



**CONSUMER
AFFAIRS
101**

DEPARTMENT OF CABLE AND CONSUMER SERVICES

WHO IS A CONSUMER?

- Buy clothes?
- Use credit cards?
- Buy electronics?
- Rent an apartment?
- Buy and/or repair a vehicle?
- Have cable or other utilities?



WHAT CONSUMER AFFAIRS DOES

- **Mediates** consumer, tenant-landlord, cable, and towing complaints
- **Investigates complaints** to ensure compliance with the Virginia Consumer Protection Act and the Virginia Residential Landlord Tenant Act
- **Consumer Specialists** are available Monday — Friday 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. to answer advice inquiries



FILING A COMPLAINT

➤ Online Complaint Form:

www.fairfaxcounty.gov/consumercomplaint/

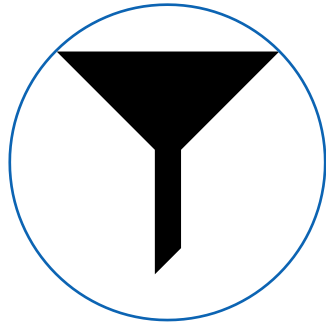
➤ Describe the nature of the complaint

➤ Include business contact information

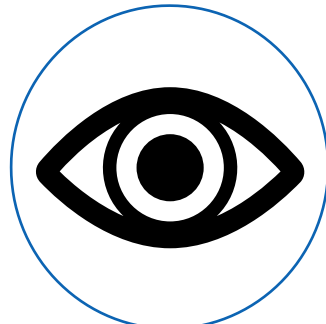


- ✓ Receipts
- ✓ Invoices
- ✓ Lease Agreements
- ✓ Photos
- ✓ Supporting Documentation

COMPLAINT PROCESS



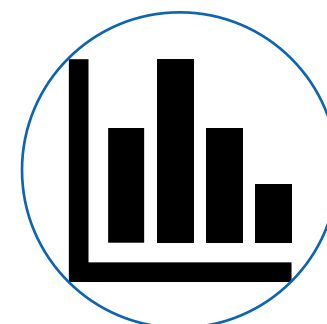
- Complaint received
- Letter and copy of complaint sent to business requesting response



- Review of applicable laws and ordinances
 - Field visits



- Discussion with parties
 - Mediation

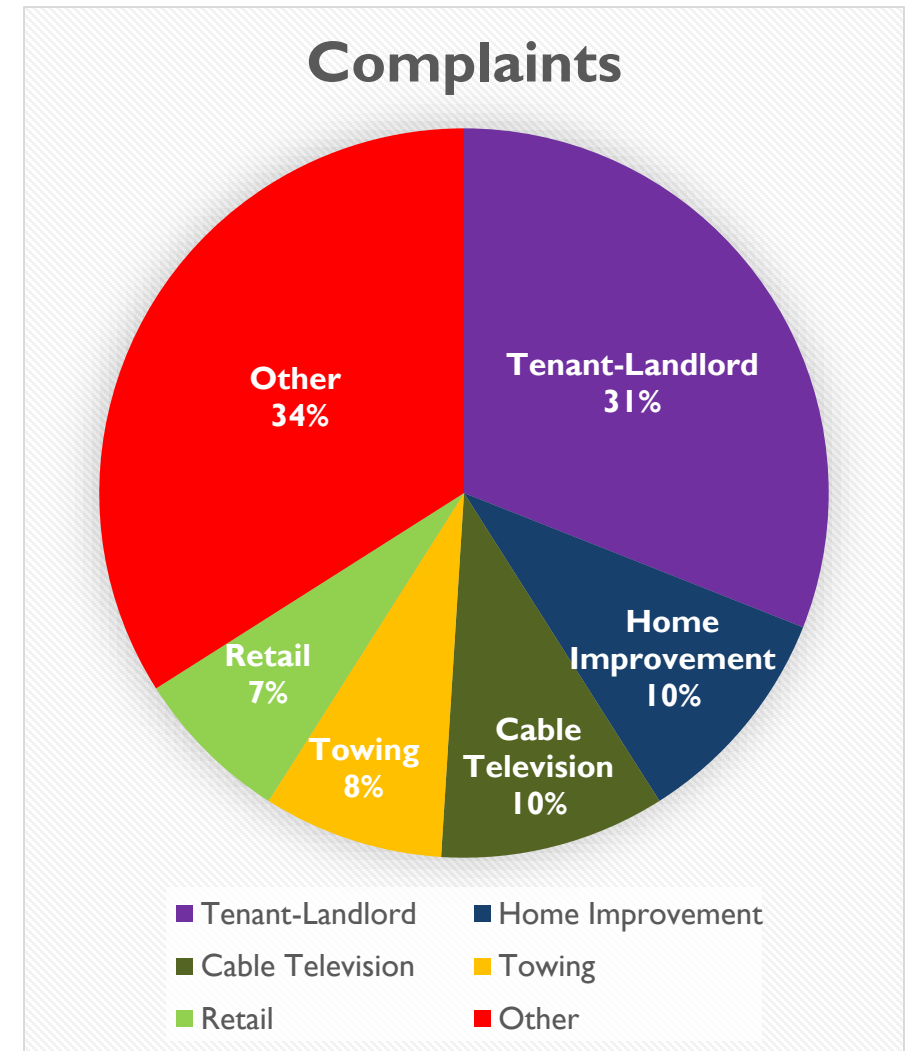


- Complaint resolution
- Voluntary arbitration



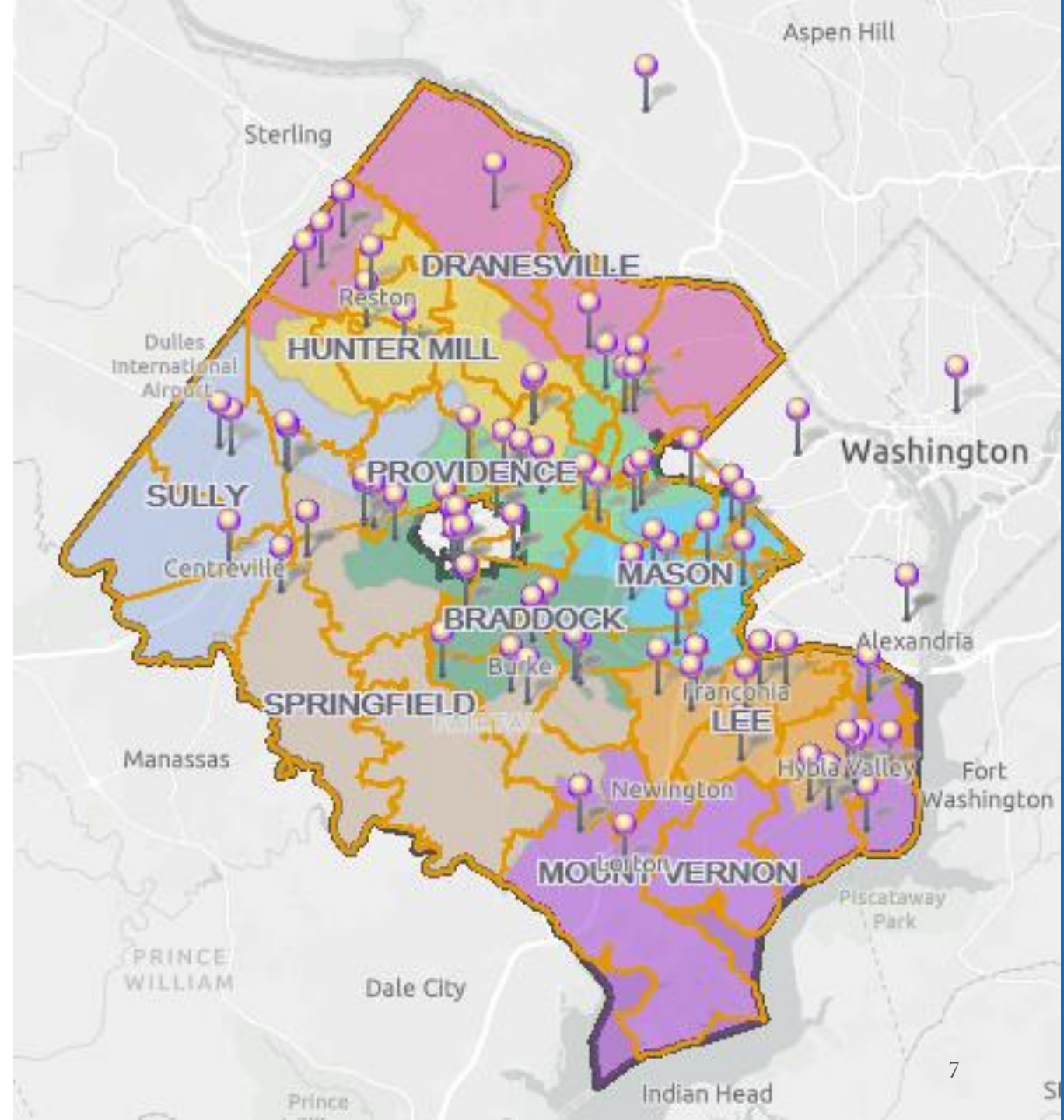
COMPLAINT HISTORY

- Online database is searchable by business name or by complaint type
- Resolution of complaint is a public record for one year
- www.fairfaxcounty.gov/cableconsumer/csd/consumer/complaint/History.aspx



CONSUMER OUTREACH

- Home Contractors
- Identity Theft
- Buying and Maintaining a Vehicle
- Financial Literacy
- Homeowner Associations
- Tenant-Landlord Rights
- High School Consumer Programs

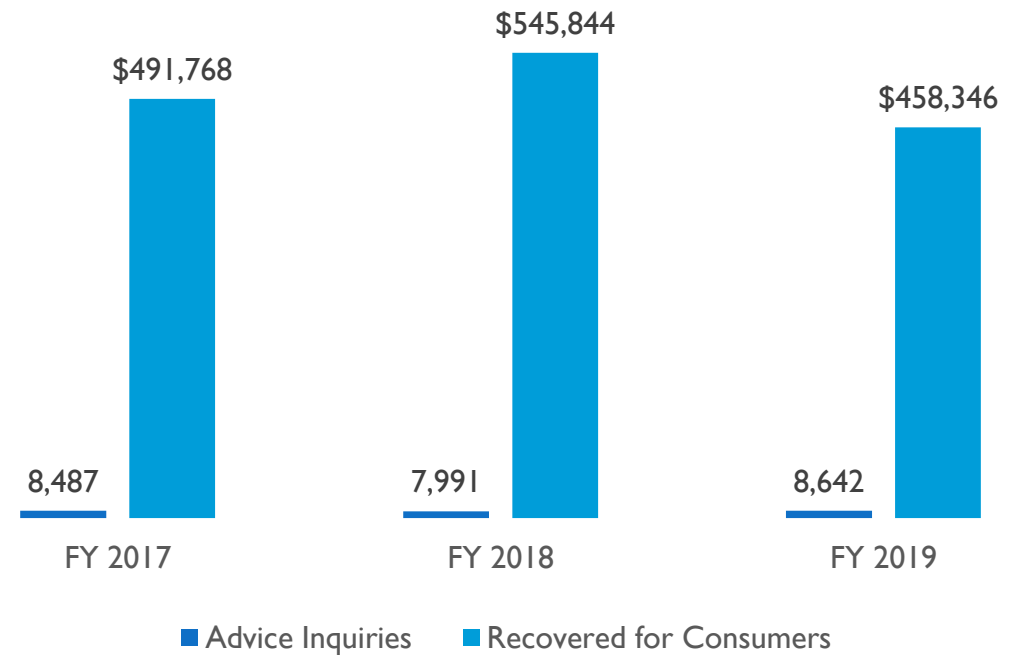


COMMISSIONS

Consumer Protection Commission	Tenant-Landlord Commission
Advise the Board on consumer affairs	Provide information to the public concerning the rights and responsibilities of tenants and landlords
Advise the Department of Cable and Consumer Services on consumer matters	Forward to the Board, as appropriate, recommendations for changes in legislation
Hold public hearings on and publish its findings on issues of widespread public interest which deal with illegal, fraudulent, deceptive, or dangerous consumer practices	Represent the County interests concerning tenant-landlord matters before judicial, legislative, administrative and other public or private bodies
Adopt, promulgate, amend, and rescind rules and regulations subject to the approval of the Board concerning such consumer issues;	Advise the Board about the nature, causes and possible solutions to tenant-landlord problems
Refer apparent violations of any provision of relevant consumer law for investigation	Hold public hearings and report its findings to the Board on tenant-landlord issues that affect public interest
Perform all duties specified under applicable Fairfax County Code	Make tenants and landlords aware of the conciliation and mediation services available
Advise and inform the Board on all issues related to cable communications	Arbitrate tenant-landlord complaints, upon agreement of both parties

SUCCESSSES

- Responded to 8,642 case inquiries
- Recovered \$458,346 in cash, goods, and services for consumers
- Conducted 269 outreach events to educate the public on a variety of consumer issues
- Partnered with Silver Shield and Financial Exploitation Prevention Taskforces



MEDIA PRESENCE



- Fairfax County Consumer Affairs Facebook
- Consumer Connection** Facebook program
- Podcasts



- The Informed Consumer** e-newsletter
- Consumer presentations
- Consumer **tip sheets**



- Your Community, You're Connected** television program
- Consumer Focus** television program

CONSUMER AFFAIRS

Fairfax County Consumer Affairs

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