-landlord issues, provide consumer educational information, regulate taxi and towing industries, and issue licenses for certain business activities. To support County and community meetings and events at the Fairfax County Government Center. To protect and maintain the fiscal integrity and financial solvency of the department.

## Connection to the Countywide Strategic Plan

The Fairfax County Board of Supervisors adopted the first-ever Countywide Strategic Plan on October 5, 2021. The Countywide Strategic Plan serves as a road map to help guide future work, focusing on the 10 Community Outcome Areas that represent the issues of greatest importance to the community. The Department of Management and Budget continues to integrate the Countywide Strategic Plan into budget documents. For information on how the agency's program performance contributes to these goals, please see the Performance Measurement Results by Community Outcome Area. For more information on the Countywide Strategic Plan, please see [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/strategicplan/](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/strategicplan/). The Department of Cable and Consumer Services primarily supports the following Community Outcome Areas:



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

## Focus

The Department of Cable and Consumer Services is the umbrella agency for three distinct functions: Consumer Services, Communications Policy and Regulation, and Communications Productions. The total agency staff is distributed over two funding sources, the Cable Communications Fund and the General Fund. Communications Policy and Regulation and Communications Productions are presented in Fund 40030 (Volume 2). Consumer Services is presented within the General Fund (Volume 1). The diverse functions of the Department of Cable and Consumer Services provide quality customer service to the community and work collaboratively with County agencies, neighboring jurisdictions, and professional organizations.

Consumer Services includes Consumer Affairs, Regulation and Licensing, Meeting Space Management and Event Support, and Administrative Services.

Consumer Affairs investigates and mediates consumer complaints, tenant-landlord disputes, and cable television issues. Staff works with businesses and consumers to resolve complaints to the satisfaction of both parties. In addition to mediation, staff develops conciliation agreements to resolve complex disputes, offers binding arbitration when mediation efforts are exhausted, and provides an advice line for consumers to speak directly to staff about consumer issues. Consumer Affairs provides education to the community by conducting presentations and distributing educational

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information on a variety of consumer topics. Educational meetings are conducted with the public to provide information about current consumer trends and ways to avoid consumer scams, frauds, and other problems. Consumer Affairs publishes the quarterly *Informed Consumer* e-newsletter and posts weekly tips on Facebook, hosts the *Consumer Connection* program shown on Facebook, and provides staff support to the Consumer Protection Commission and the Tenant-Landlord Commission. In addition, Consumer Affairs publishes an annual *Community Association Supplement Guide* with information on current common interest community laws and services, serving as a resource to over 2,000 Fairfax County homeowner, condominium, and civic associations.

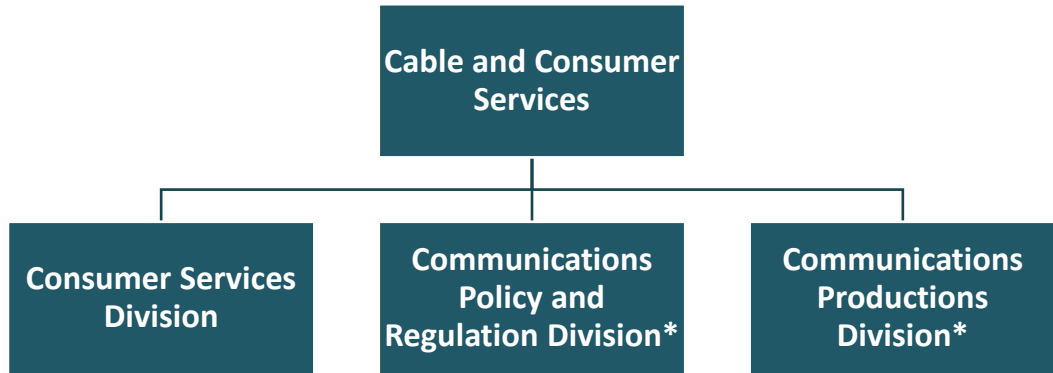
Regulation and Licensing is responsible for issuing licenses, permits, certificates, or registrations to taxicab operators, taxicab drivers, canvassers, peddlers, solicitors, vendors, promoters, massage establishments and therapists, pawn brokers, precious metal and gem dealers, going out-of-business sales, solicitors representing charitable organizations, trespass tow operators, and shared mobility devices for hire operators. Regulation and Licensing also conducts taxicab inspections to ensure vehicle safety and accuracy of taximeters. Regulation and Licensing reviews new taxicab certificate applications and recommends to the Consumer Protection Commission and Board of Supervisors the appropriate number of taxicabs required to service transportation needs in the County. Regulation and Licensing investigates complaints and develops rate recommendations for taxicab services and certain rate recommendations for trespass towing within the County. Regulation and Licensing provides staff support to the Trespass Towing Advisory Board which makes recommendations to the Board of Supervisors on towing industry regulations and rates.

Meeting Space Management and Event Support provides reservation and scheduling services and meeting support for spaces throughout the Government Center Campus, supporting the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors; Fairfax County boards, authorities, and commissions; County agencies and non-profit organizations. Staff processes reservation requests, stages furnishings and equipment, and configures meeting rooms for an average of 32 meetings and events each day. Technical support for presentations, conference calls, audio-visual playback, public address systems, and assistive listening for individuals with hearing impairments is also provided during meetings and events. Staff oversees the J. Hamilton Lambert Conference Center audio-visual systems and staff identifies requirements; recommends solutions; and installs, tests, and maintains audio-visual equipment.

Administrative Services develops and oversees the agency-wide budgets and is responsible for fiscal administration of both the agency General Fund and the Cable Communications Special Revenue Fund. Administrative Services directs all purchasing and contract activities, overseeing the department procurement card program, office supply program, and accountable equipment inventory. Administrative Services includes the role of department Human Resources Manager, with responsibilities in the areas of human resource management, and employee relations. Administrative Services coordinates the training and development activities for the department. Administrative Services manages the agency computer inventory and assists with information technology requests and acquisitions. Administrative Services leads the strategic planning efforts for the agency, including the development and coordination of agency performance management.

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## Organizational Chart



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

## Budget and Staff Resources

Category	FY 2022 Actual	FY 2023 Adopted	FY 2023 Revised	FY 2024 Advertised
<b>FUNDING</b>				
<b>Expenditures:</b>				
Personnel Services	\$532,607	\$683,306	\$683,306	\$709,445
Operating Expenses	143,522	175,711	175,921	176,363
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>\$676,129</b>	<b>\$859,017</b>	<b>\$859,227</b>	<b>\$885,808</b>
<b>Income:</b>				
Massage Therapy Permits	\$44,615	\$55,182	\$44,615	\$44,615
Precious Metal Dealers Licenses	6,775	8,625	8,625	8,625
Solicitors Licenses	5,040	8,961	8,961	8,961
Taxicab Licenses	32,835	76,600	32,835	32,835
Towing Permits	1,050	1,500	1,050	1,050
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$90,315</b>	<b>\$150,868</b>	<b>\$96,086</b>	<b>\$96,086</b>
<b>NET COST TO THE COUNTY</b>	<b>\$585,814</b>	<b>\$708,149</b>	<b>\$763,141</b>	<b>\$789,722</b>
<b>AUTHORIZED POSITIONS/FULL-TIME EQUIVALENT (FTE)</b>				
Regular	8 / 8	8 / 8	8 / 8	7 / 7

## FY 2024 Funding Adjustments

The following funding adjustments from the FY 2023 Adopted Budget Plan are necessary to support the FY 2024 program:

### Employee Compensation \$26,139

An increase of \$26,139 in Personnel Services includes \$13,667 for a 2.00 percent market rate adjustment (MRA) for all employees and \$12,472 for performance-based and longevity increases for non-uniformed merit employees, both effective July 2023.

### Department of Vehicle Services Charges \$652

An increase of \$652 in Department of Vehicle Services Charges is based on anticipated billings for maintenance and operating-related charges.

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**Position Reduction** **\$0**

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

## Changes to FY 2023 Adopted Budget Plan

*The following funding adjustments reflect all approved changes in the FY 2023 Revised Budget Plan since passage of the FY 2023 Adopted Budget Plan. Included are all adjustments made as part of the FY 2022 Carryover Review and all other approved changes through December 31, 2022:*

**Carryover Adjustments** **\$210**

As part of the *FY 2022 Carryover Review*, the Board of Supervisors approved funding of \$210 in encumbered funding in Operating Expenses associated with translation services.

## Position Detail

*The FY 2024 Advertised Budget Plan includes the following positions:*

DEPARTMENT OF CABLE AND CONSUMER SERVICES - 7 Positions			
<b>Consumer Services Division</b>			
1	Director, Consumer Services Division*		
<b>Consumer Affairs</b>			
1	Consumer Specialist III	1	Administrative Assistant II
2	Consumer Specialists II	1	Consumer Specialist II*
2	Consumer Specialists I	1	Consumer Specialist I*
0	Administrative Assistants IV [-1]	2	Administrative Assistants II*
<b>Regulation and Licensing</b>			
1	Consumer Specialist III	2	Administrative Assistants III*
<b>Administrative Services</b>			
1	Financial Specialist III*	1	Financial Specialist II*
<b>Conference Center</b>			
1	Administrative Associate*	1	Administrative Assistant III*
1	Video Engineer*	1	Administrative Assistant II*
*	Positions are supported by Fund 40030, Cable Communications		
-	Denotes Abolished Position(s)		

## Performance Measurement Results by Community Outcome Area

### Effective and Efficient Government

Consumer Affairs responded to 5,058 case inquiries in FY 2022, which was a decrease of eight percent from FY 2021, due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Consumer Affairs conducted 64 consumer educational seminars in FY 2022. The COVID-19 pandemic impacted the ability for many in-person events to take place. However, staff was able to participate in some virtual outreach events. These outreach events provide information about current consumer trends and ways to avoid consumer scams, frauds, and other problems, which, in turn, can reduce the number of consumer inquiries filed with Consumer Affairs. Staff responded to all case inquiries within 48 hours, closing 94 percent, and recovering \$548,661 for consumers in FY 2022, an increase of \$144,012 from FY 2021.

Meeting Space Management and Event Support processed 9,778 reservations in FY 2022, a decrease of 22 percent from FY 2021, due to the Health Department vaccination clinic operations being scaled back at the Government Center during 2022; 100 percent of requests were scheduled. Due to the reduction and cancellation of most regularly scheduled reservations, the department did not conduct the FY 2022 Customer Satisfaction Survey.

Accounting and Finance processed 1,780 fiscal documents with 99 percent accuracy in FY 2022.

### Safety and Security

Regulation and Licensing issued 1,241 permanent licenses in FY 2022, a decrease of four percent from FY 2021; 100 percent were issued within 60 calendar days of application. Some fluctuation occurs among the various types of licenses issued year to year, with most of the change occurring within the solicitor industry.

Community Outcome Area	FY 2020 Actual	FY 2021 Actual	FY 2022 Estimate	FY 2022 Actual	FY 2023 Estimate	FY 2024 Estimate
<b>Effective and Efficient Government</b>						
<b>Customer Satisfaction with County Services</b>						
Percent of case inquiries closed	98%	98%	98%	94%	98%	98%
Percent of consumer educational seminars meeting objectives	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
<b>Effective Technology and Quality Facilities</b>						
Percent of reservation requests scheduled	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
<b>Safety and Security</b>						
<b>Following Laws and Regulations</b>						
Percent of permanent licenses issued within 60 calendar days of application	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

A complete list of performance measures can be viewed at <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/budget/fy-2024-advertised-performance-measures-pm>