



# Public Information

## APPROVED FY22 BUDGET

\$5,956,194

## FULL TIME EQUIVALENTS

53.70

 BARRY HUDSON, DIRECTOR

## MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Office of Public Information (PIO) is to provide timely, accurate, and effective communication with the public. PIO works with the County Executive, departments and agencies, media, County employees, the County Council and other elected officials, businesses, civic groups, and every other segment of the Montgomery County community. PIO provides information through the mass media, social media, internet, presentations, publications and graphics, cable television programming, and telephone and electronic requests for information and assistance via the MC311 Customer Service Center.

## BUDGET OVERVIEW


The total approved FY22 Operating Budget for the Office of Public Information is \$5,956,194, an increase of \$491,426 or 8.99 percent from the FY21 Approved Budget of \$5,464,768. Personnel Costs comprise 92.22 percent of the budget for 71 full-time position(s) and one part-time position(s), and a total of 53.70 FTEs. Total FTEs may include seasonal or temporary positions and may also reflect workforce charged to or from other departments or funds. Operating Expenses account for the remaining 7.78 percent of the FY22 budget.

## COUNTY PRIORITY OUTCOMES

While this program area supports all seven of the County Executive's Priority Outcomes, the following is emphasized:

 **Effective, Sustainable Government**

## INITIATIVES

-  Progression of MC311's customer-centric business approach for improving service delivery. Plans focus on deepening the collaboration with multiple business units within the departments of Permitting Services, Health and Human Services, Finance, and Human Resources to: reduce call handling complexities by streamlining the database of information about County services (Knowledge Based Articles - KBA - reduction); eliminate internal call transfers within MC311 and non-value additional contacts with the customer (abolish Tier II's and transfers to Department voicemail); change Department websites to be more self-service oriented (IT involvement); and increase CSR's ability to recognize calls that need to be answered by departmental experts (training). Measurable Goal: 20% reduction in call handling time for these departments.

## INNOVATIONS AND PRODUCTIVITY IMPROVEMENTS

- ✦ MC311 moved all business functions and approximately 50 employees to 100% telework status on March 17, 2020. This seamless transition at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic was only possible due to prior years of emergency preparedness planning and simulations that mirrored public safety agency readiness/contingency planning. This process included redesigning the Customer Service Representative (CSR) training program and implementing new technologies.
- ✦ In early 2021, MC311 implemented early in 2021 a phone-based messaging option that informs callers inquiring about Medicaid and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) information about online resources. This self-service feature on MC311's welcome message diverted more than 750 calls from the queue during the first month.
- ✦ MC311 early in 2021 implemented an online chatbot pilot to answer the top 24 services requested at MC311.com. This feature will soon be multi-lingual. Usage is starting at roughly 50 interactions a week, and this number is expected to increase.
- ✦ Service requests handled via MC311.com increased 22% per month so far in FY21 (from 7,600 to 9,250) and an upward trend is expected to continue.
- ✦ FY22 Recommended Budget provides for one new Merit Full-Time Customer Service Representative I (Grade 13) position; and funding for temporary contractors for six months. MC311 Management plans to hire multi-lingual candidates with an emphasis on Spanish speaking call takers. These personnel hours are expected to decrease the average call wait time, increase the number of answered calls, and decrease the call abandonment rate.

## PROGRAM CONTACTS

Contact Ohene Gyapong of the Office of Public Information at 240.777.6537 or Jane Mukira of the Office of Management and Budget at 240.777.2754 for more information regarding this department's operating budget.

## PROGRAM PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Performance measures for this department are included below (where applicable), with multi-program measures displayed at the front of this section and program-specific measures shown with the relevant program. The FY21 estimates reflect funding based on the FY21 Approved Budget. The FY22 and FY23 figures are performance targets based on the FY22 Approved Budget and funding for comparable service levels in FY23.

## PROGRAM DESCRIPTIONS

### ✦ MC311 Customer Service Center

MC311 is a key strategic, enterprise-wide initiative that provides the public with a single three-digit number (311) to call for County information and service. In addition, it provides the County with a sophisticated ability to count, track, and respond to resident requests. MC311 provides the general public with a higher quality of service delivery and accountability, while helping the government achieve operational efficiencies.

Program Performance Measures	Actual FY19	Actual FY20	Estimated FY21	Target FY22	Target FY23
Average amount of time it takes to reach an MC311 Customer Service Representative after welcome announcement (in seconds) <sup>1</sup>	94	267	230	40	40
Percent of MC311 survey respondents reporting satisfaction	83%	85%	85%	85%	85%

Program Performance Measures	Actual FY19	Actual FY20	Estimated FY21	Target FY22	Target FY23
Cost per customer contact (in dollars) (salary expenditures divided by the total number of customer contacts by phone, web portal, mobile-enabled portal, Twitter) <sup>2</sup>	\$3.72	N/A	\$5.44	\$5.44	\$5.44
Average rate of Service Requests created on the MC311 website and the mobile enabled portal	37.41%	37.53%	40.00%	40.00%	40.00%
Total number of Fulfillment Service Requests created <sup>3</sup>	233,941	242,792	245,000	250,000	255,000
Total number of General Information Service Requests created <sup>4</sup>	352,409	355,104	366,000	366,000	366,000
Percent of calls classified as General Information	73.93%	71.90%	72.00%	72.00%	72.00%
Average rate of calls that come into 311, but are not answered by a Customer Service Representative (CSR) <sup>5</sup>	9.90%	6.15%	18.00%	10.00%	10.00%
Average percent of callers requesting to speak Spanish	3.54%	6.68%	8.00%	8.00%	8.00%

<sup>1</sup> A surge of lengthy social services calls in FY20 and 21 related to COVID-19 is driving this number up.

<sup>2</sup> For FY19 there were 564,778 customer contacts where source equals phone, web, and Twitter. Actual salary costs were: \$2,098,582.

<sup>3</sup> Fulfillment Service Requests are those that are forwarded to departments for handling and completion. The numbers and types of service requests are driven by many factors including seasonal events such as tax notices, mass mailings, weather events, and global pandemics.

<sup>4</sup> General Information Service Requests are those created, handled and closed in the Customer Service Center.

<sup>5</sup> Target is 5%. Unable to meet target due to staffing shortage and COVID-19 call surge. This is also supported by Erlang, which is a tool that assists call centers with staffing requirements.

FY22 Approved Changes	Expenditures	FTEs
<b>FY21 Approved</b>	<b>4,095,802</b>	<b>42.95</b>
Increase Cost: Customer Service Representative and Funding for Temporary Staff for Six Months	341,431	1.00
Multi-program adjustments, including negotiated compensation changes, employee benefit changes, changes due to staff turnover, reorganizations, and other budget changes affecting multiple programs.	(115,155)	0.00
<b>FY22 Approved</b>	<b>4,322,078</b>	<b>43.95</b>

## Public Relations

Under this program, the Public Information Office:

- Educates and informs residents about County issues, programs, and services through press releases, media advisories, news, public events, the County website, e-mail and online newsletters, YouTube, Facebook, and Twitter;
- Works directly with media organizations to ensure that reporters and editors have accurate and timely information about County issues, programs, and services; and
- Develops promotional campaigns to increase awareness of critical issues such as pedestrian safety and emergency preparedness.

Program Performance Measures	Actual FY19	Actual FY20	Estimated FY21	Target FY22	Target FY23
Number of press events	41	64	50	45	45
Total attendance at press conferences and press events	6,279	3,520	4,000	4,000	4,000
Internal County staff satisfaction with PIO services (scale of 1-4)	3.30	3.14	3.20	3.20	3.30
Total utilization of direct resident communication systems - web, YouTube, video, podcasts, Facebook, Twitter (in millions) <sup>1</sup>	58.9	83.9	62.4	64.1	65.8

<sup>1</sup> FY20 was an anomaly because of COVID-19. Impressions from communications expected to go back to normal.

FY22 Approved Changes	Expenditures	FTEs
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FY22 Approved Changes	Expenditures	FTEs
<b>FY21 Approved</b>	<b>1,207,383</b>	<b>8.75</b>
Increase Cost: Mid-Year Action - Create Manager II Term Position	65,938	1.00
Technical Adj: Workforce Adjustment	0	(1.00)
Decrease Cost: Motor Pool Adjustment	(15)	0.00
Decrease Cost: Print and Mail Adjustment	(48)	0.00
Multi-program adjustments, including negotiated compensation changes, employee benefit changes, changes due to staff turnover, reorganizations, and other budget changes affecting multiple programs.	199,281	0.00
<b>FY22 Approved</b>	<b>1,472,539</b>	<b>8.75</b>

## Web Content and Graphic Management

The Web Content and Graphic Development Program has four major functions.

- Providing creative and technical support to Public Relations, Cable Programming, MC311, and to departments.
- Developing and overseeing the County's graphic identity program to ensure consistency in the County's printed communication for the public. The program develops printing guidelines for departments in accordance with Administrative Procedure 1-7, Use of the Montgomery County Coat of Arms, Logotype and Emblem, and Public Communication Guide.
- Managing the growth and activity on the County's website and the MC311 web portal, which involves the development of policies and procedures for adding information to the website, as well as providing a leadership role in internet management.
- Producing artwork and design services for publications, fliers, decals, exhibits, charts, maps, and other promotional and educational products. Graphic artists provide advice to departments in cost-effective and attractive ways to meet project requirements and objectives.

Program Performance Measures	Actual FY19	Actual FY20	Estimated FY21	Target FY22	Target FY23
Number of press releases and media advisories posted on website	718	756	710	710	710
Number of subscribers to county communications <sup>1</sup>	8,471	203,552	205,000	205,000	205,000
Average open rate for email communications	20.4%	20.4%	20.5%	20.5%	20.5%

<sup>1</sup> FY20 was unprecedented which contributed to the specific set of circumstances, increasing the demand for information.

FY22 Approved Changes	Expenditures	FTEs
<b>FY21 Approved</b>	<b>161,583</b>	<b>1.00</b>
Multi-program adjustments, including negotiated compensation changes, employee benefit changes, changes due to staff turnover, reorganizations, and other budget changes affecting multiple programs.	(6)	0.00
<b>FY22 Approved</b>	<b>161,577</b>	<b>1.00</b>

## BUDGET SUMMARY

	Actual FY20	Budget FY21	Estimate FY21	Approved FY22	%Chg Bud/App
COUNTY GENERAL FUND					
EXPENDITURES					

## BUDGET SUMMARY

	Actual FY20	Budget FY21	Estimate FY21	Approved FY22	%Chg Bud/App
Salaries and Wages	4,109,340	3,994,815	4,087,853	4,178,667	4.6 %
Employee Benefits	1,348,618	1,276,402	1,284,405	1,314,375	3.0 %
<b>County General Fund Personnel Costs</b>	<b>5,457,958</b>	<b>5,271,217</b>	<b>5,372,258</b>	<b>5,493,042</b>	<b>4.2 %</b>
Operating Expenses	184,474	193,551	910,008	463,152	139.3 %
<b>County General Fund Expenditures</b>	<b>5,642,432</b>	<b>5,464,768</b>	<b>6,282,266</b>	<b>5,956,194</b>	<b>9.0 %</b>
PERSONNEL					
Full-Time	70	70	70	71	1.4 %
Part-Time	1	1	1	1	—
FTEs	52.60	52.70	52.70	53.70	1.9 %
<b>County General Fund Revenues</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>—</b>

## FY22 APPROVED CHANGES

	Expenditures	FTEs
<b>COUNTY GENERAL FUND</b>		
<b>FY21 ORIGINAL APPROPRIATION</b>	<b>5,464,768</b>	<b>52.70</b>
<b><u>Other Adjustments (with no service impacts)</u></b>		
Increase Cost: Customer Service Representative and Funding for Temporary Staff for Six Months [MC311 Customer Service Center]	341,431	1.00
Increase Cost: FY21 Compensation Adjustment	134,662	0.00
Increase Cost: Mid-Year Action - Create Manager II Term Position [Public Relations]	65,938	1.00
Increase Cost: FY22 Compensation Adjustment	58,767	0.00
Increase Cost: Retirement Adjustment	4,968	0.00
Technical Adj: Workforce Adjustment [Public Relations]	0	(1.00)
Decrease Cost: Motor Pool Adjustment [Public Relations]	(15)	0.00
Decrease Cost: Print and Mail Adjustment [Public Relations]	(48)	0.00
Decrease Cost: Annualization of FY21 Personnel Costs	(114,277)	0.00
<b>FY22 APPROVED</b>	<b>5,956,194</b>	<b>53.70</b>

## PROGRAM SUMMARY

Program Name	FY21 APPR Expenditures	FY21 APPR FTEs	FY22 APPR Expenditures	FY22 APPR FTEs
MC311 Customer Service Center	4,095,802	42.95	4,322,078	43.95
Public Relations	1,207,383	8.75	1,472,539	8.75
Web Content and Graphic Management	161,583	1.00	161,577	1.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,464,768</b>	<b>52.70</b>	<b>5,956,194</b>	<b>53.70</b>

## CHARGES TO OTHER DEPARTMENTS

Charged Department	Charged Fund	FY21 Total\$	FY21 FTEs	FY22 Total\$	FY22 FTEs
<b>COUNTY GENERAL FUND</b>					
Human Resources	Employee Health Self Insurance	0	0.00	0	0.00
Health and Human Services	General Fund	145,611	1.50	144,613	1.50
Permitting Services	Permitting Services	272,832	2.90	275,558	2.90
Housing and Community Affairs	Montgomery Housing Initiative	69,262	0.90	69,408	0.90
Recycling and Resource Management	Solid Waste Disposal	412,048	4.75	415,289	4.75
Recycling and Resource Management	Solid Waste Collection	106,883	1.25	107,552	1.25
Cable Television Communications Plan	Cable TV	832,128	6.50	798,744	6.50
<b>Total</b>		<b>1,838,764</b>	<b>17.80</b>	<b>1,811,164</b>	<b>17.80</b>

## FUNDING PARAMETER ITEMS

CC APPROVED (\$000S)

Title	FY22	FY23	FY24	FY25	FY26	FY27
<b>COUNTY GENERAL FUND</b>						
<b>EXPENDITURES</b>						
<b>FY22 Approved</b>	<b>5,956</b>	<b>5,956</b>	<b>5,956</b>	<b>5,956</b>	<b>5,956</b>	<b>5,956</b>
No inflation or compensation change is included in outyear projections.						
<b>Elimination of One-Time Items Approved in FY22</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(270)</b>	<b>(270)</b>	<b>(270)</b>	<b>(270)</b>	<b>(270)</b>
Items recommended for one-time funding in FY22, including funding for 10 temporary staff for six months and operating expenses for one new staff, will be eliminated from the base in the outyears.						
<b>Labor Contracts</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>112</b>
These figures represent the estimated annualized cost of general wage adjustments, service increments, and other negotiated items.						
<b>Subtotal Expenditures</b>	<b>5,956</b>	<b>5,798</b>	<b>5,798</b>	<b>5,798</b>	<b>5,798</b>	<b>5,798</b>