

Communications

Department Director: Barbra Hernandez

OMB Budget Analyst: Audrey Ables

Department Purpose

The Pinellas County Communications Department (PCC) manages daily, long-term, and emergency public communications that help the County empower residents and partners with important and reliable information.

Budget Summary

Fund: 0001 - General Fund						
	FY20 Actual	FY21 Actual	FY22 Actual	FY23 Budget	FY23 Estimate	FY24 Request
Personnel Services	\$2,327,531	\$2,446,741	\$2,580,030	\$2,867,520	\$2,666,110	\$2,894,960
Operating Expenses	\$201,338	\$257,589	\$237,070	\$237,350	\$239,790	\$221,400
Capital Outlay	\$52,982	\$9,808	\$0	\$29,600	\$29,600	\$35,100
Expenditures Total	\$2,581,852	\$2,714,138	\$2,817,100	\$3,134,470	\$2,935,500	\$3,151,460
FTE	27.0	26.0	26.0	25.0	25.0	25.0

FY24 Budget Drivers and Topics for Discussion

- The FY24 Budget for PCC has increased by \$23,070 or 0.7%, in comparison to the FY23 Budget.
- The Proposed FY24 Budget includes 3.0% Salary Adjustments on the Mid-Point for all employees and the reclassification of some employees from classified to exempt (from \$2.8M to \$2.9, for a difference of \$33,520 or 1.2%).
- \$158,020, which supported one FTE was re-aligned within Business Technology Services (BTS) Department, and the Communications Department will no longer be providing funding for that position since it will be performing BTS-related functions.
- Operating expenses decreased \$15,950 or 6.7% due to department cost-savings efforts. The departments cost-savings is derived from the renegotiation of a communication services contract, implementation of a more cost-effective closed captioning software, and a significantly less expensive product framing solution for proclamations.
- This year Communications has made an effort to prioritize employee's professional development from \$22,080 to \$27,740 for a difference of \$5,660.
- The FY24 Budget includes planned equipment purchases (\$35,100).
- Communications has reinstituted the Pinellas Citizens University this past Spring. They are also planning to explore a virtual option for FY24. They have incorporated the cost increase of creating a virtual academy (\$200) into the FY24 budget.

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FY24 Decision Packages

- **A video storage backup for the EOC (Non-recurring \$9,000)**
 - Communications would like to enhance storage space and protect video files from potential loss in a disaster or catastrophic hardware failure with this equipment upgrade in the object of being responsible stewards by providing preventing our videos from being lost.

Proposed Fee Changes

- No user fee changes are proposed for FY24.

FY23 Accomplishments

- Completed an average of 300+ monthly jobs and tasks in support of county departments' public information and education needs.
- Handled a monthly average of 660 LiveChat interactions, 350 phone calls and 100 public records requests.
- Held introductory and advanced media relations training for staff and leadership across county departments. Post survey training results show 100% satisfaction by training participants.
- Created an anti-complacency hurricane safety communication plan to increase compliance with emergency messaging during named storm events.
- Created a communication plan and dedicated training in support of the Homes for Pinellas housing summit.
- Completed an organizational assessment for public participation ahead of developing training and guidelines for consistent citizen outreach.
- Achieved a monthly average of 25,000 online engagements with county published content.
- Completed studio upgrades to enhance video production.

Work Plan

- Launch of External Newsletter
- Public Participation Training & Guidelines
- Pinellas Citizen University
- Hurricane Season Public Education

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Performance Measures

Measure	Unit of Measure	FY21 Actual	FY22 Actual	FY23 Budget	FY24 Budget
Advertising Value Equivalency (AVE)	US Dollars	\$422,660,324.00	\$875,929,108.00	\$800,000,000.00	\$900,000,000.00
Total Online Video Views	Count	-	-	475,000	500,000
Total Audiences Reached via Community and Online Meetings	Count	31,918*	4,530	5,000	10,000

*FY21 actuals reflect pandemic demand increase

Budget Summary by Program and Major Object

County Organization Support

Supports prompt and efficient delivery of timely and actionable life-safety information to county residents. This is done via services such as: public communications, BCC meeting support community engagement; media relations; audiovisual production; studio and field equipment operation; graphic design products; photography; County website maintenance, design, and restructure in partnership with Business and Technology Services (BTS); support for crisis communications, issue consultation, and other communications-related services.

Fund	FY20 Actual	FY21 Actual	FY22 Actual	FY23 Budget	FY23 Estimate	FY24 Request
Expenditures Total	\$2,581,852	\$2,714,138	\$2,817,100	\$3,134,470	\$2,935,500	\$3,151,460
FTE	27.0	26.0	26.0	25.0	25.0	25.0

Emergency Events

Expenditures incurred during a disaster event to allow for accurate tracking of those expenses in support of reimbursement of eligible expenditures from the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) Public Assistance Grant Program or other funding sources, as applicable.

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Fund	FY20 Actual	FY21 Actual	FY22 Actual	FY23 Budget	FY23 Estimate	FY24 Request
Expenditures Total	\$600,457	\$365,335	\$11,430	\$0	\$0	\$0
FTE	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

Attachments:

- | | |
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Communications Department

Director

Barbra Hernandez, APR, CPRC
00202 (E32) BCC/E0051

Public Information Manager

David Connor
07552 (E25)
BCC/E734

Senior Public Information Coordinator

Tony Fabrizio
17564 (E23)
BCC/E742

Public Information Specialists

Kelsey Grentzer
07550 (C24)
BCC/C2608

Sydney Criteser
07550 (C24)
BCC/C3951

Libby Bolling
07550 (C24)
BCC/C2353

Social Media Specialist

Feddy Azofeifa
07575 (E18)
BCC/E760

Senior Communications Coordinators

Josh Boatwright
17564 (E23)
BCC/E663

Ashley Johnson
17564 (E23)
BCC/E813

Communications Project Specialist

Brian Pellerin
07550 (C24)
BCC/C3851

Community Outreach Coordinator

Arelys Escalera
17564 (E23)
BCC/E792

Administrative Operations Supervisor

Telma Bruzzo
17564 (E23)
BCC/E1040

Administrative Support Specialists

Vanessa Quintana
11312 (C19)
BCC/C3910

Chelsea
Damthongmivanh
11312 (C19)
BCC/C3992

Graphics and Digital Projects Coordinator

Sarah Powell
17564 (E23)
BCC/E907

Senior Graphic Designers

Eric Bell
07539 (C22)
BCC/C3026

Nancy East
07539 (C22)
BCC/C3745

Shan Fernandez
07550 (C24)
BCC/C821

Digital and Audiovisual Communications Manager

Brian Derr
07582 (E25) BCC/E736

Video Project Coordinator

Bruno Rivera
17564 (E23)
BCC/E1041

Technical Director

Dan Eggleston
07576 (C26)
BCC/C3283

Video Specialists

Andy Roether
07564 (C23)
BCC/C1798

Tony Smith
07564 (C23)
BCC/C3164

Broadcast Engineering Specialist

Ed Griswold
07572 (E23)
BCC/E1000

Senior Master Control Specialist

Pete Brosey
07548 (C24)
BCC/C3154

**Communications
By Major Object**

Expenditures

Major Object	FY20 Actual	FY21 Actual	FY22 Actual	FY23 Budget	FY23 Estimate	FY24 Request	Budget to Budget Change	Budget to Budget % Change	Variance Explanation
Personnel Services	2,327,531	2,446,741	2,580,030	2,867,520	2,733,950	2,901,040	33,520	1.17%	Due to the 3% increase to the midpoint, as well as career path and ladder raises
Operating Expenses	201,338	257,589	237,070	237,350	239,790	221,400	(15,950)	-6.72%	Due to the department identified savings
Capital Outlay	52,982	9,808	0	29,600	29,600	35,100	5,500	18.58%	Due to the equipment replacement plan
Expenditures Total	2,581,852	2,714,138	2,817,100	3,134,470	3,003,340	3,157,540	23,070	0.74%	Due to the increase described above

**Communications
By Account**

Attachment 2: Budget Reports

Expenditures

Account	FY20 Actual	FY21 Actual	FY22 Actual	FY23 Budget	FY23 Estimate	FY24 Request	Budget to Budget Change	Budget to Budget % Change	Variance Explanation
5110001 - Executive Salaries	658,274	789,764	924,747	862,490	1,109,180	1,110,900	248,410	28.80%	Due to the 3% increase to the midpoint, as well as career path and ladder raises
5120001 - Regular Salaries & Wages	922,883	888,023	897,075	971,050	771,070	843,710	(127,340)	-13.11%	Due to the reclassification of two employees
5130001 - Other Salaries And Wages	0	0	30,912	0	0	0	0	0.00%	
5140001 - Overtime Pay	13,432	34,365	45,260	8,000	12,000	8,000	0	0.00%	
5150001 - One Time COLA Wage Disbursement	0	0	0	30,000	15,000	0	(30,000)	-100.00%	Reduction due to one-time \$1,200 retention pay in FY23
5200001 - Employee Benefits-Overtime	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.00%	
5210001 - FICA Taxes	118,093	126,876	137,990	137,980	144,570	149,540	11,560	8.38%	
5220001 - Retirement Contributions	141,995	176,277	213,397	221,820	231,400	273,260	51,440	23.19%	This is due to the 3% increase to the midpoint This is due to the state increase in retirement contributions
5230001 - Hlth,Life,Dntl,Std,Ltd	482,623	503,170	458,689	478,160	450,730	515,630	37,470	7.84%	
5299991 - Reg Salary&Wgs-Contra-Prj	(6,652)	(50,148)	(103,518)	114,600	0	0	(114,600)	-100.00%	This is due to the 3% increase to the midpoint Due to one employee moving to BTS
5299992 - Benefits-Contra-Projects	(3,117)	(21,587)	(24,521)	43,420	0	0	(43,420)	-100.00%	Due to one employee moving to BTS
5310001 - Professional Services	27,468	36,671	28,599	45,000	33,000	44,000	(1,000)	-2.22%	A reduction in cost for closed captioning
5340001 - Other Contractual Svcs	36,384	5,977	239	0	18,000	0	0	0.00%	
5400001 - Travel and Per Diem	1,893	1,520	9,089	11,840	11,840	13,230	1,390	11.74%	Due to sending two additional staff members to conferences this year
5410001 - Communication Services	16,467	15,797	15,553	14,560	15,800	17,500	2,940	20.19%	To provide the Public Information Officers with cell stipends
5420001 - Freight	0	0	18	200	100	200	0	0.00%	
5420002 - Postage	16	5	3	100	100	100	0	0.00%	
5440001 - Rentals and Leases	2,495	2,417	2,533	6,000	6,000	6,000	0	0.00%	
5460001 - Repair&Maintenance Svcs	793	284	5	5,000	5,000	1,500	(3,500)	-70.00%	Realigned based on historical spending; the funding was realigned to operating supplies EXP
5470001 - Printing and Binding Exp	5,374	2,017	1,438	3,000	3,000	3,000	0	0.00%	
5480001 - Promotional Activities Exp	5,994	1,752	2,831	14,000	9,000	11,000	(3,000)	-21.43%	Department identified cost savings, no longer providing frames for BCC proclamations
5490001 - Othr Current Chgs&Obligat	155	134	0	0	0	0	0	0.00%	
		FY21 Actual	FY22 Actual	FY23 Budget	FY23 Estimate	FY24 Request	Budget to Budget Change	Budget to Budget % Change	Variance Explanation
5490060 - Incentives & Awards	5,011	0	995	6,000	6,000	1,500	(4,500)	-75.00%	Realigned based on need

5490070 - Employee Celebrations & Recognition	0	0	0	450	450	450	0	0.00%	
5496521 - Intgv Sv-Fleet-Op & Maint	3,019	6,492	4,034	8,280	8,280	8,280	0	0.00%	Attachment 2: Budget Reports
5496522 - Intgv Sv-Flt-Veh Rplcmnt	840	469	60	(230)	(230)	(230)	0	0.00%	
5496551 - Intgv Sv-Risk Financing	29,040	32,060	27,950	34,100	34,100	34,100	0	0.00%	
5510001 - Office Supplies Exp	2,671	354	1,004	4,000	4,000	4,000	0	0.00%	
5520001 - Operating Supplies Exp	42,883	123,998	88,020	25,500	25,500	30,500	5,000	19.61%	Due to the department expecting the need for more operating supplies in FY24 based on an increased workload
5520009 - Oper. Supplies-Computer	0	12,326	11,530	24,760	25,060	25,320	560	2.26%	To purchase computer equipment that is not provided by BTS
5520098 - PC Purchases under \$5,000	0	0	25,079	21,520	21,520	3,710	(17,810)	-82.76%	Per the BTS computer replacement plan
5520099 - PC Purchases under \$1000	13,750	3,483	1,070	0	0	0	0	0.00%	
5540001 - Bks, Pub, Subscrp & Membrshps	5,639	7,259	7,945	3,030	3,030	2,730	(300)	-9.90%	
5550001 - Training & Education Costs	1,447	4,574	9,076	10,240	10,240	14,510	4,270	41.70%	Conference and accreditation costs
5640001 - Machinery And Equipment	18,399	9,808	0	29,600	29,600	35,100	5,500	18.58%	Per the equipment replacement plan
5640099 - PC Purchases over \$1000	31,579	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.00%	
5680100 - Software-Purchased	3,005	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.00%	
Expenditures Total	2,581,852	2,714,138	2,817,100	3,134,470	3,003,340	3,157,540	23,070	0.74%	Due to the increase in salaries

Change Request Summary

Attachment 3: Decision Package

Report data returned based on the user's security permissions.

Change Request	AUTO - 760 - Equipment Upgrade: Video Backup Solution
Budget Year	2024
Change Request Type	Operating Decision Package Request
Change Request Stage	OMB Review [Operating Decision Package Request]
Acct. Reference	
Publish Date	
	An upgrade to a computer file storage system used by the videographers and setting up a synchronized backup at the EOC. Technical details are below:
Description (What is it) *	<p>1. Replace network expansion cards in the NAS with fiber (QNAP NAS's with QNAP QXG-25G2SF-CX6 Dual-Port 25GbE PCIe 4.0 x8 Network Expansion Card) at a cost of \$440.64 each (x2) to attain a high data transfer speed. Total \$882.</p> <p>2. Increase storage capacity from the current 96TB to 160TB with solid state drives: \$7813</p>
Summary of Request	<p>Total project cost estimated not to exceed \$9,000.</p> <p>Backup Video Storage to increase video electronic data storage capacity and to synchronize data to a server at the EOC. This will provide a disaster recovery solution and protect the entire video archives in the event of physical damage to the device – be it by a storm or other disaster.</p> <p>The system is needed to increase our storage space and to protect our video files from potential loss in a disaster or catastrophic hardware failure.</p>
Justification *	<p>The primary storage system for the Video team is physically located at 333 Chestnut St. on a multi-disc storage device. This device can recover from a hard drive failure; however, it is not backed up to another device offsite. If there were physical damage to the device from a fire, storm, or other disaster, it is possible that the video team would lose its entire archive and much of its work in progress.</p> <p>This system will significantly reduce the risk of video file loss, thus providing greater resiliency. While it would only be measurable in the event of a catastrophic system failure, completing the project now will ensure that thousands of hours of video files accumulated throughout the years can be backed up. This also reduces the risk of a loss of video public record.</p>
Ranking	<p>The current system is about halfway full, so increasing the capacity is important to extend the life of the system.</p> <p>1</p> <p>The video storage backup solution will enable the department to strengthen its functional resiliency and eliminate the risk of losing video content that is critical to high profile products, such as the BCC's Annual Accomplishments Report video.</p>
Operational Impacts	<p>Demand for departmental video content experienced a major spike during COVID-19. Having reliable video storage and equipment enabled the department to meet that demand with high quality and accessible content for American Sign Language (ASL) audiences and beyond.</p> <p>The Communications Department produces and disseminates an average of 86 video products online per year across its multiple platforms, plus additional video products created for use by other departments and partner agencies in their public outreach and education efforts. Average number of citizen views of county-generated videos online is 420,000 per year, a significant increase in demand as compared to pre-pandemic.</p> <p>Video equipment has supported more than 5,000 hours of BCC public meetings and others (TDC, BOA, Code and others) over the past 3 years, for an annual average of 1,700 meeting hours where reliable video equipment and storage are critical to a successful meeting delivery.</p>
Net Operating Budget	9,000
Net Capital Budget	-
Net Budget	9,000

Change Request Summary

Report data returned based on the user's security permissions.

Attachment 3: Decision Package

Operating Budget Details

Account	Position	Description (What is it?)	2024 Budget
Expenses			
231010 - Communications			
5640001 - Machinery And Equipment		Video Storage Backup	9,000
Total 231010 - Communications			9,000
Total Expenses			9,000
Total			9,000
Net Total			9,000

Financial Analysis Stress Test for the 2023 Budget Information Sessions

Communications

As part of the FY24 Budget development process, a financial analysis stress test was conducted for County Administrator Departments that are not enterprise-funded Departments. As such, the financial and operational impacts were determined for three scenarios:

- 1) Remaining at a flat budget from the FY23 Adopted Budget to the FY24 Proposed Budget
- 2) Reducing the budget by 3% below the FY23 Adopted Budget
- 3) Reducing the budget by 5% below the FY23 Adopted Budget.

Items such as grants and one-time expenditures were not included in these analyses.

For the Communications Department, their department submission for FY24 met the flat scenario. However, due to updated to the Florida Retirement System they are now \$23,070 over the FY23 budgeted amount. The Department achieved a flat budget submission by renegotiating a communication services contract with no service impact (a recurring savings of \$2,900), implementing a more cost-effective closed captioning software than budgeted (a recurring savings of \$16,000), and adopting a significantly less expensive product framing solution for proclamations (a recurring savings of \$5,000).

To achieve a 3% reduction, the Department would need to take the steps already included in the Proposed Budget and further reduce the budget by \$94,000. This would be achieved by eliminating a position made vacant after a planned retirement which would reduce the Department's ability to produce videos by approximately 25%.

To achieve a 5% reduction, the Department would need to take the steps outlined above and further reduce the budget by \$29,000 (this is not exactly the difference of 2%, from 3% to 5%, as the 3% scenario yields more than a 3% savings as envisioned). This would be accomplished by reducing the promotions budget (decreasing the County's presence in the overall media market), reducing the Department's travel and training budget (decreasing staff development), reducing live chat subscriptions provided Countywide for all Departments, and reducing the office supplies budget to curtail staff's ability to deliver in some instances.

It is important to know that these impacts on services and financial scenarios are not recommended at this time. Readers should not assume that the results of these stress tests will be implemented as this is, in fact, not the intention at this time.