



## Bill Farver, Multnomah County Chair

Suite 600, Multnomah Building  
501 SE Hawthorne Boulevard  
Portland, Oregon 97214

Phone: (503) 988-3308  
FAX: (503) 988-3093  
Email: [mult.chair@co.multnomah.or.us](mailto:mult.chair@co.multnomah.or.us)

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SUBJECT: 2001 BUDGET OVERVIEW

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I have worked on many budgets over the past 17 years with the County - starting with Pauline Anderson in 1985. This has been the most difficult. The process was filled with uncertainties, both political and financial. The political uncertainties include the resignations of two commissioners, followed by interim appointments, followed by elections to fill the vacancies - the results of which we may or may not know before the budget is adopted. The financial uncertainties include large decreases in projected revenue from the business income tax over a three year period and projected state reductions in funding for county-provided services.

I have tried to balance the need to be fiscally conservative with the desire to preserve key county services. I have also tried to draw upon my experience with the County, my understanding of the deeply held values of the Board, and my own values and principles in making these recommendations. As a consequence, this budget message may be longer than usual .... It may contain more references to evaluation. Uncertainty brings out the best and the worse in all of us.

Today, I will dwell on the best and continue to be optimistic that we can emerge from this process on sounder financial footing and with most critical services in place. Several factors made this budget process work as well as it has:

- Partnerships with schools, cities, and the state that allow us to work together to meet the needs of the public.
- Talented and dedicated employees who are willing to do more with less, seek efficiencies and be very creative in generating new revenue.
- A strong Board of County Commissioners committed to working cooperatively based on a common set of values and principles

That's the good news. The bad news is that we face a revenue shortfall that is approximately 20 million dollars. How can we best fill this \$20 million hole in the budget? Today, I will share with you my proposed response. First, we must aggressively pursue improving operating efficiencies. Second, we must search for additional revenue sources. Third, we must continue our focus on priority benchmarks using the best research and evaluation data available. Fourth, we must listen carefully to the community. Finally, we need to make deep and painful cuts in our existing services that will result in layoffs and the elimination of vacant positions.

I'll talk a little about each of those steps and close with a discussion of future issues and some principles to keep in mind for our coming deliberations.

## **EFFICIENCY**

In the short-term we are finding ways to do more with less. In the long term we are pursuing cost avoidance. I'll give some examples.

### **Clinic Utilization**

In the Health Department, our seven clinics accommodate 95,000 visits annually. They are in the middle of a Clinic Redesign Project that will reduce wait times and increase the number of clients seen each day in the clinics. All members of the clinic team will redirect their efforts to front-line client service, whenever possible. Based on the experience of other jurisdictions, we expect a 5% to 20% improvement in efficiency from these changes. Thanks to these operating efficiencies, the Department believes it can avoid health care service reductions to those most in need. We will do more with less.

### **Fleet Audit Efficiencies**

Last fall, the Auditor suggested the County examine Fleet services. Since the audit was issued, 88 cars have been turned into Fleet Services. Next year departments will save \$141,808 in ongoing and one time only costs and the Fleet fund will save \$121,495 in one time costs. Here is an excellent example of stronger central management and clearer standards that provide more efficiency. We'll do more with less.

### **Information Services**

I have directed County information services personnel located in Departments to report to the Central Information Officer as of July 1. The CIO will develop service agreements with the Departments based on their current service level and recognizing unique departmental needs where they exist. Over time, the CIO will be able to improve services and help provide system thinking and cost avoidance strategies. This central direction will increase accountability and allow improvements to major initiatives in mental health and health data planning.

One aspect of that strategy will be the transfer of remaining county operations off the mainframe within two years. Once this transition is made the County will save \$1,500,000 annually. We will do more with the same in the future.

### **Building Management**

Facilities Management is currently developing options to reduce the County's vacant space by consolidating operations and disposing of three County structures within the next two years. This will require the Board to find new locations for the Sheriff's patrol services ; for Facilities; and for the Multi Disciplinary Team. Additional short-term costs will be more than balanced out by the sales of the properties, more efficient long-term operations, and cost avoidance of building new structures. We will do more with our existing buildings.

## **REVENUE**

After pursuing efficiencies, but before making cuts, we looked for new sources of funds to replace lost revenue. As noted, State government also has a shortfall and they are making cuts. The Federal Government does not have a budget shortfall and we have stepped up our efforts to secure the benefits of Federal programs for residents of Multnomah County. We are looking to a few other sources as well. In this budget we anticipate over \$9,000,000 in new revenue.

### **Federal Financial Participation**

Under the leadership of the Federal Financial Participation workgroup, the County has projected an additional \$5,000,000 in federal revenues to Health and Community and Family Services. The FFP group has received wonderful cooperation from the state government in pursuing these options. More remains to be done in the coming year involving potential partnerships with schools, juvenile services, and other funding streams. One specific result of these efforts is the ability to project adequate operating funds for a winter 2002 opening of the Child Receiving Center. This revenue enabled us to avoid even more painful human services reductions.

### **Leasing Beds**

The Sheriff has aggressively pursued revenue-generating options. Partners in the public safety system are planning to absorb the potential loss of up to 100 jail beds that could be leased to the Federal Government. Absorbing this reduction of beds will require the cooperation of the District Attorney and the Department of Community Justice. They have agreed upon a plan with thoughtful guidelines that minimize the impact on public safety, including pairing a post-prison/ probation revocation sentence with electronic monitoring, when appropriate. This is an efficiency that makes increased revenue possible.

### **Pay to Stay**

The Sheriff also proposes to increase the charges to inmates who can afford to pay a portion of the County's cost in holding them. This approach could be especially useful at the Restitution Center that already charges a daily rate.

### **Rental Rate**

Finally, the Sheriff believes he will be able to successfully conclude prolonged negotiations with the Federal Government that will increase the lease cost to reflect the County's cost of detaining offenders.

### **User Fees in Animal Control**

On a more limited scale, Animal Control Director, Gary Hendel, has proposed a number of fee increases which will offset proposed cuts in his program and enable him to implement his planned "no kill of adoptable animals" policy.

## **FOCUS ON PRIORITY BENCHMARKS**

After we've pursued efficiencies and after we've looked for new revenue we still need to make cuts. How do we decide where to cut? We look at our priorities. My budget recommendations assume certain long-term goals. Within this budget environment I was not always able to make progress on each, but at a minimum I attempted to avoid damaging cuts that would set our progress back.

The priority benchmarks I used in this budget planning include early childhood, health, and quality of life. By August 1, the new Board will be composed entirely of members who were not at the County when the Board chose the breakthrough benchmarks of poverty, school success, recidivism, and good government. This summer I think it would be appropriate for the Board to review, discuss and affirm the strategic direction inherent in the Benchmarks for the County for the next five years.

The overriding value of using benchmarks to guide decision making is that it helps the Board stay focused on community priorities. The Board must have patience and persistence to fund research based approaches and stick with them through an appropriate implementation and evaluation phase. A new Board will want to discuss and reach consensus on the future benchmarks. The original structure provides a continuing focus and a clarity that serves us well in difficult times such as these. I will highlight a few examples where changes in this budget are driven by our priorities. Within each benchmark area I will include a general goal statement that drives our efforts.

#### **A. Early Childhood: Readiness to Learn**

*Children born in high-risk family situations should be screened and assessed. Their families should be provided assistance in their formative years.*

As an outgrowth of the extensive community based planning effort led by Commissioner Lisa Naito, the County is prepared to implement the Governor's Children's Program by developing comprehensive responses in three areas: First, we will expand our Healthy Start teams in North Portland and East County. Based on the research tested "Olds" model, these teams provide ongoing support to first time, low income, single mothers. Nurses with caseloads of only 25 families provide two years of intensive home visits. The Olds model has been shown to achieve long term cost savings as well as significant health benefits. These include an 80% less chance that adolescents who received these services as babies will be convicted of a crime.

Second, we will develop neighborhood based, multidisciplinary Family Support Teams which provide less intensive services for a broader population. The County can build upon the success of the neighborhood health worker model which was expanded following an audit two years ago. This approach has been endorsed by both the Rand study and the Citizens Crime Commission.

Third, we will expand the Connections program that provides home visits for all new moms, not just the first births targeted by the Children's Plan.

I hope that the state provides sufficient flexibility to allow us to absorb some of the reductions from other state funding streams and the general fund - such as early intervention screening and small cuts in the Parent Child Development Centers. In terms of ongoing services, the Library continues to emphasize and expand its outreach and in-branch services for young children and moms.

#### **B. Poverty**

*Families in poverty should be provided with resources to alleviate their suffering and, when possible, provided with tools to get out of poverty.*

We have two plans to address homelessness- one on homeless youth is currently being implemented, evaluated, and fine-tuned; another plan, addressing the needs of homeless families, awaits funding. We can take a small step this year. Based on the research we have done over the years with LPSCC and Community and Family Services, we will partner with the JANUS youth organization to pursue an alcohol and drug treatment grant providing up to \$900,000 over three years to intervene more effectively in the lives of homeless street youth. Research shows a strong link between homeless youth and alcohol, tobacco and other drug

use. Our recent evaluation of the homeless youth system indicated that 52% of the youth used alcohol prior to entering the system and 48% used marijuana. Traditional alcohol and drug services are often not effective in reaching street youth.

### **C. School Success**

*SUN schools will spread and be an organizing focus for the provision of school based services. The School Attendance Initiative will continue to help students return to schools. Schools will need to do more to make their structure and curriculum appropriate for all students.*

#### **School Attendance Initiative**

Our research and evaluation data on this project show that it is effective both at returning students to school and increasing their performance once they have returned. The data from last year shows that over 3,600 students were served by SAI. On average their attendance increased from 75% to 83% after SAI intervention. Increased attendance brings increased State funds to our school districts. Preliminary academic measures from a small number of pilot schools indicate that students meeting grade level expectations rose from 31% to 56% in reading and 31% to 44% in math. This small sample is very encouraging.

In this budget climate, I have scaled back the effort to focus on the schools most in need of the service. Even with those reductions, the number of students served next year will be more than 70% of the number served this year. We are prioritizing. We will continue to serve all schools with more than 40 referrals this year, all SUN schools, and all schools targeted by their districts as under-performing.

#### **Schools Uniting Neighborhoods**

The SUN initiative is an exciting and innovative approach to building community, increasing school success and improving utilization of public facilities. In this budget we do not have the funds for a major expansion of this effort, but I have proposed to protect this initiative from substantial reductions. SUN has put in place one of the most intensive evaluation efforts we have ever undertaken and we need to stay the course and collect the learnings from this important initiative.

### **D. Access to Health and Mental Health Services**

*All citizens should have access to basic health, mental health and supportive services to enable them to live productive lives in their community, to the extent possible.*

This is an area where the need is great and the local and state resources will seemingly always be inadequate.

#### **Health Care for Low-Income Families and Youth**

The changing health care situation, locally as well as nationally, continues to increase the demand on the County to provide health care to low income families and youth and to the uninsured. I've talked about visit redesign and federal financial participation. We also continue to lead toward a community solution through the Communities In Charge grant.

## **Mental Health**

By moving the focus toward housing, employment, and community based treatment we will reduce the need for more expensive hospitalization. It may not cost less in the short run, but we will provide more service to more people and most importantly, people will be healthier and able to make positive contributions to our community. We will review the budget implications of these actions on May 15.

## **The Elderly and the Disabled**

More options for clients who are disabled or frail will be driven by self-determination and the least restrictive home environments. We will continue to push for restored funding for the more humane and cost effective approach of Oregon Project Independence.

## **Children's Services**

The County is now soliciting bids for the construction of the Children's Receiving Center, which we hope to open next winter. The CRC located in the Gateway Urban Renewal district will provide a place where children who have been removed from their homes for reasons of abuse or neglect can be taken for immediate care and comprehensive assessment. The Center will serve up to 16 children at a time ages 3 to 12 and will be operated with existing county and state funds. The County has the opportunity to use this Center as a focal point for comprehensive services for children in foster care aged 0 to 6 and for their foster and biological families. These include parenting, mental health, health, and domestic violence and abuse services and supports.

## **E. Reducing Recidivism**

*Our public safety focus must continue to be on offenders who pose continuing dangers of committing serious person to person crimes and are returning to the community from incarceration with little resources to support a non-criminal life style. Individuals who do not pose a substantial danger to the community should be channeled into sanctions and treatment services which have been shown to help end recidivism. Juvenile offenders and their families should be provided every opportunity to become contributing members to their community.*

Much of the work revolves around the chronic problems of alcohol and drug abuse and its multiple victims in our society. Here are three examples:

### **Gang Prevention and Intervention Efforts**

The state previously provided the County with \$1,300,000 in gang prevention and intervention money. The Governor eliminated that funding from his budget and the Legislature is very unlikely to restore it. The Department feels that these services are particularly crucial and notably effective. I agree, and I have largely backfilled them in my Executive Budget. I suggest we continue to fund treatment foster care, juvenile court counselors, the Day Reporting Center, and multi systemic therapy. Treatment Foster Care and MST are nationally promising practices for juvenile delinquency reduction.

### **Mentorship**

In this budget we supplement Community Justice's successful Interchange program with a mentorship program to provide more effective transition of those offenders back to the community. Last year, the County started a mentorship program for graduates of the Hooper

drug treatment program. With a year of experience, the evaluation reported that the percentage of clients referred from detoxification who were actively engaged in outpatient treatment increased from 52% to 85%. Moreover, the number of clients enrolled in outpatient treatment increased annually from 84 to 165 and the percentage of those clients completing treatment increased from 16% to 54%. The results exceeded even our most optimistic expectations. By offering this service to graduates of Interchange and Columbia River Correctional Facility we can increase the success rate of individuals who have received some of our most expensive secure treatment.

### **Drug Treatment Sanction**

Currently, less than 30% of the offenders on probation in this County receive treatment for drug abuse. If we institute a more comprehensive drug court we can increase that number to 50%. Given the reductions in jail beds, prosecution resources, and probation resources, we need to take a thoughtful approach to doing more with less. I need to acknowledge the District Attorney, Community Justice Director, Courts and Sheriff for developing an approach which can direct many low level misdemeanants, trespass and non-violent felony criminals into court supervised treatment. This is consistent with the approaches being tried in California and Arizona.

For this approach to work, the County is requesting a reprioritization of how the City and County agree to spend the Local Law Enforcement Block Grant that our area receives. Discussions need to continue with the City of Portland to increase funding of the currently successful STOP program by \$750,000, instead of spending that money on police equipment and overtime.

Multnomah County has operated a drug diversion treatment court since the early 1990's. A recent outcome study shows that drug court participants are convicted of new crimes 16% less and arrested for new crimes 14% less than a matched group that did not enter drug court. Similarly, we need to deal with offenders with mental illness who do not pose an immediate danger to themselves or others. We cannot afford to use expensive jail beds, if some of these clients can be supervised and treated outside of jail. Towards that end, we are also requesting from the Local Enforcement Block grant, funds to pilot a mental health treatment court option. The County will provide additional mental health case management services and closely evaluate the effort.

### **Trespass in a Drug Free Zone**

Finally, in an effort to target our justice system resources to the most appropriate clients, I would encourage the City of Portland to reexamine their use of the drug free zone. I am concerned that the current enforcement of the Drug Free Zone is overloading our criminal justice system and contributing to the overrepresentation of African Americans. Over 10% of offenders sentenced to misdemeanor crimes in 1998 were convicted of Trespass II, most of which results from Drug Free Zone exclusion orders. Almost 1/2 of these offenders were African American. When police issue the exclusion orders (as opposed to judges or prosecutors), 45% are for African Americans, 33% white and 20% Latino. I believe the Drug Court offers a more promising long-term approach to this neighborhood problem. By limiting arrests and booking to ex-offenders who are suspected of something other than trespass, the system would eliminate the recycling of fully 1/10 of the misdemeanants currently in our system.

## **F. Good Government**

The County must begin to embrace sustainable practices and model this behavior in all we do. Less than that will shortchange our children's future. The need for adequate housing for many of the populations we serve will drive the County towards a larger role. We are developing the capacity to coordinate County housing work in DSCD and we have the potential to expand our supported housing for offenders. The review of the County's administrative services, now proceeding under the direction of *Cecilia Johnson*, promises to involve the County's best thinkers in how we move forward.

## **LISTENING TO OUR CITIZENS**

Our County - and our democracy - work best when citizens are organized to work with local governments to get the services they need. If the services are to be effective, communities of color will need services tailored to meet their unique cultural norms. As the fastest growing community in the state and county, the Latino community will need greater attention from the County. The County also has large, and growing, populations of Russian, Vietnamese and other non-English speaking people. Language and cultural barriers make serving these communities well extremely challenging. We must work hard to meet these challenges. To gather input from the community we've been working with community groups that have been willing to sponsor budget forums and share their views with us. The County held seven budget forums this winter. They were attended by approximately 500 people. Consistent themes and community priorities included:

- Focusing on preventing problems
- Expanding support for SUN Schools
- Expanding recreational facilities and youth development programs
- Expanding violence prevention and intervention programs; adding funding for culturally specific programs
- Funding leadership building in the Asian Pacific Islander and Latino communities
- Strengthening early childhood services (by supporting health, early education, and parenting programs)
- Continuing to support high risk and gang affected youth and their families
- Continuing to support school based health centers
- Improving access to culturally appropriate mental health, alcohol and drug treatment services
- Supporting culturally specific programs for elders
- Building on community strengths and assets
- Given the budget constraints, and always testing for effectiveness, I tried to follow all of these themes.

In addition, there were some specific requests. Based on equity concerns, I have honored the following:

- Providing \$25,000 each to APANO and the Latino Network to continue their advocacy and organizing work.
- Providing the Asian Family Center with diversion staff.
- Providing potential funding for an expansion of our Latino mental health work to Rockwood, possibly by this spring. Expansion to the Columbia Villa is also recommended when funds permit. The final decision should be made by the Board when we have a better perspective on the federal financing potential.



I wish we could have done much more.

## **MAJOR REDUCTIONS**

After the efficiencies, after the new revenue, after the priorities and the community input, even the best thinking and most well-intentioned actions cannot avoid the harsh reality of layoffs and service cuts. I regret that more than 120 positions in the county will be eliminated and over 50 current employees may lose their jobs by July 1. This budget includes reductions that total over \$13,000,000. Here are a few of the major cuts recommended by departments and agencies that I included in the Executive Budget:

### **Public Safety Juvenile**

- Closure of a 16 bed unit at the Juvenile Home. (\$495,000)
- Elimination of the GIFT program - Gang Influenced Females - (\$190,000)
- Reduction of juvenile counselors from DCJ (\$600,000)

### **Public Safety - Adult**

- Reduction of seven prosecutors (approximately \$500,000)
- Reduction of corrections deputies (\$500,000)
- Reduction of work crew staff (\$606,000)
- Elimination of Sheriff's office support for the child abuse multi-disciplinary team (\$155,000)
- Elimination of the employment contract for offenders from DCJ (\$72,000)
- Elimination of outpatient field services mental health contract for offenders from DCJ (\$181,000)
- Reduction of 9 corrections technicians supporting the work of probation officers from DCJ (\$390,000)

### **School Services**

- A 1/3 reduction in the number of schools served by the School Attendance Initiative (\$700,000)
- Elimination of FRC counseling staff at Marshall and Whittaker (\$130,000)
- Reduction in spending on Transition School (\$600,000)

### **Aging Services**

- Reduction by 43% in Oregon Project Independence funds (\$440,000)

### **Health Services**

- Neighborhood Health services (\$1,100,000) The Healthy Birth Initiative grant ends on June 30. Through a reorganization of the Field Teams, and a reallocation of existing resources, \$450,000 has been restored to the Initiative.
- Elimination of the Lead prevention program - lost grant from City of Portland (\$457,000)
- Reduction in STARS - Students Aren't Ready for Sex - reduced state funds (\$102,000)

### **Support Services**

- Reduction in our staff in Finance (\$447,000)

- Reduction in central information services (437,000)
- Reduction in Facilities and Property Management (1,067,000)

### **Administration**

I have discussed the need to review our administrative services. However, I also need to mention the dangerous lure of false efficiencies. We all prefer to avoid direct service reductions and instead rely on internal efficiencies and administrative reductions wherever appropriate. I have mentioned just a few of the many efforts we have made in that direction. But I would be remiss in my duties if I did not point out that, at some point, cutting administrative staff becomes counterproductive.

Without experienced administrative staff, the County will:

- be unable to maintain the highest quality in our services;
- be unable to form and sustain crucial partnerships with the business community and other local jurisdictions;
- face the prospect of increased employment litigation; and
- be unable to maintain quality workers who seek to make a meaningful contribution to their society, but also have responsibilities outside of work with friends and family.

We need to be prudent in the management of our human resources. I worry that these cuts, following on the reduction of more than \$7.5 million to the County's current service level last year, will place too much strain on our systems.

### **STATE REDUCTIONS**

The County's budget dilemma this year was compounded by reductions in state funding. We remain hopeful that Oregon Project Independence funds will be restored by the State Legislature and will continue to help our senior citizens remain in their homes as long as possible. We remain hopeful that Oregon Youth Authority beds will be restored. With the closure of a unit at Juvenile, the County is not in a position to assume responsibility for serious youth offenders who have been sent to state training facilities. We are not hopeful about restorations of the state funded gang prevention and intervention programs. These programs have become a vital part of our local juvenile corrections strategy and I have made deeper cuts within Community Justice to restore the bulk of those programs.

It is distressing, but understandable, that a slowing business climate and out of state mergers impact our business tax revenue. It is outrageous that relatively small amounts of our income tax payments will be returned to us by the state while we face the erosion of services that could have been continued with those state funds.

### **FUTURE UNCERTAINTIES**

When facing a cut back, government cannot always meet the long-term needs of its citizens. It needs, however, to keep those many needs in mind as it makes thoughtful short-term decisions that may have long-term implications. While not comprehensive, here are a few areas where a new Board will need thoughtful planning and strategic actions:

### **Operating Levies**

The wonderfully intact and expanding Library system will be up for renewal, probably in 2002. Operating funds for the new Wapato Jail and Secure Alcohol and Drug Treatment Center will need to come from a local option levy. The facility should be ready to open in the summer of 2003. We know from our evaluations that the effectiveness of the drug treatment will depend upon adequately funded follow up services including housing, mentors, and employment.

### **Capital Requirements**

Commissioners Cruz and Naito are working with our Facilities Department on options for a General Obligation Bond to meet the needs for adequate, structurally safe court space. The unfunded liability of the Bridges and the continuing strain on limited transportation funding will require cities, state and federal cooperation with us if we are to meet the needs. Housing support is emerging as a significantly under-funded local government service. While the County has historically not had a major role compared to other jurisdictions and organizations, the success of much of our work depends on adequate, affordable shelter. Maintaining our investment in our buildings through the asset preservation fund mechanism will allow some flexibility in how we address these needs.

### **State Partnerships**

In many of our services - health, mental health, aging, community corrections - the County is supposed to be a partner with the state. Too often, the Legislature is more than willing to provide counties with the responsibility for locally provided services, but unwilling to provide adequate funding for these services. The County needs to work with other counties and the Governor to develop a meaningful partnership that addresses the responsibilities of both partners - the funder and the service provider. The good news is the continuing assistance we are getting from the state in our expanded FFP partnership and the potential still remaining.

### **Local Partners**

I am continually struck by the time, energy and commitment that true partnership involves. A new Board should carefully consider structures that would enable it to have more regular dialogue on public policy with the Cities and School Districts in Multnomah County. Too often discussions are limited to relatively last minute budget negotiations, without an overall commitment to fund systems, not perceived organizational needs.

### **Role of Central Support Services**

The County is a very different organizational place than it was when Pauline and I first came and different because of the impact of Beverly Stein. We have the potential to think and act more efficiently and more as a single enterprise, rather than discrete Departments. Indications of that movement are the strength of the DSS leadership both at the Director and Division Manager levels, the installation and use of MERLIN, the adoption of Countywide Information services standards and technology, and the positive response to the fleet audit.

To continue to capture efficiencies, avoid long-term costs, and capture the learnings from the auditor's work in these areas, the County will need to continue to move its thinking towards a countywide/enterprise level. This does not mean wholesale centralization. We need to value and honor the differences among our departments. But, we need to value expertise where it exists, and wear county hats, more than departmental hats. The Board needs to play a key leadership role in stressing these themes.

## **PRINCIPLES**

I will bring this multifaceted message to closure by sharing with you the principles that guided my decision making.

- Is the service cost effective? What are our choices?
- Is the service supported by research? How do we know it will achieve the desired outcomes? How good is our evaluation?
- Are we intervening early? Are we using prevention strategies where possible? To what extent is our investment going to impact the community on a long-term basis?
- Are we tackling the high-risk clients? Are we targeting the areas of greatest need?
- Are we building on community strengths? To what extent does the policy enable neighborhoods to assist their own residents in convenient sites?
- To what extent will a reduction in one area spill over and cause additional problems in another area
- Are we promoting transformative change? To what extent does the policy enable us to rethink and redesign how we do our work?
- Do we have Accountability? How can we demonstrate to the public that the money is well spent?

As we look in more detail at the difficult budget choices we face I hope that we will continue to ask these questions.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

In closing, I would like to thank:

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I am honored to have the opportunity to participate in this process. I look forward to our overview workshop on Tuesday and our departmental briefings and public hearings in May and June.