# Analysis: 2012 Multnomah County Office of Citizen Involvement Online Budget Survey

**Background:** The Multnomah County Citizen Involvement Committee (CIC) believes it is critical to maximize the amount of opportunities that county residents have to understand and provide input into the 2012-13 budget-making process. Similar to last year, this is particularly important given the region's continuing economic downturn and ongoing reductions in funding for Multnomah County programs and services. Given the success of its 2011 online budget survey and the important insights it provided, the CIC chose to reopen the survey using the same two questions. The questions seek to obtain input from attendees about how county programs and services should be prioritized for funding.

**Survey Design and Response:** As previously noted, the online survey consisted of two questions (see page 12) similar to those asked in the 2011 survey. 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 10—11), 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 have also been 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 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.

Between February 27, and April 30, 2012, the survey was posted online and paper copies were also made available. In a continuing effort to broaden the number of Multnomah County residents who could participate, the survey was also offered in Spanish both online and using paper copies. To maximize participation, the availability of the survey was well-publicized using a number of formats. Publicity about the survey ranged from postings on the websites and social media accounts of the Office of Citizen Involvement and County Commissioners, to an article that appeared in The Oregonian. Ultimately, 540 surveys were submitted by the public. Thirty-nine of the surveys were submitted in Spanish.

**Question 1 Results and Summary:**  The results of this question 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 approaches show different orderings of services. The first two show distinct gradations from most to least broadly supported, with a definite break between the top ten services and the others. Seven of these services are health and human services in nature, with the others including the Libraries, Roads and Bridges, and Juvenile and Gang Services. These results are slightly different than the 2011 survey, in which the significant distinction appeared between the top seven services and the others. Of the top 10 services in 2012, seven were, by and large, health and human services in nature. Interestingly, the top seven services in both years are the same although the ordering is slightly different.

The first approach gives us a view of the <u>breadth of support</u> 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, Libraries, Community Health Services, Health Clinics, Aging and Disability Services, Homeless Services, SUN Schools and Early Childhood Services, Domestic Violence Services, Roads and Bridges, and Juvenile and Gang Services (see pages 3—4). While the last three services also occupied eighth through tenth in last year's survey, they were ranked in the top six more often this year. From last year, Libraries moved up significantly in priority, while Community Health Services and Aging and Disability Services dropped.

The second approach provides a view of the <u>depth of support</u> using total point values assigned to service categories. The top service categories were, in order: Mental Health Services, Libraries, Community Health Services, Health Clinics, SUN Schools and Early Childhood Services, Homeless Services, Aging and Disability Services, Roads and Bridges, Domestic Violence, and Juvenile and Gang Services (see page 5). Although the ordering changes between the two views, the membership of the top ten services is unchanged. In comparison with the first view, SUN Schools and Early Childhood Services and Roads and Bridges rise in value under this ordering while Aging and Disability Services and Domestic Violence Services drop. Compared to last year's ordering for depth of support, every service category changed with the Libraries rising most significantly and Community Health and Aging and Senior Services dropping most significantly.

The third approach focuses on determining the average value that respondents assigned particular service categories when ranking them. This can be interpreted as an indicator of the <u>strength of support</u> 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. Two services that did not fall into the top ten, Sheriff's Office and County Jails, demonstrated some of the strongest feelings of support among their proponents. The Library had the most ardent proponents. As compared to last year, the strength of support rose significantly for Roads and Bridges and Domestic Violence Services and dropped most significantly for SUN Schools and Early Childhood Services, the District Attorney, and Aging and Disability Services. Interestingly, on a scale of points from six to one, this year's survey respondents ranked all the services within one point of each other, unlike last year where a significant outlier appeared. This is a positive development as it suggests that the overall amount of stakeholders of specific county services decreased this year.

## 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 Disability Services | **19.0% (48)** | 14.7% (37) | 15.5% (39) | 15.9% (40) | 18.7% (47) | 16.3% (41) | 252 |
| Animal Services | 10.5% (12) | 10.5% (12) | 14.9% (17) | 19.3% (22) | 19.3% (22) | **25.4% (29)** | 114 |
| Community Health Services | **21.6% (61)** | 18.8% (53) | 14.5% (41) | 14.9% (42) | 17.0% (48) | 13.1% (37) | 282 |
| County Jails | 16.9% (12) | 9.9% (7) | **22.5% (16)** | 18.3% (13) | 11.3% (8) | 21.1% (15) | 71 |
| Developmental Disabilities Services | 8.1% (8) | 17.2% (17) | 11.1% (11) | 16.2% (16) | **28.3% (28)** | 19.2% (19) | 99 |
| District Attorney - Public Prosecutor | 10.2% (6) | 15.3% (9) | 18.6% (11) | 16.9% (10) | 18.6% (11) | **20.3% (12)** | 59 |
| Domestic Violence Services | 17.2% (35) | 12.7% (26) | 7.8% (16) | 18.6% (38) | **27.0% (55)** | 16.7% (34) | 204 |
| Elections | 14.3% (7) | 8.2% (4) | 12.2% (6) | 16.3% (8) | 14.3% (7) | **34.7% (17)** | 49 |
| Health Clinics | 16.9% (44) | 17.3% (45) | **22.7% (59)** | 20.0% (52) | 11.5% (30) | 11.5% (30) | 260 |
| Homeless Services | 10.6% (26) | **19.9% (49)** | 17.1% (42) | 17.5% (43) | 18.3% (45) | 16.7% (41) | 246 |
| Juvenile and Gang Services | 7.7% (14) | **20.8% (38)** | 16.4% (30) | **20.8% (38)** | 19.1% (35) | 15.3% (28) | 183 |
| Mental Health Services | 18.4% (57) | 17.2% (53) | **19.4% (60)** | 18.8% (58) | 12.9% (40) | 13.3% (41) | 309 |
| Libraries | 20.4% (58) | **20.8% (59)** | **20.8% (59)** | 10.2% (29) | 12.3% (35) | 15.5% (44) | 284 |
| Parole and Probation Services | 9.4% (5) | 9.4% (5) | 15.1% (8) | 18.9% (10) | 17.0% (9) | **30.2% (16)** | 53 |
| Property Assessment and Taxation | 5.4% (2) | 18.9% (7) | 18.9% (7) | 13.5% (5) | **29.7% (11)** | 13.5% (5) | 37 |
| Roads and Bridges | **23.3% (45)** | 15.5% (30) | 15.0% (29) | 15.0% (29) | 15.0% (29) | 16.1% (31) | 193 |
| Sheriff's Office Patrol | 16.9% (14) | **18.1% (15)** | 15.7% (13) | 16.9% (14) | 15.7% (13) | 16.9% (14) | 83 |
| SUN Schools and Early Childhood Services | **20.4% (49)** | 15.4% (37) | 16.3% (39) | 15.0% (36) | 12.5% (30) | **20.4% (49)** | 240 |
| | | | | | | answered question | 503 |

## 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.
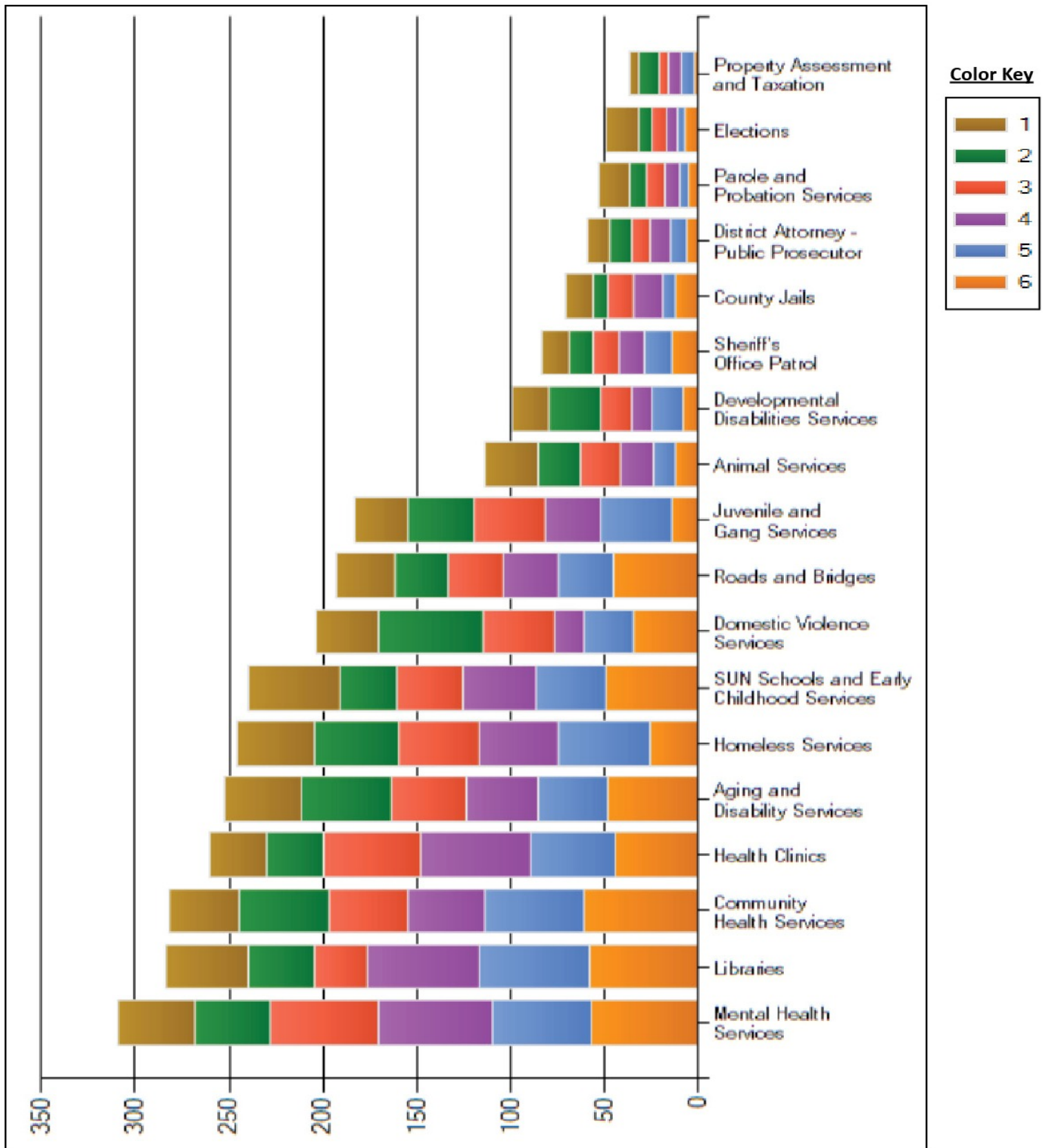


**Color Key**
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6

Services (top to bottom):
- Property Assessment and Taxation
- Elections
- Parole and Probation Services
- District Attorney – Public Prosecutor
- County Jails
- Sheriff's Office Patrol
- Developmental Disabilities Services
- Animal Services
- Juvenile and Gang Services
- Roads and Bridges
- Domestic Violence Services
- SUN Schools and Early Childhood Services
- Homeless Services
- Aging and Disability Services
- Health Clinics
- Community Health Services
- Libraries
- Mental Health Services

# 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.
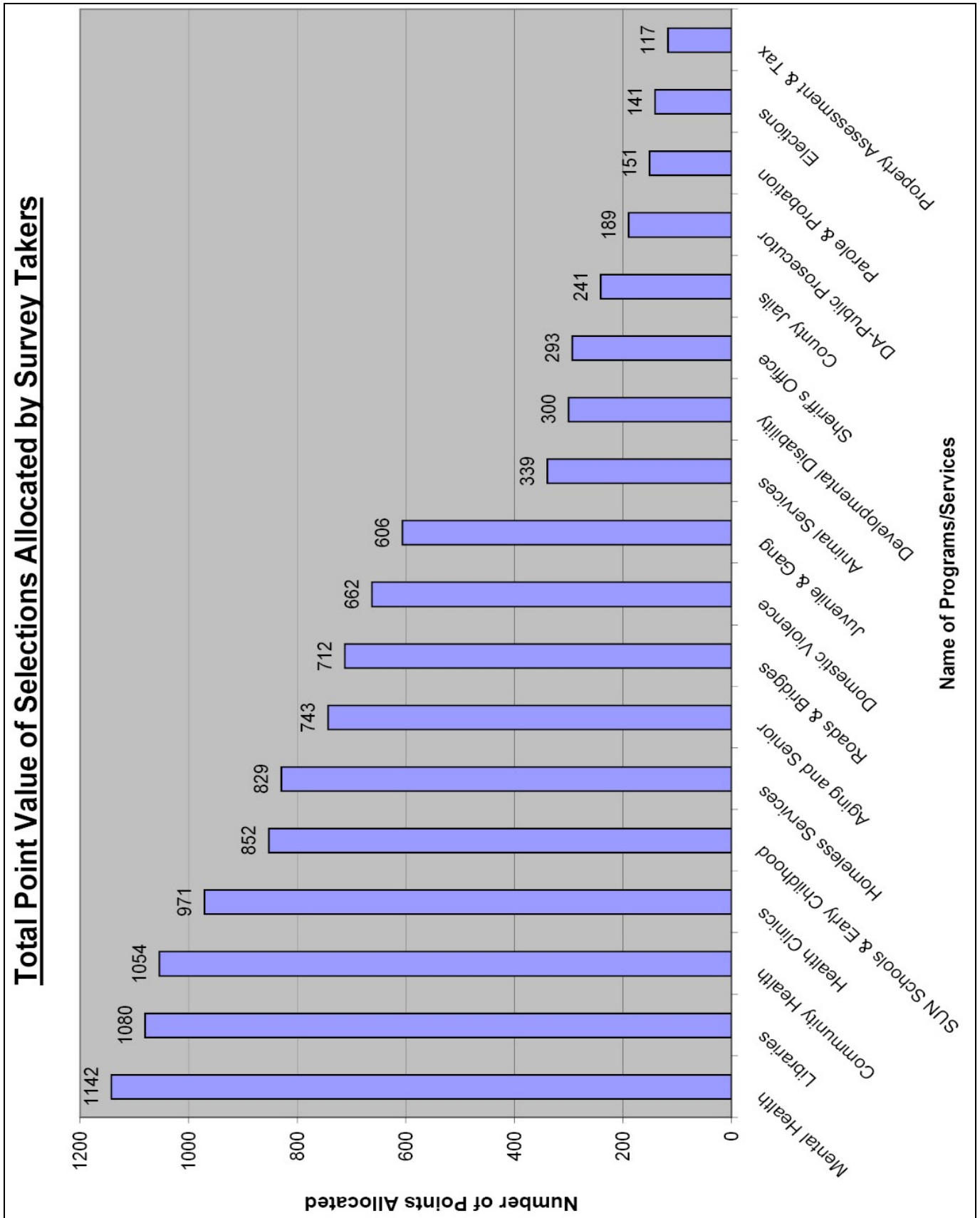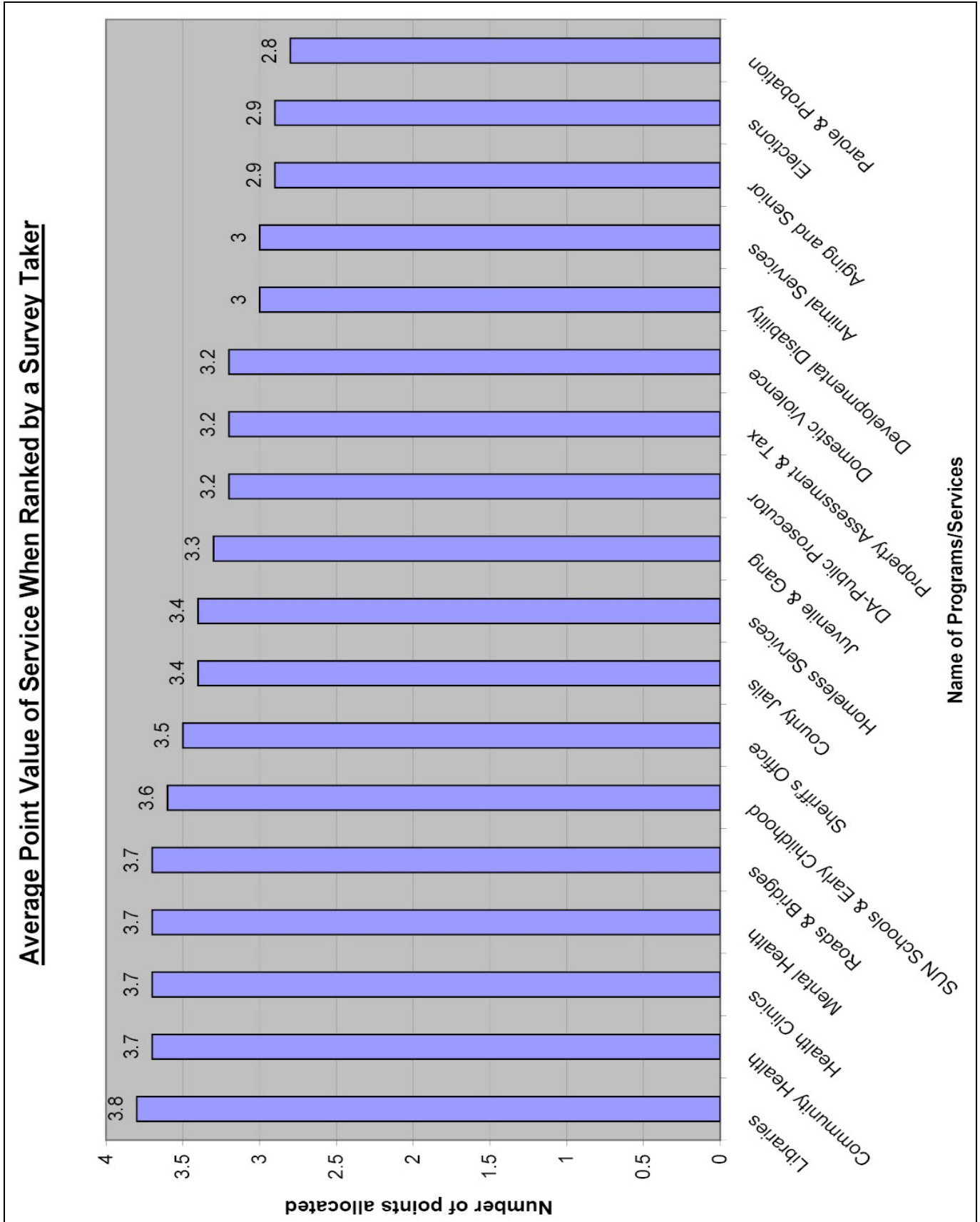


**Total Point Value of Selections Allocated by Survey Takers**

Number of Points Allocated

Name of Programs/Services

| Name of Programs/Services | Points |
|---|---|
| Mental Health | 1142 |
| Libraries | 1080 |
| Community Health | 1054 |
| Health Clinics | 971 |
| SUN Schools & Early Childhood | 852 |
| Homeless Services | 829 |
| Aging and Senior | 743 |
| Roads & Bridges | 712 |
| Domestic Violence | 662 |
| Juvenile & Gang | 606 |
| Animal Services | 339 |
| Developmental Disability | 300 |
| Sheriff's Office | 293 |
| County Jails | 241 |
| DA-Public Prosecutor | 189 |
| Parole & Probation | 151 |
| Elections | 141 |
| Property Assessment & Tax | 117 |

# 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.

**Average Point Value of Service When Ranked by a Survey Taker**

| Name of Programs/Services | Number of points allocated |
|---|---|
| Libraries | 3.8 |
| Community Health | 3.7 |
| Health Clinics | 3.7 |
| Mental Health | 3.7 |
| Roads & Bridges | 3.7 |
| SUN Schools & Early Childhood | 3.6 |
| Sheriff's Office | 3.5 |
| County Jails | 3.4 |
| Homeless Services | 3.4 |
| Juvenile & Gang | 3.3 |
| DA-Public Prosecutor | 3.2 |
| Property Assessment & Tax | 3.2 |
| Domestic Violence | 3.2 |
| Developmental Disability | 3 |
| Animal Services | 3 |
| Aging and Senior | 2.9 |
| Elections | 2.9 |
| Parole & Probation | 2.8 |

**Question 2 Results and Summary:** Respondents submitted 1415 comments concerning the features they valued most about the county programs and services 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 90 different categories—yet over 60% of the comments fell into ten categories.

These ten 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 ten categories fall under the general heading of health and human services. Additionally, three categories cover issues related to county literacy/access to information, infrastructure and public safety. Nine of the ten categories also were listed last year. It appears that concern about issues related to public infrastructure and county literacy/access to information grew significantly this year.

Over 16% of the responses fell into the top two categories:

1. **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 and inspires children, particularly those who don't have resources and are seeking work during economic downturns.

2. **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.

Nearly 20% of the responses fell into the next three categories:

3. **People with mental health problems need psychiatric care and attention.** Example comments included: rapidly growing segment of the population (e.g., veterans returning from war); 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.

4. **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 the community waits to do it; the big earthquake will come eventually; East County infrastructure particularly needs attention.

5. **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; efforts can leverage other resources from outside the county.

Over 24% of the responses fell into the next five categories:

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; the larger community is healthier by limiting the impacts of problems at-risk populations face.

7. **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.

8. **Promoting community health and safety net programs generally is essential to create stability and well-being both for individuals and the county as a whole.** Example comments included: constitutes the foundation on which other societal elements grow; reduces problems like epidemics; reflects morality; helps to maximize the amount of county residents who pay taxes.

9. **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.

10. **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; increases county safety and quality of life by reducing panhandling and criminal activity; youth who are homeless are much less likely to succeed in future; reflects sensitive society.

Similar to last year, the 1400-plus comments *in toto* emphasize social justice and a sense that the county should address issues using preventive measures and early intervention in service areas as much as possible.

**Additional Opportunities for the Public to Provide Input Prior to Approval of the 2012-13 Budget:**
The Multnomah County budget is likely to be approved by the Board of County Commissioners on May 31, 2012. Public budget hearings are being held on May 9th, May 16th, and May 23rd at different locations throughout the county. At the hearings, the County Commissioners will take public comments and testimony (up to 3-minutes) concerning the county's proposed budget. You can learn more about the public budget hearings as well the budget proposed by Chair Jeff Cogen at: https://web.multco.us/news/chair-cogen-unveils-proposed-2012-13-county-budget.

Time to make public comments is also available during the next four board meetings. The meetings will take place in the mornings on May 10th, May 17th, May 24th, and May 31st, in the Multnomah Building Boardroom located at 501 SE Hawthorne Boulevard in Portland. Additionally, individuals 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.**

# Your County, Your Services

## Service Descriptions

**Aging and Disability 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 screen arrestees, houses inmates before trial, and have custody of inmates after they are sentenced 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 Disability Services serve 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 pursued 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. In 2009 over 5,000 victims were assisted with domestic violence services.

**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.

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## Service Descriptions, Continued

**Homeless Services**

These services to the homeless and those at risk of losing their housing include rent assistance, emergency shelter, temporary housing and assistance accessing public benefits. Over 80% of people who were formerly homeless retain housing 12 months after exiting the program.

**Juvenile and Gang Services**

These services include parole and probation 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.

**Libraries**

Libraries provide books, media, and cultural and educational programs to the community. Multnomah County's libraries have the highest circulation rates per person in the country.

**Mental Health Services**

Mental Health Services serves residents with mental illnesses and addictions. Services include counseling, school- and community-based services, medication, and residential treatment. In 2009 over 74,000 residents were provided with mental health insurance through Verity/OHP.

**Parole and Probation Services**

Parole and Probation Services supervises adult offenders after sentencing to probation or release from jail on parole. Approximately 8,600 probationers and post-prison offenders were supervised in 2009.

**Property Assessment and Taxation**

Property Assessment and Taxation covers assessment and collection of 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.

**Roads and Bridges**

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.

**Sheriff's Office Patrol**

The Sheriff's Office patrols unincorporated areas of Multnomah County, some east county cities, and the Willamette and Columbia rivers. Patrol deputies made approximately 3,000 arrests in 2009.

**SUN Schools and Early Childhood Services**

SUN Schools provides extra-curricular and enrichment activities at 58 local elementary, middle and high schools. Early Childhood Services provide health, nutrition services and parent education in homes and schools.

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# 2012 Budget Survey

**\*1. Rank the top six services you value most, in order from 6 to 1. A higher number means you place a higher value on that service. To see a description of the programs that each service covers, copy the following address into your browser: http://bit.ly/ySuTtY**

| | 6 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Aging and Disability Services | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |
| Animal Services | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |
| Community Health Services | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |
| County Jails | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |
| Developmental Disabilities Services | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |
| District Attorney - Public Prosecutor | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |
| Domestic Violence Services | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |
| Elections | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |
| Health Clinics | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |
| Homeless Services | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |
| Juvenile and Gang Services | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |
| Mental Health Services | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |
| Libraries | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |
| Parole and Probation Services | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |
| Property Assessment and Taxation | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |
| Roads and Bridges | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |
| Sheriff's Office Patrol | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |
| SUN Schools and Early Childhood Services | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |

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