




April 27, 2023

MEMORANDUM

TO: Edward P. Burroughs, III, Chair
Government Operations and Fiscal Policy (GOFP) Committee

THRU: Josh Hamlin 
Director of Budget and Policy Analysis

FROM: Malcolm Moody- *MM*
Legislative and Budget Analyst

RE: Office of Community Relations
Fiscal Year 2024 Budget Review

Budget Overview

- The FY 2024 Proposed Budget for the Office of Community Relations is \$6,217,200. This represents an increase of \$522,000, or 9.2%, above the FY 2023 Approved Budget. This is largely due to increased OIT charges, mandated salary adjustments, increased operating costs to align with projected costs, increase in the fringe benefit rate, and an increase in Common Ownership Communities (COC) Commission contract costs.
- The Office’s expenditures are funded entirely by the General Fund.
- The FY 2023 estimated total General Fund expenditures are \$5,164,400, which is \$530,800 less than the FY 2022 Approved Budget level of \$5,695,200, or -9.3%. The Office does not expect to request a supplemental budget in FY 2023.

Budget Comparison - General Fund

Actual Fiscal Year 2022 to Proposed Fiscal Year 2024

Category	FY 2022 Actual	FY 2023 Approved	FY 2023 Estimated	FY 2024 Proposed	Change Amount	% Change
Compensation	\$ 3,263,452	\$ 3,704,100	\$ 3,259,400	\$ 3,861,200	\$ 157,100	4.2%
Fringe Benefits	1,041,032	1,281,300	1,136,300	1,339,800	58,500	4.6%
Operating Expenses	618,999	709,800	768,700	1,016,200	306,400	43.2%
Total	\$ 4,923,483	\$ 5,695,200	\$ 5,164,400	\$ 6,217,200	\$ 522,000	9.2%

Authorized Staffing - All Classifications					
	FY 2022 Approved	FY 2023 Approved	FY 2024 Proposed	Change Amount	% Change
General Fund	59	56	56	0	0.0%
Limited Term	0	0	2	2	200.0%
Total	59	56	58	2	3.6%

Staffing Changes and Compensation

- Staffing resources for the FY 2024 Proposed Budget increase by two (2) positions from the FY 2023 Approved Budget:
 - The FY 2024 Proposed Budget includes authorization for 56 full-time positions, representing no change from the FY 2023 approved level.
 - The FY 2024 Proposed Budget also includes authorization for 2 limited-term positions (Community Developer and Graphic Artist), representing an increase of two (2) positions above the FY 2023 approved level.

- As of March 28, 2023, the Office reported 14 vacant full-time positions, representing 25% vacancy rate.
 - Out of 14 vacancies, six (6) positions may be filled in FY 2023: The Office reports that four (4) Community Developer positions, one (1) Deputy Director position, and one (1) Administrative Assistant position were requested to be filled in FY 2023.
 - Three (3) currently vacant positions will not be filled in FY 2023: Two (2) Call Center Representative positions and one (1) Administrative Aide position are anticipated to be filled in FY 2024.
 - Five (5) remaining vacant positions are not funded in FY 2023.

- The FY 2024 Proposed Budget includes funding for 51 of the 56 full-time positions. In FY 2024, nine (9) of the currently vacant 14 positions are funded, and five (5) positions are proposed to remain unfunded in FY 2024.

- FY 2024 compensation is proposed at \$3,861,200, an increase of \$157,100, or 4.2%, above the FY 2023 approved amount. The increase in compensation is primarily due to prior year and planned FY 2024 salary adjustments, which is offset by an increase in vacancy lapse.

- The Office has lost three (3) employees to date to attrition. The Office reports the key factor contributing to the attrition level is “workload and hours”. The positions most affected by attrition are Call Center Representatives and Community Developers.

- The Office reports that “*employees working in the Call Center are deemed essential but are still teleworking*”.

- Two (2) employees from the Office are assigned to the County Executive’s Office.

Fringe Benefits

- FY 2024 Fringe Benefits are proposed at \$1,339,800, an increase of \$58,500, or 4.6%, above the FY 2023 approved level, due to compensations adjustments and an increase in fringe benefit rates, which is offset by an increase in vacancy lapse.
- A five-year trend analysis of fringe benefit expenditures is included below.

Fringe Benefits Historical Trend				
	FY 2021 Actual	FY 2022 Actual	FY 2023 Estimate	FY 2024 Proposed
Fringe Benefit Expenditures	\$ 1,454,315	\$ 1,041,032	\$ 1,136,300	\$ 1,339,800
Compensation	\$ 4,177,752	\$ 3,263,452	\$ 3,259,400	\$ 3,861,200
Fringe as a % of Total Employee Compensation	25.8%	24.2%	25.9%	25.8%

Operating Expenses

- FY 2024 operating expenses are proposed at \$1,016,200, an increase of \$306,400, or 43.2%, above the FY 2023 approved level. Three largest operating expenses categories included in the Proposed Budget are:
 - Office Automation \$ 620,200
 - Operating Contracts 245,000
 - Advertising 57,000
- The accompanying table compares the FY 2024 Proposed Budget operating expenditures with the FY 2023 Approved Budget operating expenditures. In eleven (11) of the categories, the FY 2024 Proposed Budget increased planned spending from the FY 2023 budget. In the remaining two (2) categories, the FY 2024 Proposed Budget level remains unchanged compared to the FY 2023 budget.

Operating Objects	FY 2022 Actual	FY 2023 Budget	FY 2024 Proposed	FY 2023 - FY 2024	
				\$ Change	% Change
Telephone	\$ 66,806	\$ 20,000	\$ 20,000	\$ -	0.0%
Utilities	3,121	2,200	4,700	2,500	113.6%
Office Automation	402,169	409,100	620,200	211,100	51.6%
Training	355	-	23,300	23,300	N/A
Advertising	99,234	15,000	57,000	42,000	280.0%
Mileage Reimbursement	1,903	-	1,500	1,500	N/A
Operating Contracts	15,300	235,000	245,000	10,000	4.3%
General Office Supplies	14,031	13,000	24,200	11,200	86.2%
Other Operating Equipment	281	800	800	-	0.0%
Vehicle Equipment Repair/Maintenance	7,550	10,500	10,700	200	1.9%
Gas and Oil	3,357	900	5,000	4,100	455.6%
Equipment Lease	3,810	2,200	2,500	300	13.6%
Miscellaneous	1,082	1,100	1,300	200	18.2%
TOTAL	\$ 618,999	\$ 709,800	\$ 1,016,200	\$ 306,400	43.2%

- The most significant dollar increase between the FY 2024 Proposed Budget and the FY 2023 Approved Budget is in the Office Automation category (\$211,100, or 51.6%, increase) to reflect the cost allocation for IT services associated with the Office.

Workload and Program Management

- The Office reports that it *“takes on an equitable regionalized approach to outreach throughout Prince George’s County. Each district and At-Large Councilmen are assigned an OCR Community Liaison who works to educate the community on existing program and services, build and sustain interagency relationships, facilitate programs that support OCR mission, and resolve challenges.”*
- As of February 28, 2023, the Office reports it has engaged more than 50,000 County residents and attended over 250 community meetings, programs and activities. The Office continues to conduct in-person and virtual activities. The outreach activities focused around COVID-19 recovery efforts, a new gun violence prevention initiative, and the Outreach and Programs Unit quarterly themed activities.
- COVID-19 recovery:
 - The Office reports that working with various partners, the Outreach and Programs Unit has continued to disseminate donated items to the communities, including personal protective equipment, personal care items, cleaning materials, and home essentials.
 - According to the Office, in collaboration with the Office of Homeland Security, it has distributed over 10,000 COVID-19 test kits throughout the County (churches, individual stakeholders, private schools, non-profit groups, day cares, 55+ community housing, homeowner associations, civic groups).
 - The Office worked with the Department of Housing and Community Development to support the Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP). The Office assisted with *“direct engagement of those facing immediate eviction, Eviction Prevention Resources Fairs, one on one counseling, and an information helpline.”* The Office noted that with its assistance, DHCD maintains a hotline where over 40,000 calls have been received.
- Hope in Action Anti-Gun Violence project: The Office in collaboration with faith based and law enforcement partners launched the Hope in Action Anti-Gun Violence Project. The Project employs strategies that include the deployment and utilization of Peacekeepers, diversion and reentry services, community and school-based wrap around services, and the development of a Violence Prevention Task Force that reviews crime stats, program benchmarks/goals, and advises on critical need areas.

- The Outreach and Programs Unit organized various community events Countywide, including:
 - 100 Events of Summer;
 - Stuff-A-Truck 2022;
 - Week of Wishes (W.O.W.);
 - Winter Coat Drive;
 - Class Act; and
 - The Senior Health is Wealth Initiative.

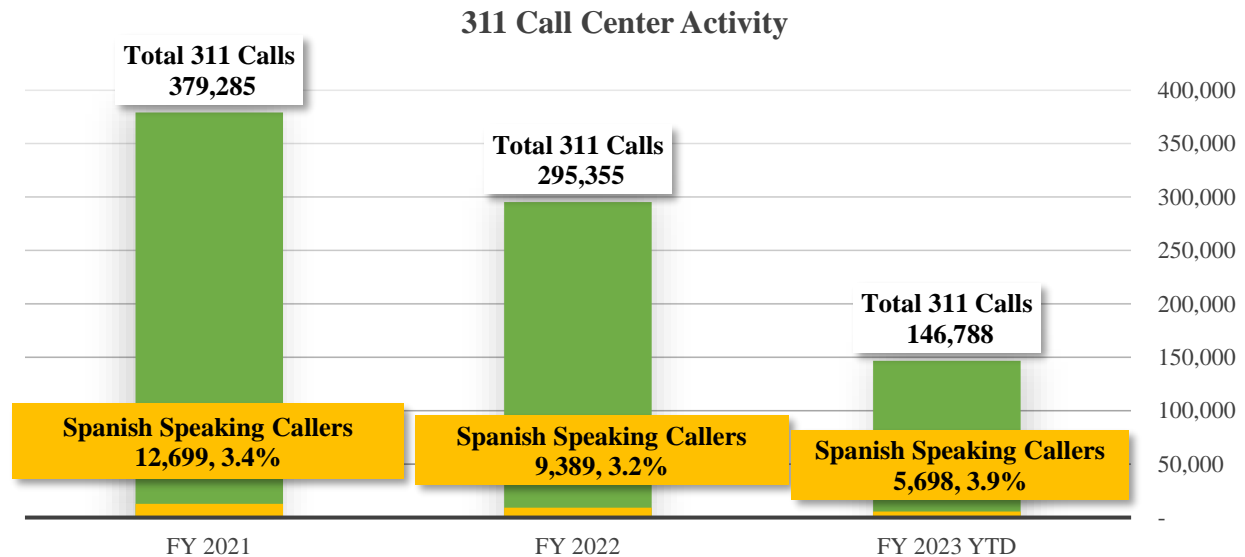
- Special Projects Division
 - The Special Projects Division (SPD) serves the whole County while also having a specialty focus on the County’s youth. In FY 2023, SPD continued the management of its projects and initiatives while also providing inter-agency support to the Office of the County Executive and Office of Human Resources Management. The SPD has also continued with its partnership with Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC) and the Department of Family Services.

 - In FY 2023 the SPD achieved the following:
 - Maintained, supported, and facilitated the CEX’s Virtual Community Meeting Tour;
 - Continued (second cycle) of teen dating violence virtual training, known as the “2022 Safe Dates Digital Academy”;
 - Served as contributing partner/vendor for the 9th Annual “No Excuse for Dating Abuse”;
 - Created and hosted the “Tuesday TALKS” event, which provided fiscal information and services to residents;
 - Developed and hosted the first “SGA Day with the CEX” which was held at Crossland High School; and
 - Served as United Way Coordinator for Prince Georges County Government’s Combined Charities Campaign (CCC) for the second consecutive year.

- Common Ownership Communities (COC) commission provides services to governing bodies, owners, and residents of homeowner’s associations, residential condominiums, and cooperative housing corporations. The Office reports that COC Commissioners hosted Community Conversations, distributed Community Toolkits, completed 32 conciliations and one (1) formal Alternative Dispute Resolution.

- EDvantage serves to educate members of homeowners' associations, condominiums, and cooperative housing corporations of their rights and responsibilities as unit owners. The Office reports that, to date, it has assisted over 150 members of the community in completing the EDvantage training program. Working alongside the Commission on Common Ownership Communities and the Office of Information and Technology, COC produced training in both English and Spanish with voiceovers for the visually impaired.
- The Office reports that since the fall of 2020 community toolkits have been disseminated to provide information about the Office of Community Relations and to provide information on COVID-19, as well as to provide helpful items and information for the pending colder weather. Distribution resumed at the beginning of FY 2023.
- 311-On-the-Go! Unit
 - The objectives of this Unit are to increase visibility by bring the County government to the community, improve citizen service satisfaction levels, educate citizens on the functions and services of County agencies programs, establish realistic expectations to ensure more positive citizen-to-government engagement experiences, build and maintain relationships with stakeholders (internal, non-profits, community leadership, etc.), develop the reputation as the "go-to" for community resource access and answers and work collaboratively across County agencies to address stakeholder concerns.
 - The Office hosted the 311-Go-Day of action at the Shepherd's Cove Women's Shelter, which was used by the 311-On-the-Go! Team to conduct a day of service for the residents of the shelter and their children.
 - Two (2) positions are proposed to be reassigned in FY 2024 from the 311 Call Center division to support the 311-On-the-Go initiatives.
- For additional information on the Office's COVID-19 recovery, gun violence reduction, Outreach and Programs Unit operations, Special Projects Unit operations, Common Ownership Communities commission, and the 311-On-the-Go initiatives, please see response to the *FY 2024 Budget Review First Round Question No. 28* (pages 10-17). Additional information on the gun violence reduction program and the Office's efforts to connect County residents to health and human services has been requested as a part of the *FY 2024 Budget Review Second Round Questions*, but responses were not received in time to be included in this Report.

▪ 311 Call Center:



Data Source: FY 2024 Budget Review First Round Responses, Question No. 36 (pages 18-19).

- As of February 28, 2023, the 311 Call Center received a total of 146,788 inquiries/calls.
 - Of the total calls received in FY 2023, 9,389, or 3.9%, were received from Spanish-speaking callers. The Office has reported it has two (2) Spanish-speaking Call Representatives on staff, which is unchanged from the previous year. The Office reported that it is recruiting to add at least one (1) more Spanish-speaking Call Representative.
 - Attachment A and B to the FY 2024 Budget Review First Round Questions provide breakdown on the 311 calls for service data including request types by Councilmanic districts and services provided data by Councilmanic districts.
 - Additional information on the 311 calls for service and customer satisfaction has been requested as a part of the FY 2024 Budget Review Second Round Questions, but responses were not received in time to be included in this Report.
- The Office's FY 2024 top priorities include:
- Increasing the efficiency and responsiveness to County residents.
 - Maintaining and sustaining the new PGC311 Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system.
 - Expanding resource services to all residents through the 311 On the Go! Program to include interagency collaboration.
 - Expansion of the basic needs distribution program provided to County residents.
 - Improving the quality of life in all County neighborhoods that face significant economic, health, public safety, and educational challenges.