



Montgomery County Government

MEMORANDUM

October 13, 1992

TO: County Council

FROM: *Joan M. Pedersen*
Joan M. Pedersen, Program Evaluator
Office of Legislative Oversight

SUBJECT: Office of Legislative Oversight Memorandum Report: Publications Review Project

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide the County Council with a report on the progress and status of the publications review project.

II. AUTHORITY

Council Resolution No. 12-608, CY 1992 Work Program of the Office of Legislative Oversight, adopted April 7, 1992.

III. SCOPE

This OLO project was designed to review and analyze the production and use of publications throughout County government. The scope of the study does not include evaluation of the professional writing and graphic standards or the effectiveness of individual publications.

During FY92 and FY93 budget deliberations, the Council expressed concerns whether publication costs could be reduced through in-house production, downsizing, or combining of certain publications; whether methods are in place to identify outdated or low-demand publications for elimination; and whether County agencies are aware of and consider using other available public media in place of publications.

This OLO project was originally designed to be completed in two phases, possibly resulting in two separate reports: Phase I, Executive Branch Publications Review; and Phase II, Outside Agencies Publications Review. Phase I of the project was to include a review of individual publications produced by the Executive and Legislative branches and analyses of the associated costs of production and mailing to identify potential areas of efficiency and economy.

Phase II of the project would have extended the in-depth review to publications generated by other County and Bi-County agencies, including the Housing Opportunities Commission, Montgomery College, Montgomery County Public Schools, and Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission. However, during pre-planning discussions with administrators at these agencies, OLO learned that the agencies have been examining and making changes to the number, nature, and distribution of their publications to gain efficiencies and economies. Consequently Phase I of this project was extended to include a study of the agencies' publication review processes, changes implemented, and benefits experienced or expected to be derived. This portion of the OLO study will assist the Council to determine whether a more in-depth evaluation of outside agency publications will be necessary as a discreet Phase II project in 1993.

IV. OVERVIEW AND PROGRESS OF THE STUDY

A. Montgomery County Government

OLO began its study of the County government with a request for information from the Executive and Legislative branches. Each department or office was requested to complete information on each publication produced during FY90 and through the second quarter of FY91. A variety of information was requested, including: reasons for producing the publication, number of copies printed, costs and any associated revenues, and method of distribution.

With input from the Executive's Public Information Office and its Publications and Graphics unit, a form was created on which information could be recorded about each publication produced. It was decided that those items of information that may have been interpreted differently by the various departments would be handled by OLO through examination of a sample of the publication. A second form was created for in-house use by OLO to record such information. See ATTACHMENT A, for copies of the forms that were used by the departments/offices and OLO.

Information gathered from the Executive and Legislative branches indicate that the departments/offices maintain few records relating to their publications and some do not keep any of the monthly computer reports (provided by the Department of Facilities and Services) which display the cost to print their publications. Many were able to locate past monthly computer reports and match entries to print request forms to identify the costs associated with various publications, but some offices had not retained the computer reports. There are currently no record-keeping requirements.

Although the County has an administrative procedure (AP 1-6 effective FY82) for centralized control of publications, the AP has subsequently proven to be relatively inadequate, and certain requirements contained in the AP are no longer followed. Some time ago, OLO performed an evaluation of the policies, procedures, and expenditures of publications

produced and distributed by the County government and issued Report No. 83-2 (released by Council on January 10, 1984), in which it was recommended that measures be implemented to better control and account for costs associated with publications. See ATTACHMENT B for a copy of the conclusions and recommendations relating to publications.

The determination whether a publication is needed rests within the various departments and offices. The Publications and Graphics unit can offer suggestions regarding those publications the unit sees, as can the Print Shop. The Print Shop manager is required to sign-off for print jobs which will be done outside. This is controlled through the procurement process; for outside printing services expected to cost at least \$1,000, coordination through the Procurement Office is required, and Procurement requires that a signed Print Shop approval be submitted. Although Print Shop approval is supposed to be obtained for all outside printing services, lower-cost print jobs could be done outside and paid for through the direct payment process without the knowledge of either the Procurement Office or the Print Shop manager.*

Since there is currently no centralized review of publications, OLO recommended and the Council's Management and Fiscal Policy Committee approved a plan to create a publications review group in the Executive branch during FY93. Subsequently, OLO worked with the Offices of Management and Budget and Public Information to structure a publications review plan. During FY93, the Public Information Office will head a pilot group which will review all publications to be produced for two Executive departments. Two of the larger producers of publications in dollar value and/or number of publications are voluntarily participating: Health and Family Resources.

The centralized review group will analyze the need for each publication proposed by these two departments and provide expert media and graphics advice to assure appropriate methods of communication and presentation are utilized. After approximately six months of activity, it is expected that the pilot group will be able to determine the depth of ongoing review which should take place, develop standards for some types of publications, propose record-keeping requirements which the offices should follow, and recommend modifications to the AP to strengthen control over the production and distribution of publications. OLO is following the group's efforts and will include details in the final report on publications.

* The threshold for obtaining services outside the formal procurement process is changed from time to time.

B. Outside Agencies

This part of the OLO study will focus on publications produced by the Housing Opportunities Commission, Montgomery College, Montgomery County Public Schools, and Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission. For purposes of the study, practices and procedures relating to the design and production of publications of two organizational components at M-NCPPC are being reviewed: the Parks Division and the Planning Division. Each of these divisions independently design and produce distinct publications.

Over the past three fiscal years, these "outside" agencies have been examining and making changes to the number, nature, and distribution of their publications to gain efficiencies and economies. Each agency has reported that centralized control is either currently in effect or a special committee had recently completed a centralized review of the agency's individual publications and the processes by which publications are produced and distributed. The agencies have also reviewed their policies on fees to be charged for publications. OLO has requested details of the review processes used by the agencies and the changes which have been put into effect.

C. Related Activities

The Council established, by Resolution, an Interagency Public Information Working Group composed of information officers from the Council, the Executive's Office of Public Information, the Housing Opportunities Commission, Maryland-National Park and Planning Commission, Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission, Montgomery County Public Schools, and Montgomery College. The group is meeting regularly and is scheduled to report to the Management and Fiscal Policy Committee on February 4, 1993.

The information officers are seeking ways to make better use of existing resources for communicating with the public. The group is preparing an inventory of resources and expertise that can be shared across agencies. A priority project is to improve the effectiveness of outreach, particularly to minority populations.

Public information personnel are also meeting regularly in a working group established by the Cable Communications Advisory Committee to promote sharing of resources by the PEG channel operators. Two outcomes are: (1) the preparation of promotional tapes to enhance audiences for the PEG channels; and (2) a joint procurement effort that is expected to result in cost-savings for purchases of items such as video tapes and lighting equipment. This latter effort is being coordinated with the Interagency Procurement Coordination Committee.

A related project undertaken by Council staff is a review of resources allocated to public information in the departments and agencies of County government. Assignment of this project resulted from a budget question introduced by the MFP Committee. It was debated whether the question should result in a broadening of OLO's study of publications or should be handled separately. Subsequently, it was decided that the budget question would be handled as a separate project, to be coordinated with the publications study. Council staff has undertaken this review and OLO will provide assistance as needed. Information about the review will be included in the final OLO report on publications.

V. OLO COMMENTS

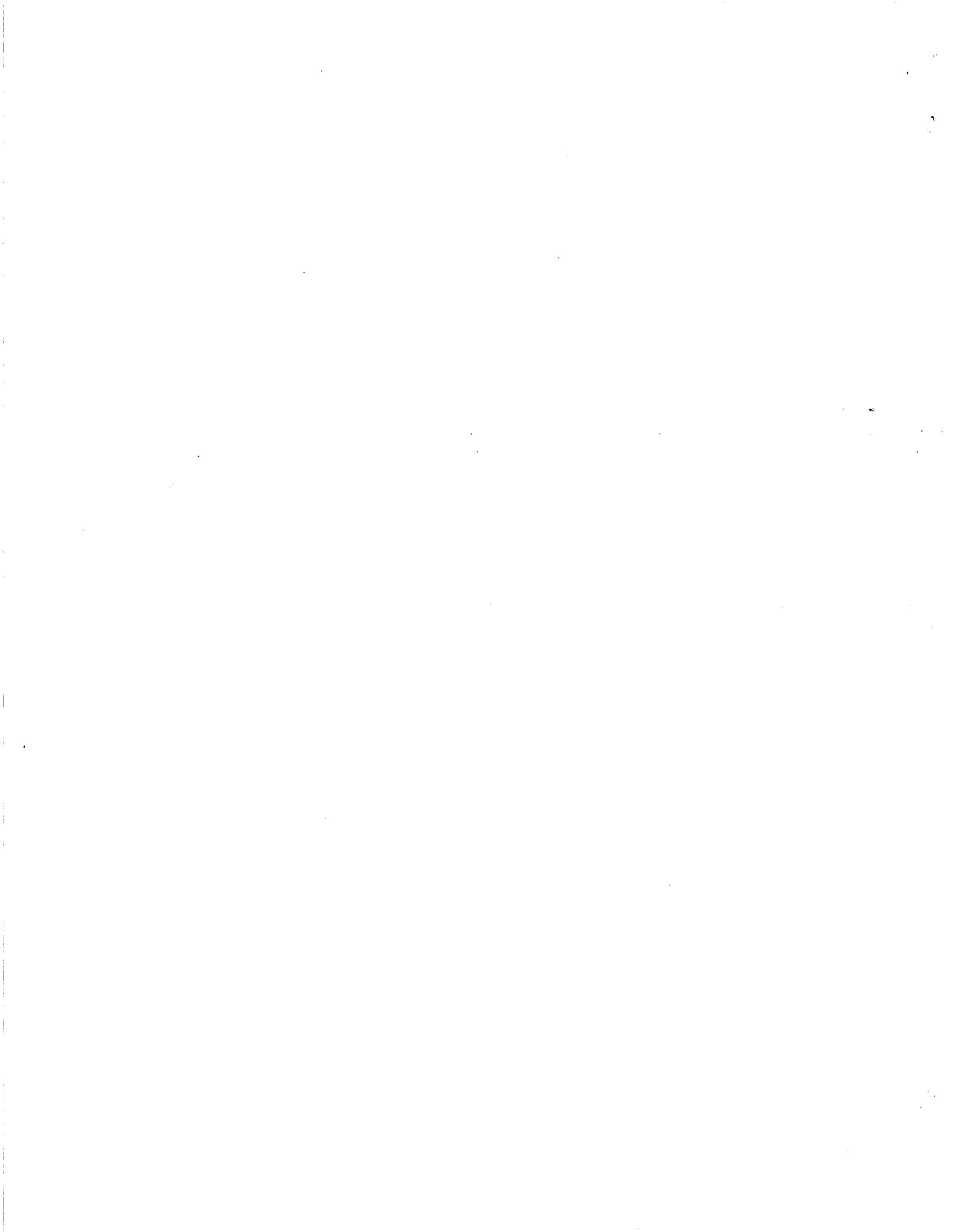
It appears the outside agencies are ahead of the County government in efforts to review and control production and distribution of publications. Each has either a centralized review and control mechanism in place or has recently completed work whereby a centralized group reviewed individual publications. During the early stages of this OLO study, it was discovered that conclusions contained in OLO Report No. 83-2 relating to publication management at the County government level are as applicable today as they were on January 10, 1984, when the report was released by Council (ATTACHMENT B).

Efforts are underway in the Executive and Legislative branches to address management of publications and coordinate use of other media. County departments and agencies are participating in working groups to collaborate on ways to better coordinate among the departments and agencies for more effective sharing of information and more efficient use of information resources.

OLO expects to submit the final report on publications to the Council in February 1993, with a view to including recommendations from the various working groups. The report will also include information and recommendations on the public information resources review being conducted by Council staff.

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Attachments



OFFICE OF LEGISLATIVE OVERSIGHT PUBLICATION SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE
 COUNCIL OFFICE BUILDING, 100 MARYLAND AVENUE, ROOM 509, ROCKVILLE, MD. 20850
 (See Instructions and Definitions on back of this form)

Return completed form by 01/17/92

Direct questions to: Rob Heckman 217-7991

This form prepared by: _____ Phone: _____ Date _____

Name of document (attach copy): _____

Author: Gov't Branch: _____ Department: _____

Section: _____ Agency Number: _____

Is this document legally mandated or otherwise required? Yes _____ No _____

Cite law or other requirement: _____

Purpose for producing this document: _____

Intended audience (general public, students, seniors, etc.): _____

Format of publication (report, pamphlet, newsletter, etc.): _____ Reason
for selecting format _____

Attached document is published (once only, monthly, yearly, etc.) _____

If two or more documents of approximate same size and general format are produced
 yearly, enter information for an average publication. OTHERWISE SKIP TO NEXT LINE.

Total published yearly: _____ Avg. No. printed: _____ Avg. No. distributed: _____

Document last published: Date: _____ No. printed: _____ No. distributed: _____

Method of distribution: _____

Explain any changes in method of distribution: _____

Number mailed: Inter-office: _____ County residents: _____ Outside County: _____

Copies mailed are determined by mailing list, upon request, other _____

If mailed, indicate kind and size of envelope: _____

If document required new or otherwise special design, indicate applicable costs:

Dept. staff \$ _____ Other in-house staff \$ _____ Contractor \$ _____

Document printed by: Agency print shop _____ Outside printer _____ Office copier _____

Printing cost per document (if known): \$ _____ or Total printing cost: \$ _____

Show additional costs (if known) for cover: \$ _____ for binding: \$ _____

Cost per envelope: \$ _____ Postage cost per document: \$ _____

Other costs (explain): \$ _____

Additional costs for special handling (if known):

Cost per photograph/image: \$ _____ Cost per non-black ink color: \$ _____

Other special process or handling (explain): \$ _____

Revenues:

Current charge per document: \$ _____ State who is charged: _____

Explain if fees are ever waived _____

When were fees/charges first instituted? FY _____ Give brief history of fee changes: _____

Other offsetting revenues received for this publication (grants, contributions, etc)

\$ _____ Specify source: _____

Revenues collected: FY90: \$ _____ FY91 \$ _____ FY92: \$ _____

IF MAJOR CHANGES ARE PLANNED FOR THIS DOCUMENT IN FY92, PLEASE ATTACH EXPLANATION

INSTRUCTIONS

Please report on any publications printed in FYs 90, 91, or 92 and, any publications for which you have a supply or are currently distributing, regardless of the fiscal year in which it was printed.

PUBLICATIONS TO REPORT: reports, booklets, brochures, fliers, directories, guides, newsletters, tabloids, calendars of events, posters, public interest bus ads, etc. to be made available or directly distributed to employees or the public.

FORMAT: describe your publication using terms like those above. If your publication is an unusual size for its format, please include that information.

DISTRIBUTION METHOD: list in order of use. For example, if nearly all the copies are handed to clients, **HAND** would be your primary method. Indicate other methods in order of use, **ONLY** if they are used for a substantial number of copies. Please use the following terms to describe your distribution methods:

- Interoffice - Sent to individuals by pony or interoffice mail.
- Bulk Interoffice - Sent by pony or interoffice mail for countertop distribution or to be posted at libraries, community centers, etc.
- Child - Distributed to participants at schools, day care centers, etc. for take home.
- Bulk Mail - Mass distribution mailed at U.S. bulk rates.
- Mail List - Sent via U.S. mail regular rates per department list of regular recipients.
- Mail Request - Sent via U.S. mail regular rates per specific requests by individuals or organizations.
- SSAE - Sent only in stamped, self-addressed envelopes provided by recipients.
- Walk-In - Available in display rack at originating department for pick-up by interested parties, including employees and/or the general public.

Document # _____

Number of pages _____ Printing one side of paper or both sides _____

Number of photos: color _____ black & white _____

Black ink is used: Yes _____ No _____ Number of non-black colors used: _____

Description of paper/covers:

Size of paper/cover _____

Kind of paper used _____

Kind of cover used _____

Color of paper used _____

Color of cover used _____

Weight of paper used _____

Weight of cover used _____

Any photos or special layout for covers (explain): _____

Describe how document is bound: _____

Document # _____

Number of pages _____ Printing one side of paper or both sides _____

Number of photos: color _____ black & white _____

Black ink is used: Yes _____ No _____ Number of non-black colors used: _____

Description of paper/covers:

Size of paper/cover _____

Kind of paper used _____

Kind of cover used _____

Color of paper used _____

Color of cover used _____

Weight of paper used _____

Weight of cover used _____

Any photos or special layout for covers (explain): _____

Describe how document is bound: _____

**Conclusions and Recommendations Relating to Publications
Excerpted from OLO Report No. 83-2**

CONCLUSIONS

1. The Centralized Public Management effort, required by Administrative Procedure 1-6, does not assure adequate control over the cost of publications or effective and efficient distribution of publications.

a) The total cost of publications cannot be determined because funds for producing and distributing publications are appropriated as part of the individual department's annual operating budget; the cost of inter/intra-department copies of documents and inter-office mail service are included in the same operating expense codes with publications and there is no requirement to identify and report the total cost (design, printing and distribution) of each publications produced.

b) Departments are only submitting requests for new non-routine publications and the Publications and Graphics Section does not compare the actual publications produced to those originally approved.

c) Administrative Procedure 1-6 does not address distribution of publications except to require the individual departments to send one copy of each publication to the County Executive's Office, Chief Administrative Officer, Publications and Graphics Section, and three copies to the Rockville Library Municipal Collection. Individual departments manage the distribution of their own publications and there are no procedures to assure that the required copies are distributed or that the distribution of all publications is effective and efficient.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The Office of Management and Budget, Office of Public Information and Volunteer Services, Department of Facilities and Services, and Department of Finance should review the current policies and procedures concerning centralized publication management and printing and mail services and implement the following changes and controls to improve their effectiveness and efficiency:

a) Allocate all funds for producing and distributing publications to the Office of Public Information and Volunteer Services (note that Volunteer Services has since been dropped from the name);

b) Develop procedures to identify the total cost (design, printing, and distribution) of each publication produced;

c) Develop procedures to assure that copies of each publication are sent to the County Executive's Office, Chief Administrative Officer, Publications and Graphics Section, and three copies to the Rockville Library Municipal Collection.

