HOUSING AND COMMUNITY AFFAIRS

PROGRAM:
Consumer Protection[a]

PROGRAM ELEMENT:

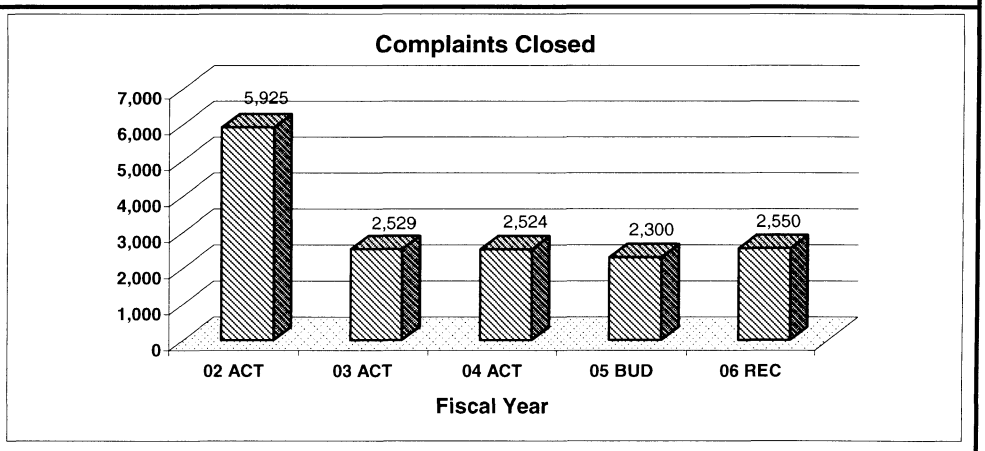
PROGRAM MISSION:
To investigate and attempt to resolve consumer complaints concerning home sales, improvements, and mortgages; automobile sales and repairs; and other merchants and service providers in a manner that is both timely and fair

COMMUNITY OUTCOMES SUPPORTED:
- Maintain a marketplace that is fair to all parties, including consumers, merchants, landlords, tenants, homeowners, and their governing boards
- Foster respect for the law
- Provide responsive government
- Promote a positive business climate

PROGRAM MEASURES	FY02 ACTUAL	FY03 ACTUAL[e]	FY04 ACTUAL	FY05 BUDGET	FY06 CE REC
Outcomes/Results:					
Total monetary restitution to consumers ($000)	753	1,045	854	1,300	1,100
Service Quality:					
Percentage of complainants satisified with:					
- The way in which the complaint was handled	91	92	89	88	88
- The outcome from filing the complaint	82	82	75	80	80
Efficiency:					
Service units[c] completed per workyear	1,953	1,681	1,707	1,595	1,715
Average cost per service unit[c] completed ($)	42.49	64.62	58.40	63.86	63.45
Volunteer hours contributed	4,620	4,244	2,829	4,000	3,000
Workload/Outputs:					
Consumer complaints closed[d]	5,925	2,529	2,524	2,300	2,550
Information calls answered	31,123	23,270	26,277	24,000	26,000
Disclosures[b]	9,626	6,468	5,854	5,600	5,400
Total service units provided[c]	46,674	[e]32,267	34,655	31,900	33,950
Inputs:					
Expenditures ($000)[a]	1,983	2,085	2,024	2,037	2,154
Workyears[a]	23.9	19.2	20.3	20.0	19.8

Notes:
[a]Excludes the Child Passenger Safety Seat portion of this program, but includes all other Consumer Protection activities and responsibilities.
[b]Disclosures are responses to calls from consumers asking if there have been any complaints about a given merchant.
[c]Service units equal complaints plus requests for information plus disclosures.
[d]Excludes large class type settlements, which could inflate and distort the number of cases.
[e]The sharp drop in cases and total service units resulted from the transfer of the Cable Television Office from the Department of Housing and Community Affairs to the Department of Technology Services.

EXPLANATION:
The Division of Consumer Affairs within the Department of Housing and Community Affairs ensures that a fair and competitive marketplace is maintained within Montgomery County so that consumers are protected from unfair and deceptive business practices, and responsible businesses are allowed to operate free from unfair competition.



PROGRAM PARTNERS IN SUPPORT OF OUTCOMES: County Attorney, District Court, Maryland Attorney General's Office, Federal Trade Commission, Better Business Bureau, U.S. Postal Inspection Service.

MAJOR RELATED PLANS AND GUIDELINES: Maryland Annotated Code, Montgomery County Code, Federal laws and regulations.

HOUSING AND COMMUNITY AFFAIRS

PROGRAM:
Consumer Protection

PROGRAM ELEMENT:
Child Passenger Safety Seat Program

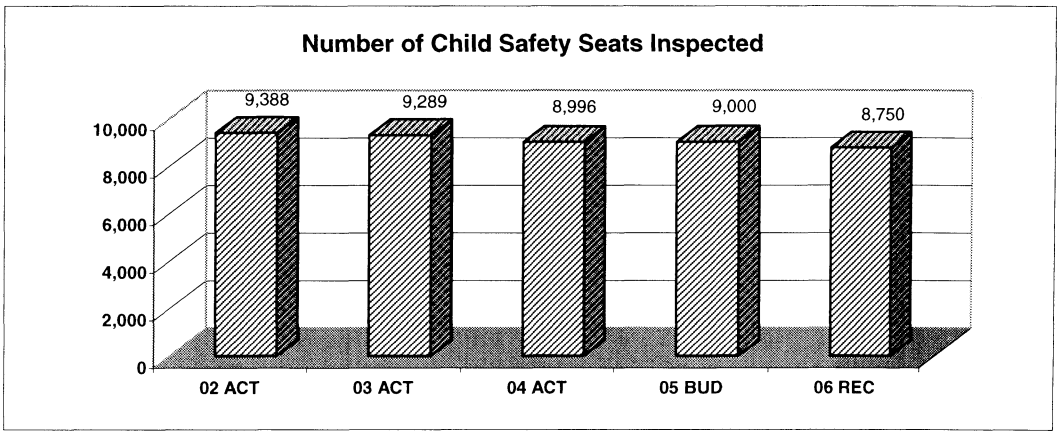
PROGRAM MISSION:
To inspect child passenger safety seats to ensure that they are properly installed and used in vehicles

COMMUNITY OUTCOMES SUPPORTED:
- Prevent injury and ensure the safety of children
- Educate the automotive industry, citizens, and families about the avoidance of risks and hazards
- Provide responsive government

PROGRAM MEASURES	FY02 ACTUAL[e]	FY03 ACTUAL[e]	FY04 ACTUAL	FY05 BUDGET	FY06 CE REC
Outcomes/Results:					
Number of child safety seat installations found to be defective[a]	7,323	8,360	6,564	6,300	6,825
Percentage of safety seat installations found to be defective	78	90	73	70	78
Percentage of defective safety seats corrected	100	100	100	100	100
Service Quality:					
Percentage of clients satisfied with service[b]	100	100	100	100	100
Number of seats installed by Department of Housing and Community Affairs staff that had to be redone	0	0	0	0	0
Efficiency:					
Number of child safety seats inspected per workyear	NA	1,019	1,447	1,575	1,575
Cost per child safety seat inspected ($)	NA	65.82	58.05	52.70	61.90
Number of persons trained per workyear	44.9	47.1	70.0	65.0	67.5
Workload/Outputs:					
Seats checked					
By Department of Housing and Community Affairs staff	NA	2,446	2,894	3,150	3,150
By others[c]	NA	6,843	6,102	5,850	5,600
TOTAL	9,388	9,289	8,996	9,000	8,750
Persons trained	157	113	140	130	135
Community outreach efforts[d]	8,544	12,562	13,971	13,000	15,000
Inputs:					
Expenditures ($000)	257	161	168	166	195
Workyears	3.5	2.4	2.0	2.0	2.0

Notes:
[a]These figures were estimated by extrapolating the results for Department of Housing and Community Affairs inspectors to staff from other departments that are performing child safety seat inspections.
[b]Based on a survey provided to all clients.
[c]Seats are also inspected by other government staff (Fire and Rescue Service, Police), private automotive dealerships, etc.
[d]Includes phone calls, presentations, child-birth classes, and consultations.
[e]Some FY02 and FY03 outcome, efficiency, and workload measures have been corrected using improved information.

EXPLANATION:
The Division of Consumer Protection within the Department of Housing and Community Affairs has been inspecting the installation of child safety seats for many years. However, in FY00 a separate and distinct program was established. In FY01, four additional workyears were dedicated to expansion of training and inspection for child safety seat installation and use.



PROGRAM PARTNERS IN SUPPORT OF OUTCOMES: Local automotive dealerships, Police Department, Fire and Rescue Service, Department of Health and Human Services, Emergency Nurses Association, Gaithersburg City Police, Holy Cross Hospital, Rockville City Police.

MAJOR RELATED PLANS AND GUIDELINES: National Safe Kids Coalition, National Highway Transportation Safety Administration (NHTSA) Guidelines.

HOUSING AND COMMUNITY AFFAIRS

PROGRAM:
Housing Code Enforcement

PROGRAM ELEMENT:

PROGRAM MISSION:
To ensure safe and sanitary conditions in single and multi-family residential housing units by conducting regular and as-required inspections

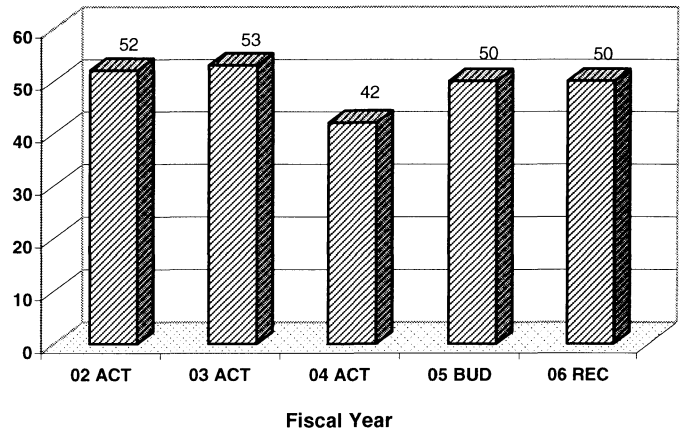
COMMUNITY OUTCOMES SUPPORTED:
- Safe, attractive neighborhoods
- Increased tax base
- Enhanced quality of life

PROGRAM MEASURES	FY02 ACTUAL	FY03 ACTUAL	FY04 ACTUAL	FY05 BUDGET	FY06 CE REC
Outcomes/Results:					
Percentage of housing units brought up to code following inspection	98	98	98	98	98
Houses rehabilitated	52	53	42	50	50
Service Quality:					
Average time to respond to complaints (days)	4	4	4	4	4
Efficiency:					
Program cost per unit to bring property/housing units into compliance ($)	119	115	95	142	107
Number of properties/housing units inspected per Department of Housing and Community Affairs workyear	678	757	967	671	916
Workload/Outputs:					
Number of properties/housing units inspected[a]	15,263	16,648	22,730	16,850	23,000
Inputs:					
Expenditures ($000)[b]	1,773	1,871	2,114	2,338	2,420
Workyears[b]	22.5	22.0	23.5	25.1	25.1

Notes:
[a]Depending on the nature of the violations and the responsiveness of the owner, multiple re-inspections may be required to achieve compliance with applicable code.
[b]Expenditures and workyears include relevant program costs and staff charged to the General Fund within the Department of Housing and Community Affairs and to the Solid Waste Fund within the Department of Public Works and Transportation.

EXPLANATION:
The Division of Housing and Code Enforcement in the Department of Housing and Community Affairs is responsible for ensuring that the housing stock and communities throughout the County are maintained in a safe and sanitary manner. The importance of maintaining our communities and housing stock in accordance with such a standard cannot be overstated. As the County's housing stock and communities continue to age, the importance of effective and consistent code enforcement becomes even more critical.

Single family homeowners not financially capable of bringing their homes up to code are eligible to receive low interest loans funded by the Federal Community Development Block Grant to rehabilitate their houses.



PROGRAM PARTNERS IN SUPPORT OF OUTCOMES: Police Department, County Attorney, Housing Opportunities Commission, District Court, Department of Public Works and Transportation, Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Service.

MAJOR RELATED PLANS AND GUIDELINES: Department of Housing and Community Affairs Code Enforcement Strategy, Neighborhoods Alive Initiative, Chapter 26 of the Montgomery County Code: "Housing and Building Maintenance Standards."

HOUSING AND COMMUNITY AFFAIRS

PROGRAM:
Landlord-Tenant Mediation

PROGRAM ELEMENT:

PROGRAM MISSION:
To provide information on landlord-tenant affairs, and to investigate and conciliate landlord-tenant disputes in a fair, timely, and equitable manner, taking legal action as necessary

COMMUNITY OUTCOMES SUPPORTED:
- Promote the understanding of individual rights and responsibilities
- Encourage respect for the law
- Provide responsive government
- Promote a positive business climate and an excellent quality of life

PROGRAM MEASURES	FY02 ACTUAL	FY03 ACTUAL	FY04 ACTUAL	FY05 BUDGET	FY06 CE REC
Outcomes/Results:					
Percentage of disputes resolved	95	94	95	95	95
Number of cases referred to the Commission on Landlord-Tenant affairs	37	40	40	35	35
Service Quality:					
Percentage of landlords participating in cases that rate as good or excellent:					
- The fairness with which the matter was handled	95	88	90	90	90
- The speed with which the matter was handled	94	87	91	90	90
- The courtesy and attitude of program staff	94	90	90	90	90
Percentage of tenants participating in cases that rate as good or excellent:					
- The fairness with which the matter was handled	88	87	90	90	90
- The speed with which the matter was handled	78	90	92	90	90
- The courtesy and attitude of program staff	94	92	93	90	90
Efficiency:					
Service units[a] completed per workyear	6,104	5,955	6,062	6,301	5,609
Average cost per service unit[a] ($)	13.98	15.50	14.76	16.36	19.79
Workload/Outputs:					
Number of requests for information	40,500	45,000	47,500	50,000	50,000
Number of complaints filed	1,576	1,400	952	1,000	1,000
Number of education and outreach presentations	45	51	42	40	40
Inputs:					
Expenditures ($000)	589	720	716	835	1,010
Workyears	6.9	7.8	8.0	8.1	9.1

Notes:
[a]Service units equal complaints plus requests for information plus education and outreach actions (tenant meetings, speeches, etc.).

EXPLANATION:
Montgomery County is committed to providing assistance to both landlords and tenants in resolving their disputes and with enforcing Chapter 29 of the Montgomery County Code, "Landlord-Tenant Relations." Specifically, the County:
- Provides information on landlord-tenant laws;
- Investigates and conciliates landlord-tenant disputes; and
- Refers complaints that are not conciliated to the Montgomery County Commission on Landlord-Tenant Affairs for hearings.

PROGRAM PARTNERS IN SUPPORT OF OUTCOMES: Police Department, Sheriff's Office, County Attorney, Housing Opportunities Commission, Commission on Human Rights, District Court.

MAJOR RELATED PLANS AND GUIDELINES: Montgomery County Model Leases; Landlord-Tenant Handbook; Chapter 29 of the Montgomery County Code, "Landlord-Tenant Relations."