

Service Efforts and Accomplishments
Social and Health Services FY2002

February 2003



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To: Citizens of Multnomah County
Subject: Multnomah County Service Efforts and Accomplishments: Social and Health Services FY2002

This is the third year that the Auditor's Office has reported on the County's performance in the Service Efforts and Accomplishments Report and the second report completed for the County's social and health services. These services are a substantial portion of the County's responsibility, accounting for 59% of all expenditure and 45% of staff in FY2002. This report represents two important accomplishments:

- The report includes services for the elderly and those for clients with disabilities which we were unable to include in the last report.
- One of this Office's goals in implementing this type of annual reporting is to use performance measures that could survive departmental reorganization and changes in service direction. Despite the creation of two new agencies, the Department of County Human Services and the Office of School and Community Partnerships, reorganized from the previous Department of Community and Family Services and Department of Aging and Disability Services, we were able to use many of the same performance measures.

This report was the joint effort of the Auditor's Office and the Departments of County Human Services, Health, and Library, and the Office of School and Community Partnerships. I would like to commend the County and these departments in particular for their willingness and ability to participate in such a challenging task. Together we have created a report that adds considerably to the County's accountability to its citizens.

Sincerely,

Suzanne Flynn

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Introduction

Purpose

This Service Efforts and Accomplishments (SEA) report presents the resources, workloads, and results of Multnomah County’s social and health services. The Auditor’s Office reports this information in order to:

- Increase government accountability
- Provide information to citizens about their government

Implementation of SEA Reporting

In FY1999, the Auditor’s Office studied the possibility of SEA reporting in Multnomah County and concluded that such reporting was feasible given the considerable progress the County had already made in performance measurement. The study identified gaps in the current performance measurement system that would be filled with SEA reporting, identified the role of the Auditor’s Office, and recognized the need for citizen engagement in performance reporting. In FY2000, the Office began a schedule for SEA reporting that rotates between social and health services one year, and public safety the next.

Social and Health Services	Public Safety Services
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Department of County Human Services• Health Department• Library• Office of School and Community Partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Department of Community Justice• District Attorney’s Office• Sheriff’s Office

The FY2002 report contains information on the social and health services provided by the Department of County Human Services, the Health Department, the Library, and the Office of School and Community Partnerships. The County’s social services were reorganized in FY2002 and this report reflects those changes. There are a number of measures marked “under development” for which data are not available this year. Future reports should demonstrate progress in producing these data and measuring these outcomes. This is the second report for all programs except those for the aging and physically disabled. It is the third report for the Health Department.

Methodology and Scope

Service efforts and accomplishments reporting is a concept developed by the Government Accounting Standards Board (GASB). It is intended to supplement financial reporting to give a full account of government performance. Current GASB standards do not require state and local governments to report on service efforts and accomplishments; however, GASB is considering the adoption of standards and has already established guidelines for SEA reporting. In producing this report, we followed GASB's guidelines as well as the General Standards section of *Government Auditing Standards*.

The Multnomah County Auditor's Office worked closely with staff and management in each department or agency to develop a framework for reporting, decide on measures, and gather data for the report. The reporting framework and performance measures reflect the mission, goals, and service priorities of each department.

To the extent possible, we tailored the report to reflect what we have learned about citizen interest. During our feasibility study, we conducted a number of focus groups to find out what citizens want to see in a performance report. The following elements were the most common:

- *Report from the public's point of view.* Organize the information by function rather than department. Include services, regardless of size, which are of great interest to the public.
- *Describe goals and service populations.*
- *Show revenues, expenditures, and the amount of services purchased.* Include information on County spending priorities and the number of people served.
- *Include broad measures.* Provide figures on County progress toward state and local benchmarks and cross-departmental measures.
- *Show efficiency measures.* Include information at the County and department level on per capita costs of services.
- *Include trends and comparisons.* Show how the County has done over time and compared to other jurisdictions.

Results are presented by department or agency. Within each, services are broken down by function or major service area. Four types of measures are provided:

1. *Spending and staffing measures* show how much each department spent, how many people it employed, and how much growth it experienced over the last five years.
2. *Workload measures* indicate how much of a service was produced or how many people were served.
3. *Outcome measures* demonstrate the intended results and effectiveness of a service or program.
4. *Efficiency and cost measures* show how much it costs to provide a service or how economically it is being provided over the course of time or compared to other jurisdictions.

Library Comparability Measures. We gathered data from four library systems that we determined to be comparable to Multnomah County’s Library. These libraries were chosen based on their similarity to Multnomah County on a number of characteristics: each jurisdiction operates a central and branch libraries; each has population of 500,000 - 800,000, and each serves a major metropolitan area. We contacted staff in each jurisdiction to gather data.

Citizen Survey. In late spring 2001, the Auditor’s Office conducted its first independent citizen survey to add citizen satisfaction information to the annual SEA report. The survey was designed to get information on citizen satisfaction with the quality of services and overall feelings about neighborhood livability. This SEA report contains the results of the second year survey as well.

Many of the services that the County provides are for specific populations and a citizen survey is not the best method of measuring satisfaction. However, these services are also provided to help protect the general social, economic, and physical health of the larger community. Trending measures of the community’s health provides some indication of how County government contributes to the feelings of regional and neighborhood livability.

The Auditor’s Office contracted with the Portland State University Survey Research Laboratory to conduct a telephone survey of residents from randomly selected households in Multnomah County. Adults, age 18 or older, from the six service districts used by the Office of School and Community Partnerships were interviewed by telephone for this year’s report in the spring of 2002. Of the 4,417 households with which contact was made, 2,000 completed the interview and 2,417 refused to be interviewed. This yields a response rate of 45%. The results of this survey are reported in the Citizen Survey section of this report. The appendix contains the complete survey interview.

**Data and
Measure
Limitations**

Performance measures, such as those presented in this report, provide good indicators of accomplishments or changes in performance. They do not tell us why a program is succeeding or failing. We did not attempt to determine the causes behind specific performance trends; such a task would require extensive evaluation work that is beyond the scope of this report. We encourage readers to consider SEA information in this light. Program staff, County management, or elected officials may be contacted for more information about the results presented here.

Social and health services are provided to help protect vulnerable people; reduce poverty; enhance and protect the social, economic, and physical health of the community; provide leisure and learning opportunities; and give children and youth the skills they need to succeed. Outcomes for these activities are notoriously difficult to measure: results can take years to emerge, causal factors are hard to isolate, privacy and cost issues curtail data collection efforts, and clients are very difficult to track over time. Given these limitations, we have provided measures that show performance

in specific programs or among certain populations, but do not assess progress toward broad, long-term goals, such as reducing poverty. In other cases, we were able to show results on community-wide benchmarks, such as teen pregnancy rate, but were not able to evaluate whether specific County programs impacted these results.

We found many existing measures in departments that provide a good start toward SEA reporting. Some required revision, recalculation, or better data sources. We made recommendations to each of the departments to address these issues prior to the next SEA reporting cycle.

Most of the data in the report were provided to the Auditor's Office by department staff and were collected internally, from contractors, or from another government such as the State of Oregon. Due to time and resource constraints, not all data could be verified for accuracy by the Auditor's Office.

Our goal is to make the SEA report as accessible and meaningful to the citizens of Multnomah County as possible while accurately reflecting the work of the County and meeting GASB's guidelines. We will continue to work with departments to develop, implement, and report on SEA, focusing next year on the County's public safety services.

Acknowledgements

We are grateful to the staff in each department or agency who worked so hard to put this report together, and to department directors John Ball of County Human Services, Lillian Shirley of the Health Department, Ginnie Cooper of the Library, and Lorenzo Poe of the Office of School and Community Partnerships.

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