

PUBLIC RELATIONS

DESCRIPTION

The Public Relations Department directs the County’s public communications efforts and increases awareness and understanding of Henrico County Government activities for the County’s residents, businesses, news media and others. Working with County agencies and officials, the Department creates and implements print, video and graphic communications targeted to a variety of audiences. Activities include news releases, media advisories, news conferences, photography, graphic design, Henrico County Television (HCTV), media relations, news tracking, agency consultation, website news maintenance, audiovisual presentation services, streaming Board of Supervisors meetings, event planning, community-engagement efforts, and managing social media including the county’s official Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, Nextdoor, and YouTube channel. The Department manages Henrico’s Multicultural Community Engagement initiative, which provides access to resources, key information, and a variety of engagement opportunities, such as My Henrico Academy, for the county’s diverse population of multicultural, immigrant, and refugee residents.

The Department oversees operations of HCTV. Activities include production of feature-length programming and short-format video news releases to broadcast on HCTV and distribute through social media and the County website. The Department continues to offer residents timely information and quality programming through HCTV.

OBJECTIVES

- To tell the story of Henrico County through social media, print, and video productions.
- To provide County agencies with effective support and technical assistance in crisis consultation, media relations and promotion of their programs and services.

FISCAL YEAR 2024 SUMMARY

Annual Fiscal Plan				
<u>Description</u>	<u>FY22</u>	<u>FY23</u>	<u>FY24</u>	<u>Change</u>
	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Original</u>	<u>Approved</u>	<u>23 to 24</u>
Personnel	\$ 1,907,329	\$ 1,958,740	\$ 2,110,817	7.8%
Operation	205,861	315,477	315,477	0.0%
Capital	4,830	0	0	0.0%
Sub-Total	<u>\$ 2,118,020</u>	<u>\$ 2,274,217</u>	<u>\$ 2,426,294</u>	<u>6.7%</u>
Interdepartmental Billings ⁽¹⁾	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>(51,978)</u>	<u>0.0%</u>
Total Budget	<u>\$ 2,118,020</u>	<u>\$ 2,274,217</u>	<u>\$ 2,374,316</u>	<u>4.4%</u>
Personnel Complement	20	19 ⁽²⁾	20 ⁽³⁾	1

⁽¹⁾ Reflects a 2/3 reimbursement for one position (1/3 Public Works; 1/3 Public Utilities) assigned to Public Relations, which is reflected in the Public Relations personnel complement

⁽²⁾ FOIA Officer transferred to County Attorney's complement during FY23

⁽³⁾ Public Relations Specialist included for FY24 to assist with providing information regarding public infrastructure projects, particularly road and water/sewer projects

PERFORMANCE MEASURES

	FY22	FY23	FY24	Change 23 to 24
Workload Measures				
Facebook Posts	878	577	1,000	423
Twitter Posts	1,081	1,504	1,000	(504)
Videos Produced	226	228	100	(128)
Information Packets Distributed	708	3,964	500	(3,464)
Media Contacts Made	7,242	12,157	10,000	(2,157)
News Releases	104	177	100	(77)
Photos Taken/Distributed	3,459	1,886	3,500	1,614
All Social Media Followers	36,531	39,070	40,000	930
FOIA Requests	338	536	350	(186)

OBJECTIVES (CONTINUED)

- To establish and maintain contacts with news media representatives to ensure accurate coverage of County activities.
- To create crisis and emergency communication plans.
- To enhance the visibility of Henrico County as a desirable place to live, work, and enjoy leisure hours.
- To disseminate information to County residents through print publications, feature video productions, HCTV message boards, social media, the news media, the County website, and other available platforms.
- To help multicultural, immigrant and refugee residents learn about and connect with Henrico County government programs, services, and operations through the Multicultural Community Engagement initiative.

BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS

The department’s budget for FY24 is \$2,374,316. This is a \$100,099, or 4.4% increase from the FY23 approved budget. This increase was driven solely by the personnel component and reflects greater salary estimates as well as the associated benefit adjustments. In addition, a Public Relations Specialist was added to the department’s complement. The operating and capital components remain flat from the previous fiscal year.

The department is separated into two divisions: Public Relations and Media Services.

PUBLIC RELATIONS

The Public Relations component of the budget for FY24 is \$1,322,024 and reflects an increase of \$102,020, or 8.4% compared to FY23. The increase is attributed entirely to elevated salary and benefit adjustments as well as the addition of a Public Relations Specialist to assist with providing information regarding County infrastructure projects. The position is supported by Gas Tax revenue through Public Works and Water and Sewer revenues from Public Utilities. These reimbursements are reflected in the interdepartmental billing.

Public Relations

The employees in the Public Relations office focus on media relations and public awareness of County policies, programs, and services via coverage in print and broadcast news media, and through various publications such as news releases, departmental brochures, and other print materials. Public Relations is also responsible for social media, including the County's official Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and Nextdoor accounts, photography, graphic design, HCTV message board bulletins, event planning and the Multicultural Community Engagement initiative.

MEDIA SERVICES

The Media Services component of the budget for FY24 is \$1,052,292, reflecting a decrease of \$1,921, or 0.2% from FY23. The decrease is within the personnel component and is due to a FOIA Officer being moved to the County Attorney's budget, partially offset by increased salary and benefit adjustments.

The employees in the Media Services office serve as a video production and media support staff, telling the story of Henrico County through feature and documentary programming and video news releases. Media Services offers other County agencies assistance with promotion of their programs and services through video productions. The office maintains and develops content for the Henrico County Government channel on YouTube.com, provides streaming video coverage of Board of Supervisors meetings, provides live streaming coverage of press conferences and other select county events, and is also responsible for producing programs and operating HCTV.

For FY24, the Public Relations Department will continue providing the same quality and level of service. The department will continue to assist agencies with media and public information needs, will be available to disseminate information during crisis situations, will write and produce various publications, will live-stream every Board of Supervisors meeting, will assist with special projects, and will produce new, original programming for HCTV and the Henrico County Government YouTube channel.

DEPARTMENTAL HIGHLIGHTS

In 2019, as part of the department's Multicultural Community Engagement initiative, Public Relations created the My Henrico Academy (MHA). MHA is a free program that engages multicultural communities with interactive lessons and culturally specific approaches to bridge the understanding of how their local government and communities work together. Individuals who thrive in MHA seek out information during the sessions to share with others who may not have the same access to resources and networks. Participants commit to attend evening sessions over the course of seven months with officials and leaders to learn how they can become more engaged in the civic process. The 28 hours in class get individuals involved in the program activities, assignments, and an introduction to county locations in each of the five magisterial districts.

In addition to gaining a better understanding of how local government works, participants also obtain the skills necessary to navigate social and governmental service systems, learn how to resolve issues and obtain information, and expand their networks so as to be prepared to pursue leadership opportunities within the community. Between the 2019 and 2022 classes, MHA has included 47 participants who represent over 28 countries, ethnicities, and communities and speak more than 19 languages.