



## **Analysis: 2011 Multnomah County Budget Forum Survey** ***Submissions between March 23—September 1, 2011***

**Background:** This year’s Multnomah County Budget Forum held on March 3, 2011, focused on providing information about the relationships between state and county budget funding, and obtaining input from attendees about how county programs and services should be prioritized for funding given looming reductions. Following the budget forum, the Citizen Involvement Committee (CIC) believed it was critical to continue offering county residents the chance to understand and provide input into the 2011-12 budget-making process. This is particularly true this year given the region’s considerable economic downturn and significant reductions in state funding for Multnomah County programs and services. As a result, the CIC developed a survey with two questions similar to those answered by attendees at the March 3<sup>rd</sup> forum. By using similar questions and posting a brief video online from the forum which included presentations made by Chair Jeff Cogen, Chief Operating Officer Joanne Fuller, and District Attorney Michael Shrunck, survey respondents were also encouraged to consider how state and county funding are interrelated and how state reductions could affect county programs.

**Survey Design and Response:** As previously noted, the online survey consisted of two questions similar to those asked at the budget forum (see on pages 11-12). The first question asked respondents to rank the county programs and services that were the most important to them. Out of a total of 18 county service categories (see descriptions on pages 9—10), respondents were asked to rank, in order, their top six service categories. Scores were assigned based on the ranking order. The scores have been totaled and are shown on the survey ranking sheet on page 3. The scores were also analyzed visually with bar charts using three different approaches. The second question was qualitative as it asked respondents to describe what features of the services and programs that they selected were the most important to them beyond simply naming them. The features that survey respondents listed have been analyzed and categorized based on similarity. This question is very useful to gain insight into the qualities that Multnomah County residents feel are among the most important with regard to county services and programs.

The survey was posted online and paper copies were also made available beginning in late March. In an effort to broaden the number of Multnomah County residents who could participate in the process, the survey was also offered in Spanish. The availability of the survey was well-publicized from late March to mid-May prior to the adoption of the county budget, as well as throughout August in order to provide public input to county decision-makers as the county budget is modified due to state funding reductions. Publicity about the survey ranged from postings on the homepages of both Multnomah County and the Office of Citizen Involvement to announcements that appeared twice in *The Oregonian*. Between March 23<sup>rd</sup> and September 1<sup>st</sup>, 487 surveys were submitted by the public. Ten of the surveys were submitted in Spanish.

**Question 1 Results and Summary:** The results of the survey were analyzed using three different approaches in order to maximize the insights about the value that Multnomah County residents attach to specific service categories. All three perspectives show different relative orderings of services. The first two show distinct gradations from most to least broadly supported, with a definite break between the top seven and the other services. This group of seven is by and large Health and Human Services in nature.

The first approach gives us a view of breadth of support by focusing on the number of times that service categories were ranked in the top six by respondents. The service categories that were ranked the most times were, in order: Mental Health Services, Community Health Services, Aging and Senior Services, Health Clinics, Libraries, Homeless Services, and SUN Schools and Early Childhood Services (see pages 3—4).

The second approach provides a view of depth of support using total point values assigned to service categories. The top service categories were, in order: Community Health Services, Mental Health Services, Health Clinics, Aging and Senior Services, Libraries, SUN Schools and Early Childhood Services, and Homeless Services (see page 5). The ordering changes between the two views; the membership of the top seven services is unchanged.

The third approach focuses on determining the average value of the rankings received by each service category. This can be interpreted as an indicator of the strength of support for a service by those who ranked it (see page 6). The ordering in this perspective indicates 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 into the top seven did demonstrate 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 have the most ardent proponents.

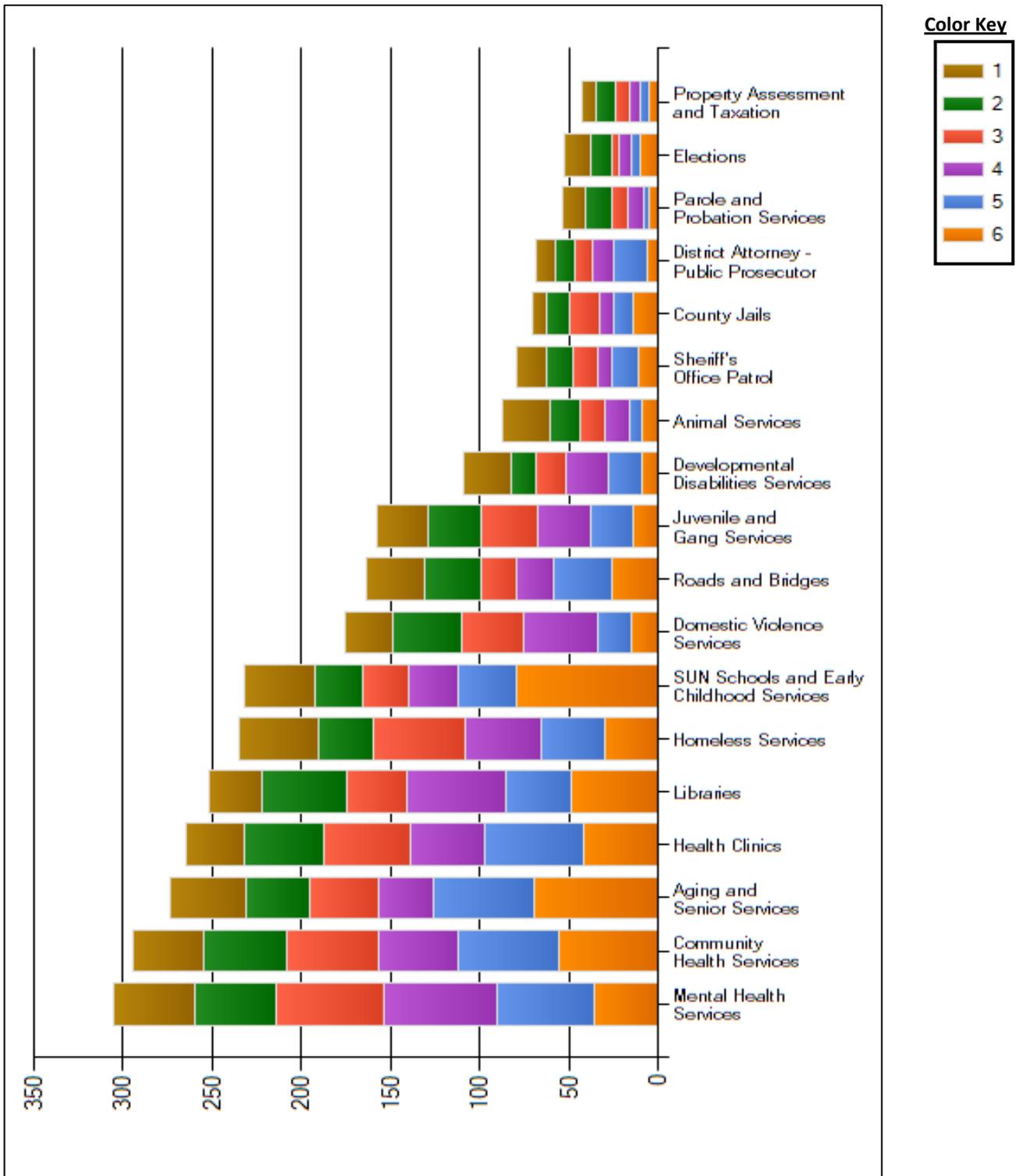
**Table 1. Survey Ranking Data**

Respondents ranked the top six county service categories that were most important to them, in order from 6 to 1. A higher number means higher value was placed on that service.

	6	5	4	3	2	1	Response Count
Aging and Senior Services	<b>25.5%</b> <b>(70)</b>	20.4% (56)	11.3% (31)	13.9% (38)	13.1% (36)	15.7% (43)	274
Animal Services	10.2% (9)	8.0% (7)	15.9% (14)	15.9% (14)	19.3% (17)	<b>30.7%</b> <b>(27)</b>	88
Community Health Services	<b>19.0%</b> <b>(56)</b>	<b>19.0%</b> <b>(56)</b>	15.3% (45)	17.3% (51)	16.0% (47)	13.3% (39)	294
County Jails	19.7% (14)	15.5% (11)	11.3% (8)	<b>23.9%</b> <b>(17)</b>	18.3% (13)	11.3% (8)	71
Developmental Disabilities Services	8.3% (9)	17.4% (19)	22.0% (24)	15.6% (17)	12.8% (14)	<b>23.9%</b> <b>(26)</b>	109
District Attorney - Public Prosecutor	8.7% (6)	<b>27.5%</b> <b>(19)</b>	17.4% (12)	14.5% (10)	15.9% (11)	15.9% (11)	69
Domestic Violence Services	8.5% (15)	10.8% (19)	<b>23.9%</b> <b>(42)</b>	19.3% (34)	22.2% (39)	15.3% (27)	176
Elections	18.9% (10)	9.4% (5)	13.2% (7)	7.5% (4)	22.6% (12)	<b>28.3%</b> <b>(15)</b>	53
Health Clinics	15.8% (42)	<b>20.8%</b> <b>(55)</b>	15.8% (42)	18.5% (49)	16.6% (44)	12.5% (33)	265
Homeless Services	12.8% (30)	15.3% (36)	17.9% (42)	<b>22.1%</b> <b>(52)</b>	13.2% (31)	18.7% (44)	235
Juvenile and Gang Services	8.9% (14)	15.2% (24)	19.0% (30)	<b>19.6%</b> <b>(31)</b>	19.0% (30)	18.4% (29)	158
Mental Health Services	11.8% (36)	18.0% (55)	<b>20.7%</b> <b>(63)</b>	19.7% (60)	15.1% (46)	14.8% (45)	305
Libraries	19.4% (49)	14.7% (37)	<b>21.8%</b> <b>(55)</b>	13.5% (34)	18.7% (47)	11.9% (30)	252
Parole and Probation Services	9.3% (5)	5.6% (3)	16.7% (9)	16.7% (9)	<b>27.8%</b> <b>(15)</b>	24.1% (13)	54
Property Assessment and Taxation	11.6% (5)	11.6% (5)	14.0% (6)	18.6% (8)	<b>25.6%</b> <b>(11)</b>	18.6% (8)	43
Roads and Bridges	15.9% (26)	<b>20.1%</b> <b>(33)</b>	12.8% (21)	11.6% (19)	19.5% (32)	<b>20.1%</b> <b>(33)</b>	164
Sheriff's Office Patrol	13.8% (11)	18.8% (15)	10.0% (8)	17.5% (14)	18.8% (15)	<b>21.3%</b> <b>(17)</b>	80
SUN Schools and Early Childhood Services	<b>34.5%</b> <b>(80)</b>	13.8% (32)	12.1% (28)	11.2% (26)	11.6% (27)	16.8% (39)	232
						<b>answered question</b>	<b>487</b>

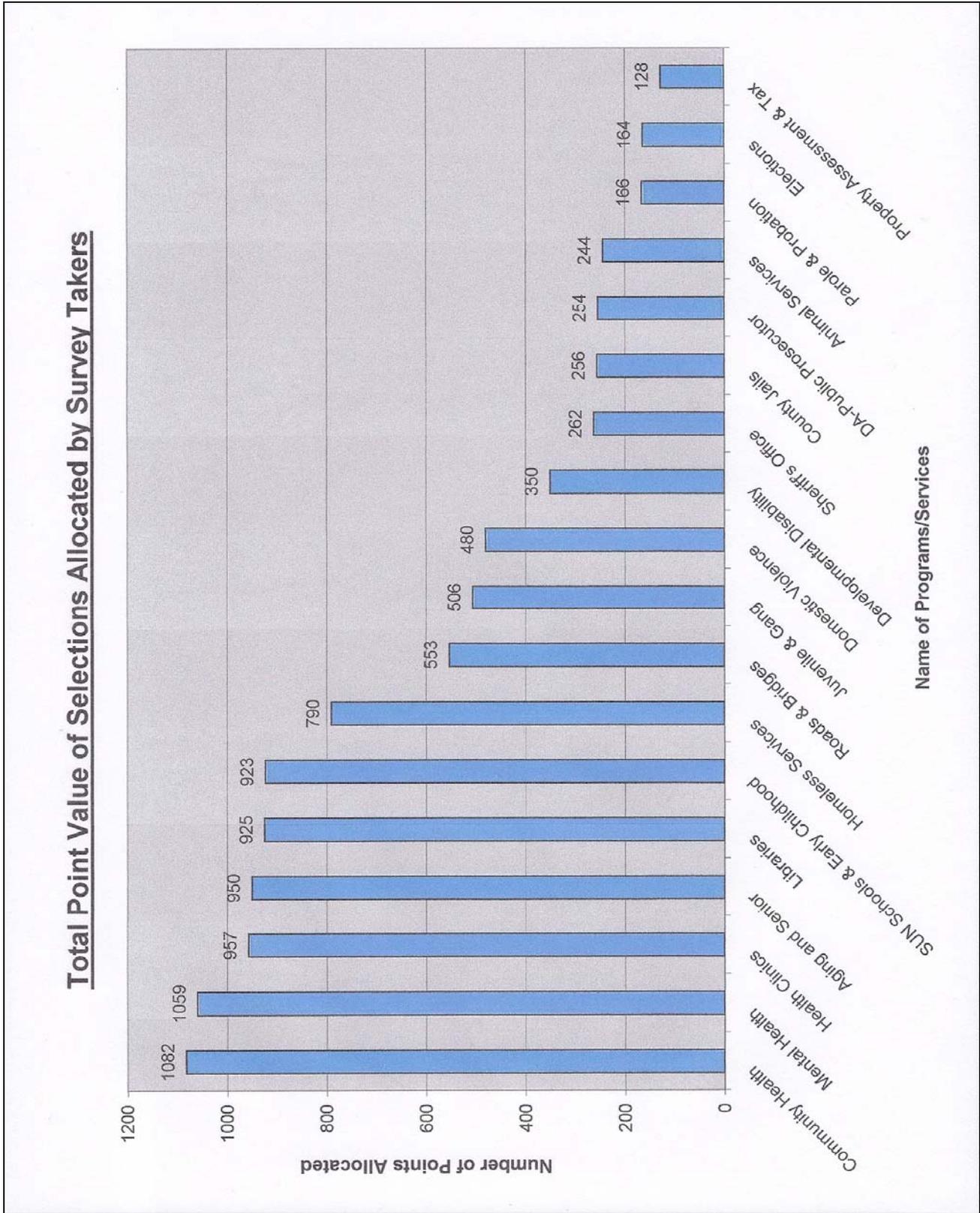
**Chart 1: How Many Times Particular Services were Ranked Highly by Respondents**

Respondents ranked the six county service categories that were most important to them, in order from 6 to 1. Within each bar, the colors represent the number of respondents assigning that value to the service



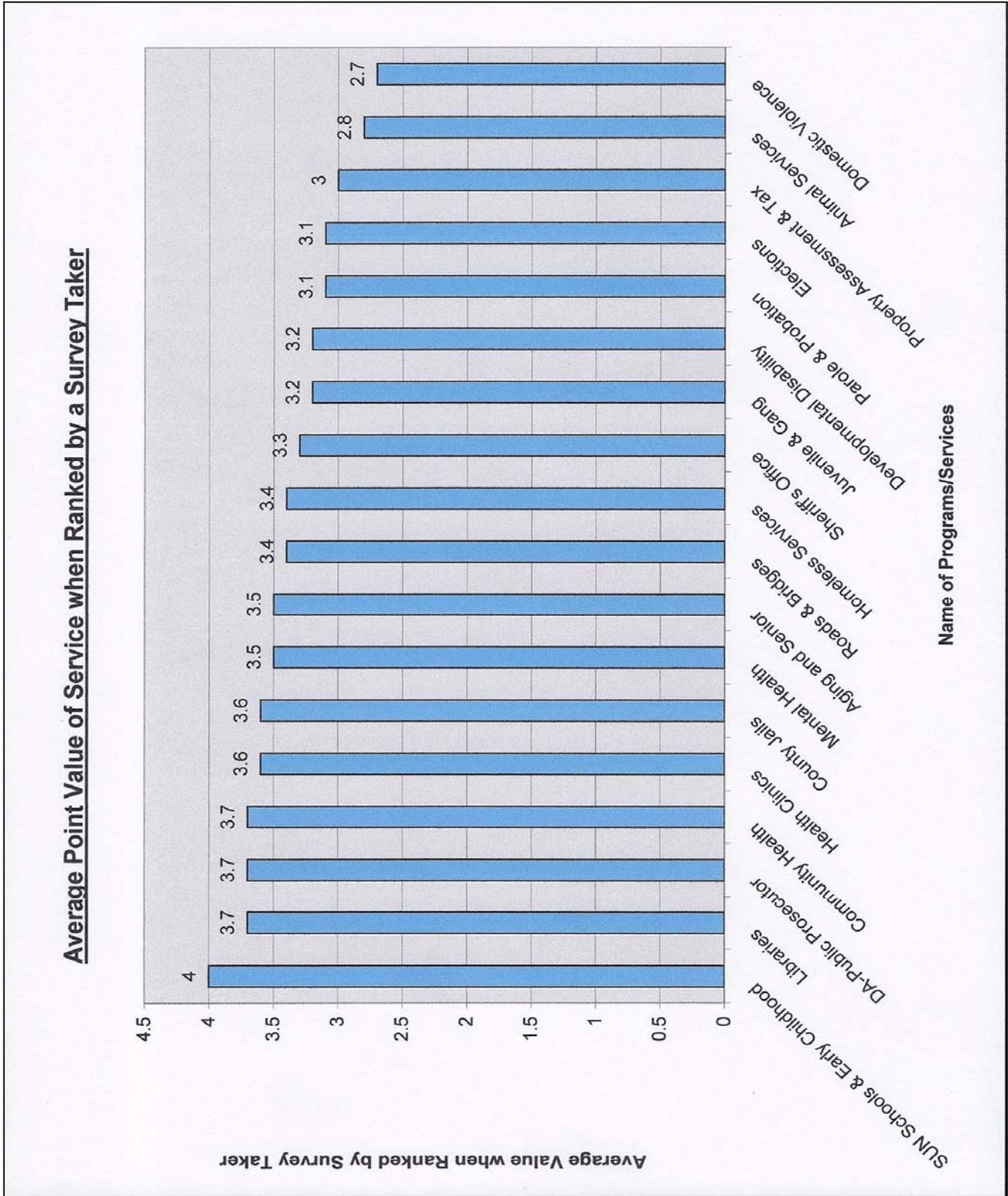
**Chart 2: Total Point Values Assigned to Services**

Each service is shown with the total value allocated by all respondents when they ranked service categories (6 to 1). A service that a respondent ranked at 6 was awarded six points and a service ranked at 1 was awarded one point.



**Chart 3: Average Point Value Assigned to Service Categories**

Total ranking value allocated to a service averaged by number of respondents ranking that service among top six.



**Question 2 Results and Summary:** Over 1260 comments were submitted by respondents concerning the features they valued most about the county programs and services that they selected. The comments were reviewed and categorized by similarity. While the features described in the comments frequently overlapped which made them difficult to categorize, some common qualities about the features of valued programs and services emerged. The comments ranged broadly—falling into more than 75 different categories—yet over 60% of the comments fell into nine categories.

These nine categories were valued the most by comment volume and are listed in order by number of comments. As with the ranking data, most of the nine fall under the general heading of Health and Human Services; Public Safety and Infrastructure are represented in the group.

Some 33% of the responses fell into the first four of these leading categories:

1. **All citizens need health care since healthy citizens lead to healthy communities.** Example comments included: lays the foundation for people to succeed and avoid other perils like homelessness and unemployment; reduces long-term health care costs; it's a human right reflecting a compassionate and sensitive society.
2. **Aging populations must be supported.** Example comments included: rapidly growing segment of the population; vulnerable and high needs population; valuable asset for transfer of knowledge and experience; certain services permit seniors to stay in their homes and remain independent which is cheaper for the county; large contingent of community's volunteers come from this population.
3. **Youth need to receive early education; social service assistance; and afterschool activities.** Example comments included: encourages youth to be successful and not go down the wrong path; promotes productive citizens and a safe and civil society; high return investment by reducing expensive public health and criminal costs over the long-term; creates critical channels to address crises as they arise.
4. **People with mental health problems need psychiatric care and attention.** Example comments included: rapidly growing segment of the population; vulnerable and high needs population that tends to be lower income; may be confronting multiple crises and family breakdowns; reduces drain on other county services; critical for preventing crime and other social problems.

Another 27% of the responses fell into the next five categories:

5. **Advance literacy; and access to media and information for all citizens.** Example comments included: supports an informed and knowledgeable public which promotes democracy and prosperity; strengthens community; related programs effectively become community and cultural centers; makes huge difference in people's lives; particularly those who don't have resources and are seeking work during economic downturns.
6. **Generally support our community's most vulnerable and at-risk populations.** Example comments included: rapidly growing segment of the population; high needs population; circumstances leading to vulnerable condition are frequently not people's fault; community is likely to be less safe and functional if don't address; difficult economic times hit these groups hardest.

7. **Protect law-abiding citizens by enforcing crime and supporting public safety.** Example comments included: promotes lawful society and discourages inappropriate behavior; safety is vital to the well-being of all citizens.
8. **Maintain and upgrade county infrastructure.** Example comments included: significant amount of current infrastructure is past its prime; infrastructure is bedrock of functioning society and promotes economy and jobs; allows people to travel easily and safely; more expensive to fix the longer community waits to do it; the big earthquake will come eventually.
9. **Address homelessness and ensure everyone in the community has housing.** Example comments included: amount of people who are homeless is growing; current economy has been a significant factor in people becoming homeless; makes community more stable and increases stability for vulnerable populations; increases success of other social programs like addiction treatment; reduces panhandling and criminal activity; youth who are homeless are much less likely to succeed in future; reflects sensitive society.

The thousand-plus comments *in toto* reflect a sophisticated understanding of social justice and of the efficacy of preventive measures in all areas of county services.

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**Additional Opportunities for Citizens to Provide Input prior to Approval of the Budget Modifications:** Modifications to the Multnomah County budget required by state funding reductions are likely to be approved by the Board of County Commissioners on September 15<sup>th</sup>. Citizens may want to consider providing public comment about proposed modifications during either of the next two board meetings. The meetings will take place on September 8<sup>th</sup> and September 15<sup>th</sup>, at 9:30am in the Multnomah Building Boardroom located at 501 SE Hawthorne Boulevard in Portland. Additionally, citizens or community groups may want to consider scheduling a meeting with a county commissioner to express their opinions.

**Please feel free to contact the Office of Citizen Involvement to get more information about the opportunities listed above or any questions you have about this report. We can be reached at 503-988-3450 or [citizen.involvement@multco.us](mailto:citizen.involvement@multco.us).**

# Your County, Your Services



## Service Descriptions

### Aging and Senior Services

Aging provides serves over 200,000 seniors and disabled people in Multnomah County. Services include case management, in-home care, senior housing assistance, protection from elder abuse, and assistance accessing public benefits.

### Animal Services

Animal Services licenses pets, operates an animal shelter, responds to animal emergencies, and rescues injured, sick and abused animals. Animal Services received over 8,000 animals in its shelter in 2009.

### Community Health Services

Community Health Services monitors and treats communicable diseases. Community Health also addresses chronic diseases and environmental health conditions in the community. Community Health provides services to over 90,000 individuals.

### County Jails

The County Jails screens arrestees, houses inmates before trial, and has custody of inmates after sentencing to jail. The jails provide medical and mental health services to inmates. The jails booked over 37,000 arrestees in 2009.

### Developmental Disability Services

Developmental Disabilities serves over 4,200 residents with intellectual and physical disabilities, providing family support and help finding programming, housing and employment for clients.

### District Attorney - Public Prosecutor

The District Attorney prosecutes misdemeanor and felony offenders for the County. The District Attorney's Office issued 4,200 felony cases in 2009.

### Domestic Violence Services

Domestic violence services include victim protection and assistance, legal advocacy, emergency shelter, and prosecution of offenders. Domestic violence assisted over 5,000 victims in 2009.

### Elections

Elections conducts all local, city, county, state and federal elections for all political districts within Multnomah County. In 2009 Elections counted 430,288 ballots.

### Health Clinics

Health clinics provide access to primary health care for low-income and uninsured residents. County health clinics are located in the community and in schools and served over 60,000 people in 2009.

## Service Descriptions, Continued

<u>Homeless Services</u>	Services to the homeless and those at risk of losing their housing. Rent assistance, emergency shelter, temporary housing, and assistance accessing public benefits. Over 80% of the formerly homeless retain housing 12 months after exiting the program.
<u>Juvenile and Gang Services</u>	Parole and probation services for juveniles, as well as gang prevention and outreach to at-risk youth by community-based providers. Juvenile probation services monitored 500 youth in 2009.
<u>Libraries</u>	Libraries provide books, media, and cultural and educational programs to the community. Multnomah County's libraries have the highest circulation per person in the country.
<u>Mental Health Services</u>	Mental Health Services serves residents with mental illnesses and addictions. Services include counseling, school- and community-based services, medication, and residential treatment. Mental Health provided mental health insurance to over 74,000 county residents in 2009 through Verity/OHP.
<u>Parole and Probation Services</u>	Parole and Probation services supervises adult offenders after sentencing to probation or release from jail on parole. Parole and Probation supervised approximately 8,600 probationers and post-prison offenders in 2009.
<u>Property Assessment and Taxation</u>	Property Assessment and Taxation assesses and collects property taxes for local governments within Multnomah County. In 2009 the Tax Collector collected and distributed \$1.2 billion in property taxes for Multnomah County and other local governments.
<u>Roads and Bridges</u>	Roads and Bridges is responsible for building and maintaining 6 major Willamette River bridges as well as 580 miles of roads that are located primarily in unincorporated Multnomah County.
<u>Sheriff's Office Patrol</u>	Multnomah County sheriffs patrol unincorporated areas of Multnomah County, some East County cities, and the Willamette and Columbia rivers. Patrol deputies made approximately 3,000 arrests in 2009.
<u>SUN Schools and Early Childhood Services</u>	SUN Schools provides extra-curricular and enrichment activities at 58 local elementary, middle and high schools. Early childhood provides health, nutrition services and parent education in homes and schools.

# Budget Survey

Instructions:

- Rank the top six services you value most, in order from 1 to 6. A higher number means you place a higher value on that service.
- You will not get to rank all services.
- After ranking the services, describe why they are important to you in the text box at the end of the survey.

**\*1. Rank the top six services you value most, in order from 1 to 6. A higher number means you place a higher value on that service. You can review the service descriptions at: <http://web.multco.us/oci/service-descriptions>.**

	6	5	4	3	2	1
Aging and Senior Services	<input type="radio"/>					
Animal Services	<input type="radio"/>					
Community Health Services	<input type="radio"/>					
County Jails	<input type="radio"/>					
Developmental Disabilities Services	<input type="radio"/>					
District Attorney - Public Prosecutor	<input type="radio"/>					
Domestic Violence Services	<input type="radio"/>					
Elections	<input type="radio"/>					
Health Clinics	<input type="radio"/>					
Homeless Services	<input type="radio"/>					
Juvenile and Gang Services	<input type="radio"/>					
Mental Health Services	<input type="radio"/>					
Libraries	<input type="radio"/>					
Parole and Probation Services	<input type="radio"/>					
Property Assessment and Taxation	<input type="radio"/>					
Roads and Bridges	<input type="radio"/>					
Sheriff's Office Patrol	<input type="radio"/>					
SUN Schools and Early Childhood Services	<input type="radio"/>					

## Budget Survey

**\*2. Please describe what features of the programs you selected are important to you.**

