



CAO Semiannual Report

January – June 2011

Submitted August 15, 2011



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FROM THE CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

In this era of tightened budgets, the U.S. House of Representatives and the Office of the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) are faced with new financial realities.

Like all Americans, the CAO is striving to operate more efficiently with fewer resources. To do this, we have focused on our core mission: providing the House community with services essential to its operations.

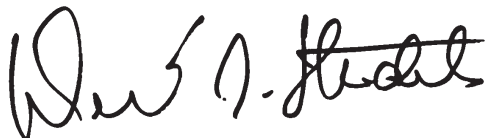
Charged with running the House's administrative operations, the CAO provides Members and staff with services such as payroll and benefits, technology support, and cyber security. We administer food services contracts, process procurement orders, refurbish and supply furnishings, and offer a range of other services from training to photography and graphics work.

I am proud of our continued management of programs and services essential to House operations.

The success of our operations is dependent on our close working relationships with the Committee on House Administration and other House organizations. We also cooperate on a daily basis with the Clerk of the House, the Sergeant at Arms, and the Architect of the Capitol.

CAO employees are focused on providing the best service possible to Members and staff so that they can efficiently and effectively do the business of the People's House.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dan J. Strodel". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "D" and "S".

Daniel J. Strodel

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In order to operate in a more fiscally conservative manner, we began evaluating all CAO operations during the first half of 2011. Our goal is to streamline operations and focus on core services including finance; budget, payroll and benefits; information technology systems; assets and furnishings; procurement; acquisitions; and concessionaire service contracts.

By July 2011, the CAO had cut \$3 million in expenditures by freezing vacant positions, reducing reliance on contractors, and eliminating funding for nonessential programs. We also helped save the House almost \$195,000 for the remainder of FY 2011 and approximately \$1.2 million in FY 2012 by discontinuing subscription-based news services that had been under utilized by the House community.

Even while reducing CAO operational costs, we have managed to launch various new services and upgrades to help House Members and staff work more efficiently and effectively. Some highlights include:

- ◆ making a more streamlined, coordinated and responsive financial system available to House offices;
- ◆ enabling Members and staff to make free video teleconference calls via internet-based video conferencing services;
- ◆ providing Member offices with the “House Cloud;” hosted a 24/7-accessible data storage services to manage data securely and more affordably;
- ◆ reducing carpet cleaning costs by assuming duties formerly handled by a contractor;
- ◆ providing low-cost graphics work to House offices;
- ◆ offering training and development courses to House staff.

These projects were designed to better serve the House community. The CAO will continue to identify ways to provide Members and staff with the highest possible level of service.

TIMELINE

January

Dan Strodel sworn in as Chief Administrative Officer.

Handled record number of Payroll & Benefits-related transactions due to scale of Congressional Transition.



Deployed 93 new Member offices to House Cloud File Services.

Completed work to increase District office bandwidth connectivity



Mobilized intensive employee assistance efforts after the tragic attack on Rep. Giffords and members of her staff.

February

Expanded use of new financial system to all Member, Committee, Leadership, and other House offices.

Increased number of offices able to participate in digital mail program.



March

Launched real-time online technical support.



April

At the direction of the Committee on House Administration and the House Technology Operations Team, launched redesigned House.gov with new features and enhanced transparency.



May

Hosted mobile tech fair to inform staff of latest House-supported hardware.



June

Enabled Members and staff to make internet-based video teleconference calls.

Began renovation of Cannon Caucus Room.

Wounded Warrior Program placed 17th fellow of year.



Saved the House \$195,000 for the remainder of FY11 and \$1.2 million in FY12 by discontinuing underused subscriptions.

ABOUT CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER DAN STRODEL

On January 5, 2011, newly elected House Speaker John Boehner swore in Dan Strodel for his first full term as Chief Administrative Officer. Before being nominated by Boehner, Strodel was appointed to the position on an interim basis in July 2010, replacing outgoing Chief Administrative Officer Dan Beard.

Strodel's House experience includes positions with the Committee on House Administration, the Office of the Clerk, the Office of the Sergeant at Arms, and the CAO. Strodel's more than 25 years on Capitol Hill also includes work with the Office of the Sergeant at Arms of the U.S. Senate and the U.S. Capitol Police.

In his position with House Administration, Strodel advised the Committee on management and oversight of the CAO as well as other House operations.

Strodel has a law degree from the Catholic University of America and a bachelor's degree from Hobart College.

FINANCE

New Financial System

In the first half of 2011, the CAO provided all House offices with access to a new financial reporting vehicle as part of the roll-out of a more streamlined, coordinated and responsive financial system.

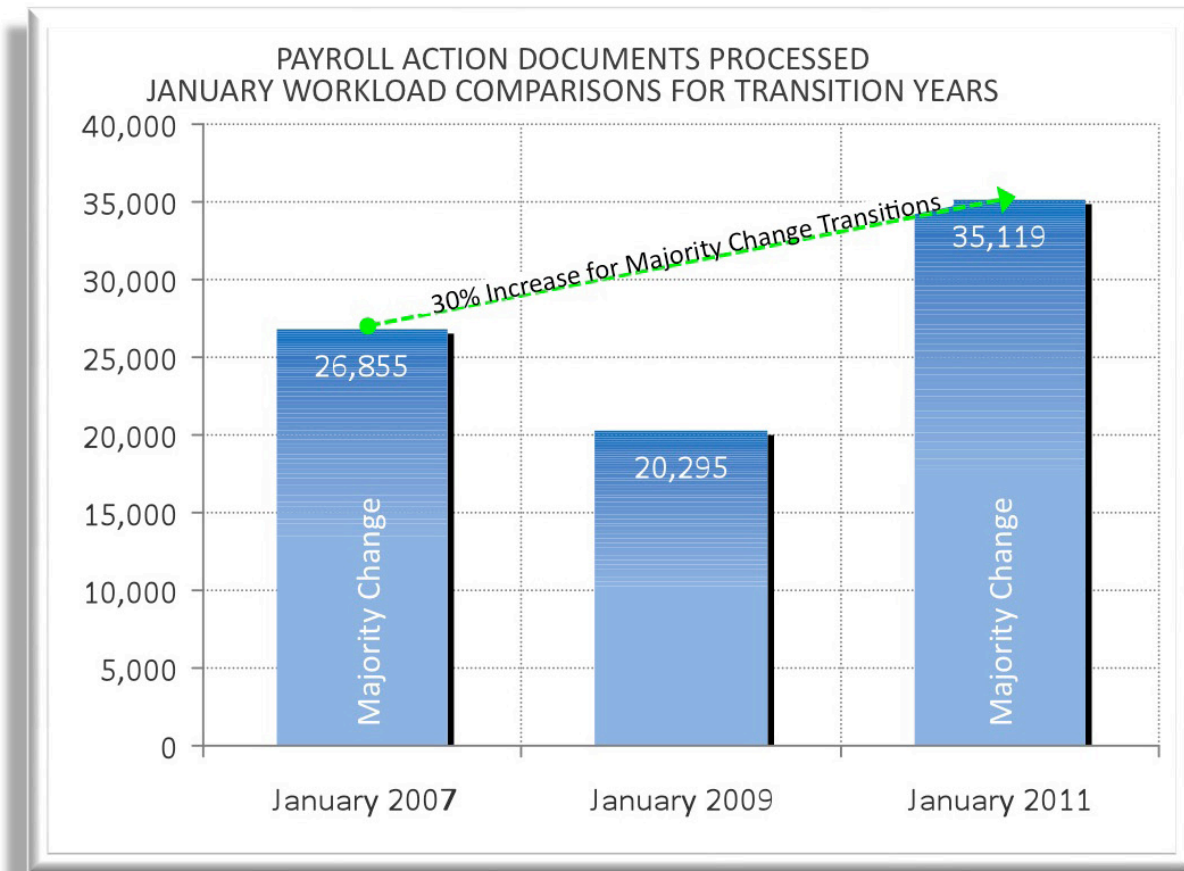
The new software allows offices to view, analyze and print payroll certifications, as well as financial and inventory reports. It also allows staff to customize reports to the way each office does business. Because it is web-based, users can log in securely anywhere and anytime.

The CAO continued to develop the new enterprise financial software application implemented in 2010, which will enable House offices to more easily create and process requisitions, purchase orders, vouchers, and other financial transactions.

To ease the transition to the new financial system, the CAO provided classroom and online tutoring and training, distributed manuals, and conducted face-to-face meetings with financial points of contact in Member, Leadership, and Committee offices. In May, we provided training for approximately 80 Member, Leadership, and Committee offices. We plan to train up to 200 new users by the end of FY 2012.

Payroll and Benefits

The scope of the transition to the 112th Congress was enormous: more than 4,500 employees changed work status. As a result, the CAO's Payroll and Benefits department (P & B) managed a record-breaking workload in the early months of 2011 successfully.



In January alone, P & B staff answered 3,734 phone calls – 35 percent more than usual – and processed nearly 35,000 payroll action documents – a 30 percent increase over January 2007, the last time control of the House majority changed political parties (see chart above).

They answered about 500 requests for transcripts of service (federal employees going from one government branch to another) and processed 150 retirement cases, almost as many as received during all of 2010.

Anticipating the traditional, increased workload of any election year, P & B staff began preparations months earlier. Starting in spring 2010, they reached out to departing Member offices about how to submit final payroll actions, and prepare for retirement. That way, P & B could focus on newly elected Members during the transition.

Procurement Management

To reduce spending on nonessential services, at the direction of the Committee on House Administration, the CAO's Procurement Office discontinued enterprise-wide subscription-based news services found to be surprisingly under utilized by the House community. Termination of these services will save the House approximately \$1.2 million in FY 2012 and will save almost \$195,000 for the remainder of FY 2011. Offices can continue to purchase single-user contracts if they choose, using their official allowance. To assist those who choose not to pay for these services, the CAO compiled an Online News Resources page on HouseNet and is developing a House Learning Center course about online news and information retrieval.

During the first half of 2011, Procurement staff also:

- ◆ Trained 125 Contracting Officer Representatives and Points of Contact using new online training courses;
- ◆ Renegotiated the financial system Users License Agreement down \$75,000 from the vendor's initial proposal;
- ◆ Issued a solicitation to re-compete the mail operations contract that serves the House and the Library of Congress, and is the single largest House contract.

ASSETS, FURNISHINGS, AND LOGISTICS

Carpet Cleaning

The CAO carpet shop assumed the duties of the previous public carpet cleaning contract, saving the House nearly \$200,000 per year. By hiring key personnel within the carpet shop, we were able to develop and maintain a carpet cleaning schedule for various areas using only House staff.

Renovation of Cannon Caucus Room

In June, we began a partial renovation of the Cannon Caucus Room, replacing carpet, repairing and refinishing daises, and replacing wall draping.

Furniture Refurbishment

In the first six months of 2011, we refurbished 2,294 furniture pieces to meet the high volume of requests associated with the congressional transition. To facilitate the work, we coordinated with vendors to step up production timelines and perform multiple weekly shifts and deliveries. CAO warehousing staff doubled their weekly inspections and rate of receiving furniture from vendors. By July 2011, we had placed most of these refurbished furniture pieces back in House offices.

Graphics

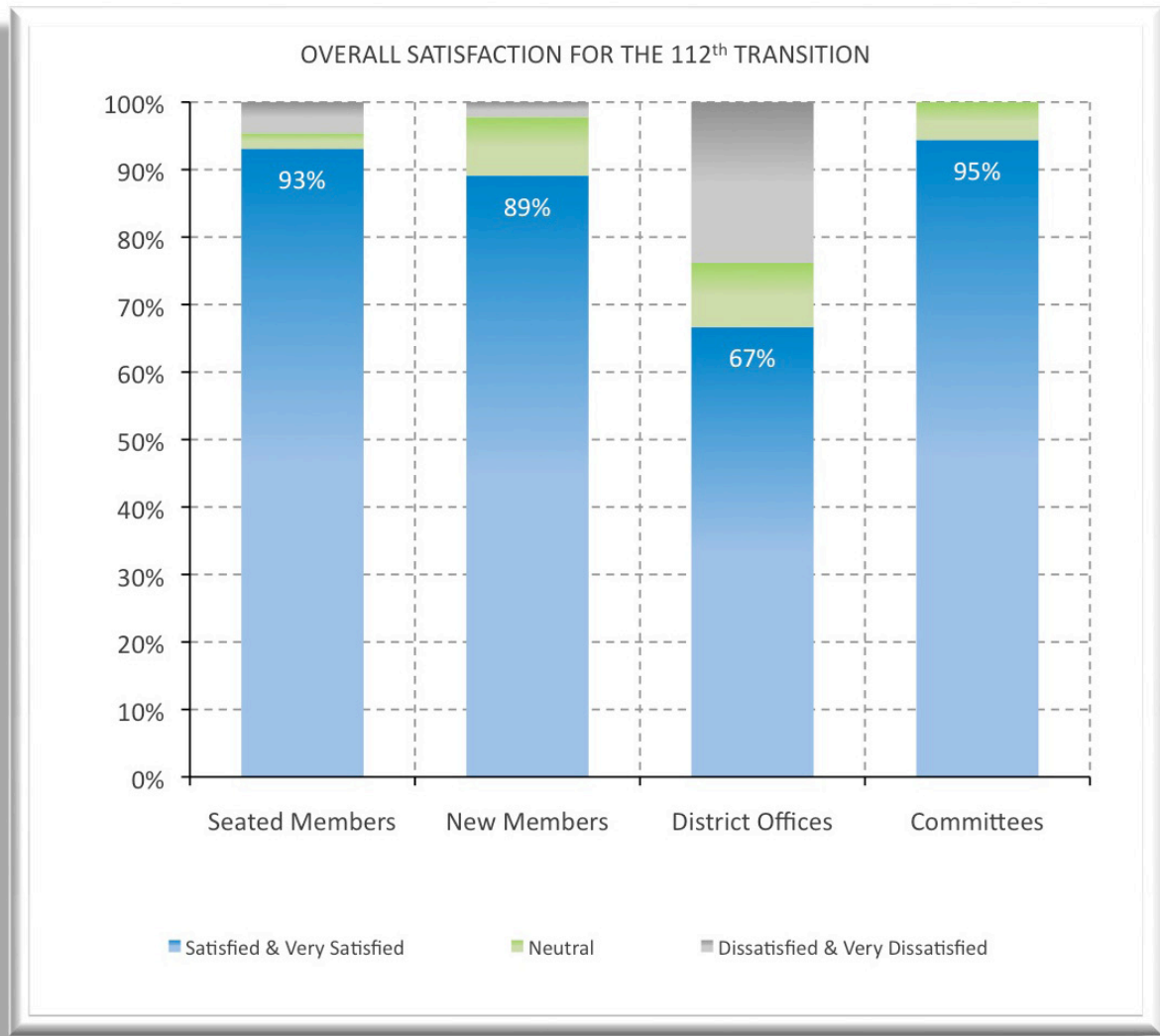
The House Graphics office provides graphic support to Members, Committees, Leadership, and other House offices in conducting official business. A graphic design project can be completed within an hour or can take 20 – 40 hours depending on the complexity and scope of the job.

During January – June 2011, the four graphic designers in the House Graphics office provided 103 graphic designs, 474 layouts and design edits, 593 poster prints, 456 poster mounts, 15 design consultations, 381 photograph and Franking prints (full-sized newsletter proofs submitted for mailing approval), 192 Congressional Record commemorative prints, seven banner prints, and 49 digital scans. The House Graphics office served more than 225 congressional offices.

Transition Survey

The CAO moved more than 250 offices and thousands of pieces of furniture during the 112th Congressional Transition. To gauge customer satisfaction and to better plan for future transitions, we surveyed Member, Committee, and District offices.

The CAO received an overall satisfaction rate of 93 percent for all offices we helped move.



District offices expressed less satisfaction with office setups, particularly with computers. This may be explained by different GSA computer replacement procedures. In new Member District offices, GSA removes – without replacing – computers that do not meet House minimum technical standards. In contrast, a replacement is provided for each non-compliant computer removed from new Member offices in Washington. We will be working to remedy this issue before the transition to the 113th Congress.

HOUSE INFORMATION RESOURCES

Video Teleconference

During the first half of 2011, the CAO enabled the House's public WiFi network to allow Members and staff to make internet-based video teleconference calls (VTC). We also took steps to maintain the necessary level of security within the House network by requiring House-specific agreements that comply with House Rules and maximize protection for Members and staff.

Expanded Broadband

The CAO upgraded the capacity of House internet connections to pass continuous traffic of almost 1 billion bits per second. We closely monitor overall usage of the internet from the House and can therefore plan capacity upgrades in advance of need.

The "House Cloud"

Through House Information Resources, the CAO continues to provide Members and staff with a secure and cost-effective alternative to managing data on office-based, individual file servers. The House Cloud exceeded projected growth expectations for 2011 by deploying 93 new Member offices into the service during the 112th Congressional Transition. Since the transition, we have migrated an additional 50 offices into the service, bringing total participants to 286 Member offices so far.

Blackberry Enterprise Server Upgrade and Migration

The CAO successfully upgraded the platform that supports all 9,167 House BlackBerry users. The upgrade allows for more customer control of desktop features on BlackBerrys. This new platform also leverages virtualization technology for increased flexibility and service uptime, has an additional layer of security built in, and provides improved IT administration features.

Enterprise Fax Service

The CAO upgraded the Enterprise Fax Service (eFax) to a Fax over IP (FoIP) solution for all House users. Using FoIP has reduced the number of servers used to support the eFax system, eliminating all associated costs for maintenance and replacement of servers and multi-board modem cards. The new eFax system also allows the processing of more faxes, saving the costs of document transport (i.e., paper, toner, physical copier costs, mailing costs, envelopes) and associated costs for personnel resources used in transporting the documents.

Expanded WiFi

In the first half of 2011, we continued to expand WiFi access on the House campus. Access is divided into HousePublic for guests and HouseAccess for staff. In June 2011, we completed installation of all hardware and permanent wireless access points in Member offices. Installation throughout House work spaces will continue through 2011.

Live Chat

In March, we launched a real-time, online system that dramatically changes customer support at the House. The text-based chat platform, called LiveChat, allows customers to multitask while awaiting support and allows CAO Technology Support staff to assist multiple customers simultaneously. By automating basic services such as customer support, the CAO's support center can focus its resources on more complicated issues, extend its capabilities, and increase its efficiency.

Technology Support

From January through June 2011, CAO Technology Support staff processed 39,758 requests for service. We resolved 89 percent of requests the same day and 92 percent on first contact.

The New House.gov

In April, at the direction of the Committee on House Administration and the House technology operations team, the CAO launched the redesigned House.gov with new features and functionality that help connect Americans with their government. More than one million monthly visitors now have access to a more engaging and easy-to-use public website, www.House.gov, which increases transparency and simplifies access to Member sites and important legislative information.

Powerful new features include a map that shows users the exact outlines of each congressional district and a tool that allows users to search for their Representative by state, zip code and/or street address. CAO engineering and communication staffs were integral to designing and implementing the new House.gov. The CAO communications staff continues to update House.gov news weekly, with the oversight of the Committee on House Administration.

Mobile Technology Fair

In May, the CAO hosted a Mobile Technology Fair that allowed House staff to check out the latest mobile hardware available from leading hardware and software technology companies. The fair featured presentations and demos given by House-supported vendors and CAO staff.

Statement of Disbursements (SOD) Email Distribution and Mass Communications Report

We started distributing the quarterly SOD in an easier-to-use format. This marked a major improvement over the previous SOD distributions that required Member and Committee offices to manually separate reports and enter user log-ins to view and print. Also, at the direction of the Committee on House Administration, we have reconfigured the SODs to include additional detailed information in quarterly Mass Mailings and Mass Communications Reports submitted by each Member office. The CAO expects to have the additional information included in the upcoming SODs.

House Open-Source Website Platform

All new Member websites were deployed on an open-source software platform which also hosts various other House websites. This software gives Member offices more options when selecting vendors. The CAO solicited more than 100 prospective vendors to develop websites for Members and House offices on the new platform.

Public Web Architecture

We deployed a new web architecture that will eventually host nearly all public House websites. The platform allows the CAO to improve House websites' security posture.

Committee on Appropriations Internal Website

To better manage appropriations program and legislative language requests from all Member offices, we developed and implemented an internal website for the Committee on House Appropriations, which facilitates posting, accessing and organizing all of these requests.

Training and Development

Staff with oversight of a Member's Representational Allowance or responsibility for legislative research may have a difficult time finding related courses at a university. Instead, staffers can get these vital skills at the House Learning Center (HLC). The HLC offers dozens of specially tailored courses and classes each month. Topics range from providing budget tools and understanding technology to conducting legislative research and answering constituent correspondence.

In the first half of 2011, HLC staff designed and delivered online training for Contracting Officer Representatives and compliance with House ethics rules as well as instructor-led financial system statement training. We delivered webinars for District office staff assistants, and offered new HTML, financial system, and emergency management courses.

While classroom training remains our core teaching method, online training is becoming increasingly popular. Through our online, interactive training module staff can access more than 1,000 courses anywhere and anytime.

Partnerships with other organizations, including the Library of Congress' Congressional Research Service and the Congressional Management Foundation, allow the CAO to offer online and classroom training for Member office staff assistants on the Hill and in District offices.

Business Continuity / Disaster Recovery

Ensuring the work of the House of Representatives continues uninterrupted is the vital mission of BC/DR. We lead analysis and planning efforts across the CAO to develop policy, contingency planning, and disaster recovery plans. On a daily basis, we monitor hazardous events, conduct outreach to District Offices, and coordinate with business units throughout the CAO to provide a wide range of equipment and resources including telework kits (laptops and printers), and satellite phones.

STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

The Wounded Warrior Program

The Wounded Warrior Program was authorized by House Leadership in February 2008, and responsibility for its operation placed with the CAO. This program provides two-year fellowships for disabled veterans, usually in Members' District offices, and may lead to full-time employment with the Member.

In the first six months of 2011, we placed 17 applicants in fellowships and saw four fellows transition to full-time positions in congressional offices. Since the inception of the program in 2008, we have placed 60 fellows in Member offices and one in the Office of the Sergeant at Arms. In that time, 27 fellows have transitioned from the program to other opportunities within the federal government, veterans' advocacy groups, and law enforcement.

We continue to accomplish the Wounded Warrior Program's purpose of providing employment and transition opportunities to wounded and disabled veterans who have served our country honorably. The program's success is evidenced by a growing number of Members who want to employ fellows.

The Wounded Warrior Program has received international attention too. On February 15, the German Bundestag's defense committee visited Capitol Hill to learn about the program.

First Call

CAO First Call staff answered 3,288 calls during the week of swearing-in, setting a record for the highest weekly volume in the office's history and surpassing the previous mark by over 900 calls. In the months that followed, CAO assistance to new Member offices included tech briefings, assistance with ordering, transferring, and removing office supplies, and furniture moves.

In the first six months of 2011 First Call staff:

- ◆ Answered 41,821 phone calls (an increase of more than 30 percent from the same time period in 2010);
- ◆ Processed 2,529 passports (an increase of 33 percent from the same time period in 2010);
- ◆ Assisted 6,853 walk-in customers;
- ◆ Handled 163 brochure requests;
- ◆ Scheduled 3,375 meeting room reservations.

Jobs Listing and Resume Referral Service

To aid the congressional transition, the CAO reactivated and enhanced the House Vacancy Announcement and Placement Service (HVAPS). We added to the previously dormant service a new job vacancy listserv and electronic resume acceptance and storage tools. In the first six months of 2011, HVAPS processed 4,329 resumes and helped place applicants in many House office jobs. The service provides confidential referral of resumes when congressional offices request them. The service also provides face-to-face and online consultations for job applicants.

Digital Mail

With approval from the Committee on House Administration, we increased the number of digital mail participants from 75 to 81 Member and Leadership offices.

The digital mail program converts first class mail to an electronic format that can be viewed and accessed through a correspondence management system (CMS). Using their CMS, House offices can view original letters and correspondence, run keyword searches, sort mail by address and sender, and compare previous correspondence records. The program has the further advantages of allowing offices to electronically route mail to the appropriate legislative assistant and relieving the burden of paper mail archiving.

CONCLUSION

We continue to upgrade and improve tools and services to carry out our core mission in a cost-effective manner. It is our goal to help Members and staff efficiently and effectively represent their constituents in the People's House.

CAO STAFFING CHART

FY 2011 Staffing Chart (as of 06/30/11)

	Current FTEs	Vacancies	Total FTEs
CAO Immediate Office and Galleries	40	5	45
House Recording Studio	47	18	65
Operations Immediate Office	10	1	11
Strategic Initiatives	46	12	58
House Information Resources	279	29	308
Administrative & Financial Services	100	9	109
Assets, Furnishings, & Logistics	147	5	152
Wounded Warrior Program	30	20	50
TOTAL CAO	699	99	798

COMPARISON OF BUDGET TO ACTUAL

FY 2010 Budget to Actual Report (as of 06/30/11)

	Adjusted FY'10 Budget	YTD Actuals	Available Balance	% of Budget Remaining
Chief Administrative Officer				
Single-Year Funds				
Personnel	\$ 60,528,560	\$ 60,441,459	\$ 87,101	0.1%
Non-Personnel				
Total Operations	\$ 85,394,410	\$ 84,981,410	\$ 412,999	0.5%
Investments (PMO)	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	0.0%
CAO-Wide Resources	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	0.0%
Total Non-Personnel	\$ 85,394,410	\$ 84,981,410	\$ 412,999	0.5%
Total Single-Year Funds	\$ 145,922,970	\$ 145,422,870	\$ 500,100	0.3%
No-Year Funds				
Investments (PMO)	\$ 7,711,901	\$ 5,381,759	\$ 2,330,142	30.2%
Total No-Year Funds	\$ 7,711,901	\$ 5,381,759	\$ 2,330,142	30.2%
Total CAO Budget	\$ 153,634,871	\$ 150,804,629	\$ 2,830,242	1.8%
BCDR				
Single Year Funds	\$ 19,673,000	\$ 19,496,074	\$ 176,926	0.9%
No Year Funds	\$ 7,445,912	\$ 2,737,890	\$ 4,708,022	63.2%
Total BCDR Budget	\$ 27,118,912	\$ 22,233,964	\$ 4,884,948	18.0%

COMPARISON OF BUDGET TO ACTUAL

FY 2011 Budget to Actual (as of 06/30/11)

	Adjusted FY'11 Budget	YTD Actuals	Available Balance	% of Budget Remaining
Chief Administrative Officer				
Single-Year Funds				
Personnel	\$ 62,687,105	\$ 51,321,392	\$ 11,365,713	18.1%
Non-Personnel				
Total Operations	\$ 63,277,790	\$ 37,263,569	\$ 26,014,221	41.1%
Investments (PMO)	\$ 884,000	\$ -	\$ 884,000	0.0%
CAO-Wide Resources	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	0.0%
Total Non-Personnel	\$ 64,161,790	\$ 37,263,569	\$ 26,898,221	41.9%
Total Single-Year Funds	\$ 126,848,895	\$ 88,584,961	\$ 38,263,934	30.2%
No-Year Funds				
Investments (PMO)	\$ 6,267,142	\$ 2,281,797	\$ 3,985,345	63.6%
Total No-Year Funds	\$ 6,267,142	\$ 2,281,797	\$ 3,985,345	63.6%
Total CAO Budget	\$ 133,116,037	\$ 90,866,758	\$ 42,249,279	31.7%
BCDR				
Single Year Funds	\$ 17,912,072	\$ 10,228,703	\$ 7,683,369	42.9%
No Year Funds	\$ 9,708,822	\$ 1,065,308	\$ 8,643,514	89.0%
Total BCDR Budget	\$ 27,620,894	\$ 11,294,011	\$ 16,326,883	59.1%

