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Budget Takes a Bite Out of Books, Parks

Fairfax County trying to close the budget gap

By [DORA HASAN MEKOUAR](#)

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Budget woes in [Fairfax County](#), Va., are about to take a big bite out of libraries and parks. The county is trying to deal with a \$315 million shortfall. [County Executive Anthony Griffin](#) wants the park authority and library system to come up with a 15 percent reduction for the 2011 budget year.

The programs have already cut 15 percent or more this fiscal year. A hundred library workers lost their jobs last year, and now 70 of their former colleagues could join them in the unemployment line.

That's disappointing news for [Alison Deegan](#), who sometimes tutors kids at the library. "You want to encourage people to come to the library. You want the hours that kids can come," she said.

Library manager [Daria Parnes](#) says it can't be helped. "There's just so much money in the pot," Parnes said. "You have to be fiscally responsible to the constituents. If you want services, you have to afford them."

Another 50 jobs could be axed from the park authority budget. Bill Bouie, chairman of the [Fairfax County Park Authority](#), says that would be a mistake considering how many people use the parks. "We had 17 million visitors last year in our parks. We had three million unique hits to our web site," said Bill Bouie.

The public will have its say at hearings that are to be held over the next few weeks.

Libraries, Parks Feeling the Squeeze

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