

FY 2009-10 PERFORMANCE OVERSIGHT HEARING

**COMMITTEE ON
GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS AND THE ENVIRONMENT**

THE HONORABLE MARY CHEH, CHAIRPERSON

COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA



**TESTIMONY OF CARRIE S. KOHNS
CHIEF OF STAFF
EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE MAYOR**

MONDAY, MARCH 1, 2010

Introduction

Good afternoon, Madame Chair and members of the Committee.

My name is Carrie Kohns, and I serve as Chief of Staff to Mayor Adrian M. Fenty. It is my pleasure to testify before the Committee on Government Operations and the Environment and to serve the residents of the District of Columbia through government service.

As you are aware, I oversee approximately 120 employees who make up the Mayor's various constituent outreach offices. About half of those employees work in EOM offices that fall under this committee's jurisdiction, with the remaining offices overseen by the Committee on Aging and Community Affairs.

For informational purposes, the Office of Community Affairs, which is directed by Sarah Latterner, oversees the following offices:

- Mayor's Office of Community Relations and Services
- DC Youth Advisory Council
- Office of African Affairs
- Office of Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Affairs



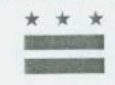
- Office of Women's Policy Initiatives
- Office of Ex-Offender Affairs

In addition to these offices, the Office of Latino Affairs, the Office of Asian Pacific Islander Affairs, the Office of Veteran's Affairs, Serve DC and the Office of the Secretary fall under the EOM umbrella.

Today's hearing will focus on the activities of only a portion of the EOM, but one that is directly charged with executing the vision of Mayor Fenty. In Fiscal Year 2010, the Executive Office of the Mayor's budget chapter has 52 FTEs and a budget of a little over \$5.3 million. I'd like to provide a quick review of the program offices that fall within this budget chapter.

Office of Policy and Legislative Affairs

The staff of the Office of Policy and Legislative Affairs, also known as OPLA, serves as a liaison between the Mayor and a wide range of people and institutions that are critical to the success of the



District Government. This includes the Council, District agencies, Congress, federal agencies and community stakeholders.

OPLA also works with the Council by coordinating executive branch participation in Council hearings. Last year, OPLA played an active role in assisting in the preparation for hundreds of Council hearings and meetings. The office is also responsible for tracking legislation and transmitting bills on behalf of the Executive as well as compiling the Budget Support Act.

Because of our structure of government, the Mayor must actively engage Congress on a regular basis. As you know, the District's budget and all other legislation are subject to congressional review.

For this reason, and because many local projects impact residents of the entire region, it is imperative that the Mayor have a strong working relationship with members of the House and Senate. The office also works to add federal funds for District programs during the appropriations process.

The Director of the Office of Policy and Legislative Affairs is
Bridget Davis.

Office of Boards and Commissions (OBC)

The Office of Boards and Commissions (OBC) coordinates the membership of 184 different boards and commissions in the District of Columbia. OBC acts as the liaison between the Mayor and as many as 3,700 members. Last year, OBC nominated 357 District residents

Erica Easter is the Director of the Office of Boards and Commissions.

Office of Communications

The Office of Communications is responsible for disseminating the Administration's agenda and accomplishments to the public and to District Government employees. Communications handles all of the Mayor's incoming media inquiries and produces two electronic newsletters. The office writes speeches and talking points for the Mayor's public engagements, and is responsible for the content on the



homepage of dc.gov, which is updated daily. In 2009, the Office of Communications held 330 press conferences and issued 369 press notices.

The office also has begun the process of transitioning over to a brand new dc.gov web portal to be announced in the next couple months that will make the site even more useful for residents.

The Director of the Office of Communications is Mafara Hobson.

Mayor's Correspondence Unit

As a further example of the Mayor's commitment to be responsive to our residents, we have increased capacity in the correspondence unit and decreased response time to constituent mail, both electronically and via US Mail. In 2009, the Mayor's Correspondence Unit responded to more than 20,000 emails and letters from constituents.

The Director of the Mayor's Correspondence Unit is Ashley Marshall.



Office of the General Counsel

The Office of the General Counsel advises the Mayor on all legal matters and is responsible for FOIA appeals for the District government. The office is made up of four staff including a deputy general counsel, with Andrew Chip Richardson serving as the General Counsel.

2009 Accomplishments

Last year was a busy one for the EOM. In addition to our regular activities, the team stepped in on various special projects from inaugural preparations to assisting with the Summer Youth Employment Program. In December, we partnered with Feed the Children and the NBA Players' Association to organize a massive food and clothing giveaway to include 8,000 turkeys and food baskets and 10,000 care packages for residents during the holiday season. Finally, the EOM team helped staff snow command operations during the most recent record snow storm to supplement staffing and help respond to constituent requests for snow removal in neighborhoods.



We have developed relationships with the Obama administration and its various federal agencies and have an ongoing dialogue on issues important to the District and our legislative team continues to work closely with Members of Congress on appropriations requests and city priorities.

Finally, our ultimate goal is to do all we can to continue to make the District of Columbia a great place to live and work through service, performance and accountability.

Conclusion

This concludes my prepared remarks. Thank you for the opportunity to address the Committee today, and I look forward to answering any questions you may have.

