

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.

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.
- To establish and maintain contacts with news media representatives to ensure accurate coverage of County activities.

FISCAL YEAR 2025 SUMMARY

Annual Fiscal Plan				
Description	FY23	FY24	FY25	Change
	Actual	Original	Approved	24 to 25
Personnel	\$ 1,967,523	\$ 2,110,817	\$ 2,119,872	0.4%
Operation	368,448	315,477	345,477	9.5%
Capital	2,995	0	0	0.0%
Sub-Total	<u>\$ 2,338,966</u>	<u>\$ 2,426,294</u>	<u>\$ 2,465,349</u>	<u>1.6%</u>
Interdepartmental Billings ⁽¹⁾	0	(51,978)	(59,602)	14.7%
Total Budget	<u>\$ 2,338,966</u>	<u>\$ 2,374,316</u>	<u>\$ 2,405,747</u>	<u>1.3%</u>
Personnel Complement	19	20 ⁽²⁾	18 ⁽³⁾	(2)

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

⁽³⁾ Two Public Relations Specialists moved to the Department of Outreach and Engagement for FY25.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES

	FY23	FY24	FY25	Change 24 to 25
Workload Measures				
Facebook Posts	577	395	500	105
X Posts	1,504	1,075	1,000	(75)
Instagram Posts	N/A	N/A	500	500
Videos Produced	228	263	250	(13)
Publications Distributed	209,048	5,800	5,500	(300)
Media Contacts Made	12,157	8,604	8,000	(604)
News Releases	177	119	150	31
Photos Taken/Distributed	1,886	5,302	5,000	(302)
All Social Media Followers	39,070	41,441	45,000	3,559

OBJECTIVES (CONTINUED)

- 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.

BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS

The department’s budget for FY25 is \$2,405,747. This is a \$31,431, or 1.3%, increase from the FY24 approved budget. Included is an increase in personnel funding of \$1,431, or 0.1%, reflecting a planned salary increase as well as associated benefit adjustments. For FY25, funding for two Public Relations Specialists will be moved from Public Relations to the newly created Department of Outreach and Engagement, offsetting much of the personnel increase. The operating component rose by \$30,000, or 9.5%, to support increased advertising efforts and social media subscription expenses. The capital component remains flat from the previous fiscal year.

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

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The Public Relations component of the budget for FY25 is \$1,401,795 and reflects an increase of \$79,771, or 6.0%, compared to FY24. The personnel increase of \$49,771, or 4.5%, is attributed to elevated salary and benefit adjustments, as well as one position’s funding being moved to Public Relations from Media Services, offset by two Public Relations Specialists being moved to the new Department of Outreach and Engagement. In addition, the operating component increased \$30,000, or 14.2%, to support heightened advertising and social media expenses.

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

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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 FY25 is \$1,003,952, reflecting a decrease of \$48,340, or 4.6%, from FY24. The decrease is within the personnel component and is due to one position's costing being moved from Media Services to Public Relations, 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 FY25, 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

Public Relations marked its third year operating the My Henrico Academy (MHA) in 2023, a program developed by the department as part of the County's Multicultural Community Engagement initiative.

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. Participants attend multiple sessions — on topics such as voting, education, public safety and doing business in the county — with Henrico officials to learn how they can become more engaged in the civic process. Participants also obtain the skills necessary to navigate social and governmental service systems, learn how to resolve issues and obtain information, and have the opportunity to expand their networks to enable them to pursue leadership opportunities within the community.

The 2019, 2022 and 2023 classes of MHA have included a total of more than 80 participants who represent some 37 countries, ethnicities, and communities, and speak more than 30 languages.

Public Relations coordinated or supported more than 30 press conferences and news media events in 2023, including the annual State of the County address and the 2024 Investiture of elected officials. The department again worked with Henrico County Public Schools to organize Student Government Day, which marked its 64th year in 2023.

Public Relations provided services for 35 county departments and agencies in 2023.