

Talking Points for Budget Survey Presentation

[presented by Kathleen Todd, Director Office of Citizen Involvement]

- CIC has traditionally facilitated live public budget forums as one means for county residents to provide input to you about the budget.
- Over the last 2 years, we've recognized the importance of expanding opportunities to increase public input by creating online surveys with ?'s similar to those used at the forums. This year we were able to significantly expand public input using the survey.
- Over 485 surveys were received.
 - A large initial group came in during spring prior to the 2011-12 budget adoption, and
 - a second surge arrived in the last month, when it became known that the county's budget needed to be adjusted to account for state funding reductions.
 - 10 surveys were even submitted in Spanish.
- Survey consisted of 2 ?'s: 1 quantitative and 1 qualitative
 - Quantitative —out of 18 county service categories, respondents were asked to rank the 6, in order, that were most important to them
 - Qualitative —asked respondents to describe which features they valued the most about the service categories that they selected
- **Summary of quantitative charts—[go to Robb']**
- **Breadth of support table and chart**—highlight # of times that each service category was ranked in the top 6 by respondents. 7 of the 18 categories were distinctly ranked more often than the rest (1 was the Library and the other 6 were related to Human Services: Mental Health Services, Community Health Services, Aging and Senior Services,

Health Clinics, Homeless Services, and SUN Schools and Early Childhood Services).

- **Depth of support chart**—highlights the total value respondents assigned to each service category. This is achieved by assigning points to the categories based on where respondents rated the categories within their top 6 rankings. A service that a respondent ranked at 6 was awarded six points and a service ranked at 1 was awarded one point. The same 7 categories are in the top but their ordering changed.
- **Strength of support chart**—highlights the average value that respondents assigned particular service categories when they ranked them within their top 6. This perspective is useful for understanding how fervent proponents of particular service categories were in their support. The ordering here shows that strength of support for a program is not necessarily related to the breadth or depth of that support. A number of services that did not fall within the top seven still demonstrated some of the strongest feelings of support among their proponents. These include the District Attorney-Public Prosecutor and County Jails. SUN Schools and Early Childhood Services clearly had the most ardent proponents.

Back to Kathleen:

- Description of responses to quantitative ?.
 - As I mentioned earlier, the second ? asked respondents to describe—beyond simply naming the services they selected—which of their features were the most important to them.
 - This question was very useful to gain insight into the qualities that MultCo residents feel are the most valuable with regard to county services and programs.
 - Over 1260 comments were submitted.

- The comments were analyzed and categorized based on similarity.
 - They varied greatly and fell into more than 75 different categories.
 - Nearly 15 comments remarked on how difficult the survey was to complete—which suggests this exercise led them to realize how difficult your job is in these trying times.
 - One respondent even said they would pray for you to make the right choices.
- Comments classified in the top 4 categories accounted for more than 33% of the total comments. These included:
- **All citizens need health care since healthy citizens lead to healthy communities**
 - **Aging populations must be supported.**
 - **Youth need to receive early education; social service assistance; and afterschool activities.**
 - **People with mental health problems need psychiatric care and attention.**
- Comments classified in the next 5 categories accounted for more than 27%. These included:
- **Advance literacy; and access to media and information for all citizens.**
 - **Generally support our community's most vulnerable and at-risk populations.**
 - **Protect law-abiding citizens by enforcing crime and supporting public safety.**

- **Maintain and upgrade county infrastructure.**
 - **Address homelessness and ensure everyone in the community has housing.**
- Overall, the public's comments reflect a sophisticated understanding of social justice and of the efficacy of preventive measures in all areas of county services.
- Questions?

