Multnomah County OREGON 2011

FY 2011 ANNUAL BUDGET SURVEY

opportunities
measurable outcomes
vibrant communities
protecting citizens
community vision
efficiency safety community vision
prevention
quality of life education
sustainability
community engagement
community vision
opportunities effectiveness
sustainability
eco friendly education
measurable outcomes
community engagement
thriving economy
effectiveness
community vision efficiency
protecting citizens eco friendly
accountability

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Department of County Management

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TO:	Multnomah County Employees
FROM:	Karyne Kieta, Budget Director
DATE:	October 28, 2010
RE:	FY 2011 Budget Process Survey Report

Every year, the Budget Office surveys participants in the budget process to see how satisfied they were with the previous year and to get recommendations for improving the process. This year's budget process was completed on June 10, 2010 when the County Board of Commissioners adopted the FY 2011 Budget. The annual budget survey was launched on August 4, 2010.

The County's budget process is based on a layered approach. The initial budget work begins within the individual departments who have their own timelines and processes. Mid-February the departments submit their budgets and we begin the Countywide budget process which again has its own timelines and processes. One adjustment we would like to make for next years survey is to try and parse out survey responses to see if we can differentiate responses based on a department's internal budget process and the central budget process. Currently, there is no way for us to know if people are responding based on their department or central experience. We have found when we visit departments there is a lot of confusion between the two processes and people just equate their immediate budget experience with the central process. This information will help us to better target process improvements.

We would like to thank the Quality Systems and Evaluation Services unit in the Department of Community Justice for administering and analyzing the results of this survey. In FY 2010 the Budget Office took significant cuts (like the rest of the county) resulting in the loss of our Evaluation Unit. DCJ's Quality Systems and Evaluation Services unit has been a great partner, ensuring that we get the best data available to improve the process.

Survey Highlights

Satisfaction
• In general, satisfaction improved in most areas compared to last year, although specific areas are addressed. Overall, half of respondents found this year's process to be no different from last year's. Of the remaining, 35% found the process to be better and 11.4% found the process to be worse. As stated in previous years, this bell curve tells us that any budget process we adopt will

have parts that some find better and some find worse—because County departments are different, so too are their preferences for budget processes.

Training
- We lost ground in training and preparation with lower levels of satisfaction specifically in the area of the webtool in comparison to FY 2010. In FY 2011, the Budget Office held 5 webtool trainings between mid-December and mid-January. We plan to create a better communication plan and talk to Department Business Managers to better address the needs of the organization.

Budget Data System
- Satisfaction in responses to questions about the Budget Data Management System have been declining over the past few years, and several respondents mentioned in comments that there needs to be significant work done in this area to increase the functionality of the existing tools or to purchase a new Countywide budgeting tool. There is a proliferation of shadow systems due to a lack of a countywide budget system. The Budget Office continues to work with departments and IT to develop a solution which balances technical budgeting needs with efficient cost-containment. We hope a system will be in place for the FY 2013 budget. It should be noted that there was a high level of satisfaction with using the internet as a convenient way to get documents and review program offers.

Next Steps
All of the comments we received were helpful and will be taken into consideration as the Budget Office prepares the FY 2012 budget process. There are some process improvements that we can implement, some medium-range improvements that will take more time and resources, and some long-range solutions that will help us as we develop long term financial plans.

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Introduction

Every year, the Budget Office surveys participants in the budget process to see how satisfied they were with the previous year and to elicit recommendations for how to improve the process. This year's budget process was completed on June 10, 2010. The annual budget survey was launched on August 4, 2010.

This year, the data analysis and reporting was done by the Department of Community Justice's Quality Systems and Evaluation Services Unit.

It is important to note that this survey does not differentiate between a department's internal budget process and the central budget process. It is impossible to know if people are responding based on their experience with their department's process or if they are commenting on the larger central budget process. The Central Budget Office has found that there is confusion between the two processes and people typically equate their immediate budget experience with the central process.

The FY 2011 Budget Process

The FY 2011 budget was marked by some interesting events. In late March, County Chair Ted Wheeler was appointed by the Governor to the Office of the State Treasurer. On April 1, 2010, then Commissioner Jeff Cogen was appointed by unanimous vote to serve as County Chair. During this time, Multnomah County, along with the rest of the nation was in an economic recession.

In addition, the Budget Office made significant reductions in the previous fiscal year. The reductions included the loss of the Evaluation Unit which had in years past conducted the budget survey. In FY 2011, the Budget Office partnered with the Department of Community Justice's (DCJ) Quality Systems and Evaluation Services unit to continue the survey. Because the survey was new to DCJ, it was decided to continue with the existing survey and not change any of the survey questions or methodology.

Executive Summary

- There were ninety-seven responses representing a 55% response rate. Last year more people were surveyed (179 compared to 177 this year) but fewer people responded (74) for a response rate of 41%.

- In general, the overall satisfaction rating improved compared to last year (6.92 for FY 2011 vs. 6.70 for FY 2010). Over half of the respondents found there to be no difference in the budgeting process as compared to last year. Thirty-five percent found the process better and 11.4% found the process to be worse.

- Health and Human Services respondents had the highest level of satisfaction of the functional areas.

- Internal Service Rates (ISRs) continue to show a great deal of dissatisfaction despite their rating as very important to the process.

- Respondents had higher levels of confidence in their department/ agency's grant and revenue projections than last year and higher levels of trust in the accuracy of the financial information in their department/agency's program offers than last year.

- Respondents responded much more favorably than last year to the statement: "Overall the budget process was transparent" (mean 3.01 for FY 2011 vs. mean 2.58 for FY 2010).

- There was a large gap between satisfaction and importance for the budget leaving the county in a solid financial position for next year and for clear policy direction. These two areas also had overall low satisfaction.

- Customer satisfaction was down slightly compared to last year.

- There were several comments regarding improving the budget process. Several respondents wished they had access to information earlier in the budget process. Other respondents suggested improving the webtool.

- Respondents commented on a lack of direction and focus from the Chair and the Board during the budget process.

Methodology

The annual budget process survey was launched on August 4, 2010 and was open for two and a half weeks, closing on August 20. There were 97 responses, representing a response rate of 55% for the 177 people surveyed. Last year more people were surveyed (179) but fewer people responded (74) for a response rate of 41%[1]. In the survey, the higher the number the greater the satisfaction with the various components.

The first set of questions asked respondents to rate their level of agreement (from 1 to 4) with several Training and Preparation issues, including manuals received, timelines distributed and training provided.

The second set of questions asked respondents to rate their level of agreement (from 1 to 4) with several Process issues, including whether the respondent trusts the accuracy of their department's submissions and whether an external technology system was used. Respondents were also asked what most important change would improve the budget process and what thing they most appreciated about the budget process.

The third set of questions asked respondents to rate their level of agreement (from 1 to 4) with factors about the Adopted Budget, including whether citizens were meaningfully involved, whether the County's priorities were reflected and if the process was transparent.

The fourth set of questions asked respondents to rate their level of Importance (from 1 to 4) of each of the issues identified in the prior sections.

The fifth set of questions asked respondents to rate their level of satisfaction (from 1 to 3) on the amount of Effort extended to and the amount of effort received from the Central Budget Office in various areas, including cooperation, timeliness, and communication.

The last set of questions asked respondents to rate their Overall Satisfaction with the budget process, to compare this year's process with prior years overall and to explain why this year's process was better or worse. Respondents were also asked what functional area of government they represented (Health and Human Services, Public Safety, General Government or other) and what role they played in the process (for instance, Board Member or Finance Manager).

This report analyzes the data from this survey, including a summary of the comments received, and the Appendix lists each question along with the number of respondents, average response, and standard deviation which measures how similar responses were to each other.
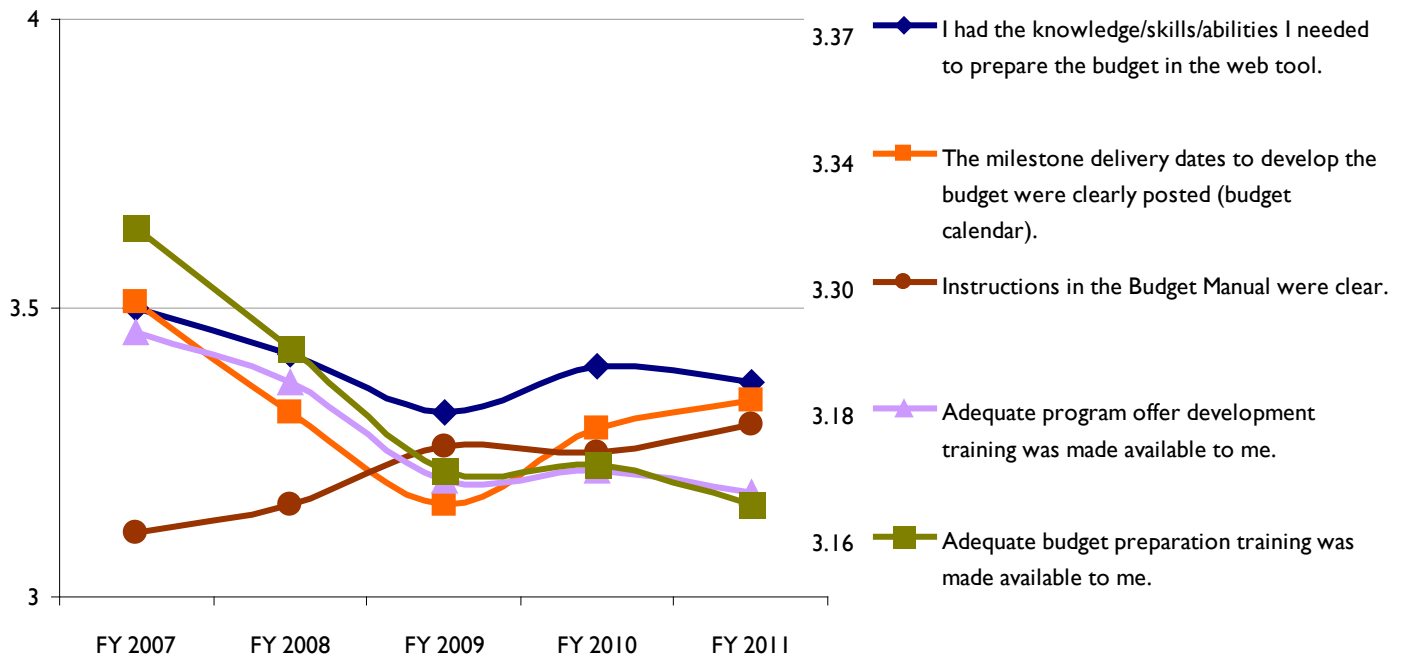
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1 Of the 97 respondents, 9 were from the Central Budget Office (1 response per department). Their responses were removed the Overall Satisfaction section.

Training and Preparation

Respondents had lower levels of satisfaction in regards to having the knowledge, skills and abilities necessary to prepare the budget in the webtool as compared to last year, but satisfaction levels were higher concerning the clear posting of milestone delivery dates. Respondents gave higher ratings to the clarity of the instructions in the Budget Manual but were less satisfied with the adequate budget and program offer development training made available to them as compared to FY 2010.

Respondents were asked, "If you ranked any of the previous training components as disagree or strongly disagree please explain why." Almost half of the 20 responses concerned Internal Service Rates (ISRs). One respondent said, "Some ISRs were incorrect, did not have enough detail, or were based on old information instead of current." Another respondent commented, "ISRs: I have never known how those are calculated or if they are correct for my area." Another response was, "The way we were supposed to handle the internal service reimbursements in the constraint calculation was not in the preparation manual, and I did not get any helpful information even when I asked." ISRs continue to be a source of disgruntlement.

In addition to dissatisfaction about ISRs, respondents commented on the quality of the program offers and budget training. One respondent said, "Program offer quality continues to deteriorate given that we are not using them as originally intended." Several respondents complained about training. One example is, "I was not given adequate training to prepare a budget in the webtool and to develop a solid program offer."

3.37	◆	I had the knowledge/skills/abilities I needed to prepare the budget in the web tool.
3.34	■	The milestone delivery dates to develop the budget were clearly posted (budget calendar).
3.30	●	Instructions in the Budget Manual were clear.
3.18	▲	Adequate program offer development training was made available to me.
3.16	■	Adequate budget preparation training was made available to me.

Budget Process

Respondents reported having higher levels of confidence in their department/agency's grant and revenue projections than last year. Along the same lines, respondents had higher levels of trust in the accuracy of the financial information in their department/agency's program offers than last year. Satisfaction ratings in these two areas have been improving for three years. Respondents were more satisfied this year with the program offer descriptions and the performance measures.

Respondents were more satisfied this year with the internet as a convenient way to review program offers. Satisfaction levels have been improving in this area for three years in a row.

Respondents were asked to briefly identify the most important change that would improve the budget process. Several respondents wished they had access to information earlier in the budget process or had more time:

- "Constraint detail early in the process."

- "Allowing more time for Internal Services to prepare their budgets."

- "Draft offers available earlier."

- "Receive internal service and indirect rates earlier in the process."

Other comments were:

- "I don't see accountability for performance measures. I would suggest either increasing accountability or removing them from the program offers."

- "The budget webtool is outdated, unreliable, and is a barrier to producing an accurate quality budget."

Respondents were also asked to briefly identify the thing they most appreciated about the budget process. The majority of the comments mentioned the Budget Office staff. One respondent said, "Budget Office staff are always pleasant and helpful." Another said, "The budget office has expert talent which gives me confidence in the budget process." Other aspects which were praised were the Budget Manual, having access to everything on the web and sticking to the timeline. One example is, "The process is quite transparent thanks mostly to the high quality of the Budget Preparation Manual." Another respondent said, "Almost (if not all) the budget documents that I needed were available on the Budget website."

Budget Process

The following graphs detail the responses regarding the budget process.

Technical Aspects of the Budget Process

Value	Legend
3.47	The internet was a convenient way to review the program offers.
3.19	I typically used the internet to locate most budget related documents.
3.00	Excluding the web tool and SAP, I used a shadow/supplemental budget system to build my budget.
3.00	Since the budget was adopted, I typically use the internet versus the printed adopted budget document to view program offers.

Department Aspects of Budget Process

Value	Legend
3.40	I have confidence in my department/agency's grant and revenue projections.
3.38	I trust the accuracy of the financial information contained in my dept./agency's program offers.
3.36	I had an opportunity to provide input during the program offer creation or revision
3.18	Program offers adequately described the essential services to be delivered.
3.08	My department/agency's program offers used quality performance measures.

Adopted Budget

Higher levels of satisfaction were reported in regards to the priorities of the County as an organization being clearly reflected in the adopted budget. This has been improving for three years but is still lower than FY 2008 levels. The level of satisfaction with the transparency of the budget process was at its highest point since FY 2008. Respondents had higher levels of agreement that the budget leaves the county in a solid financial position for next year and also had higher levels of agreement that the budget process supports collaboration and shared decision-making.
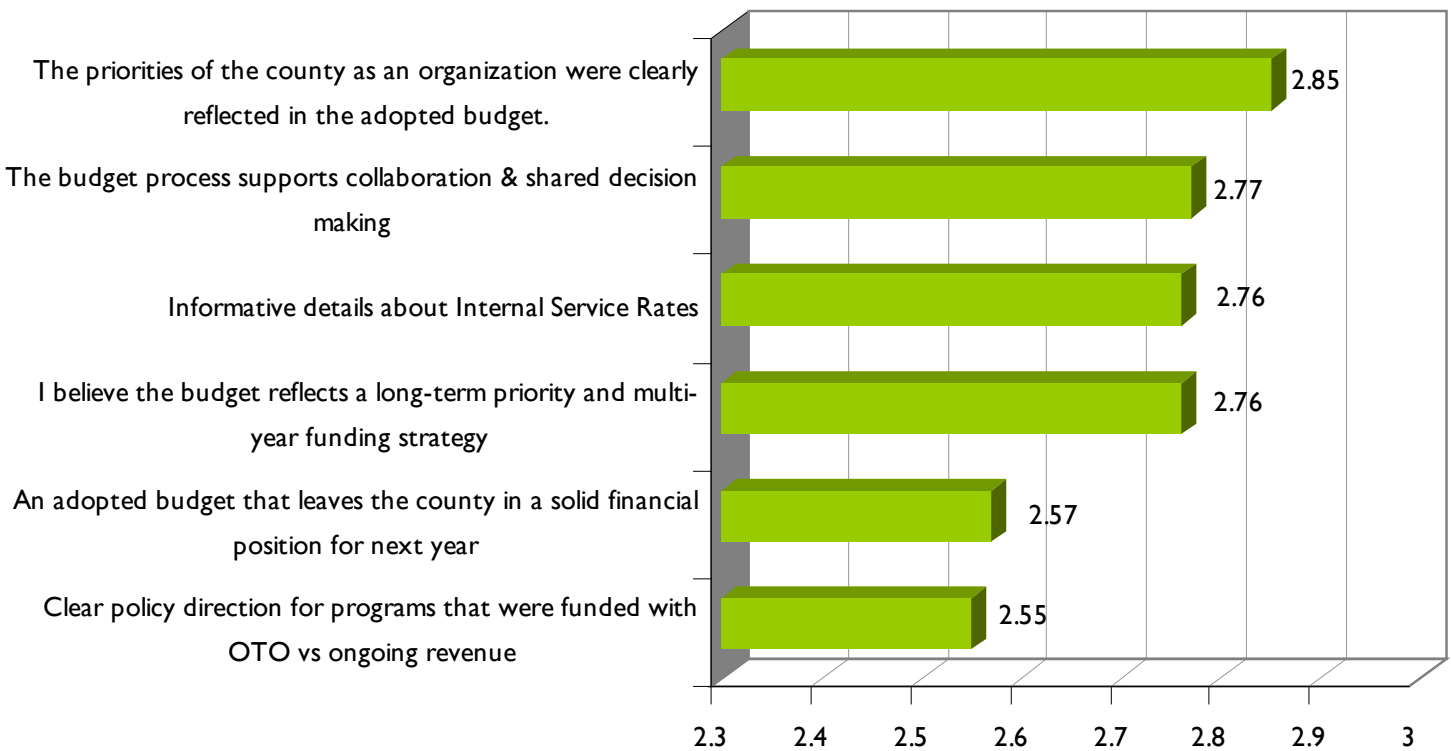

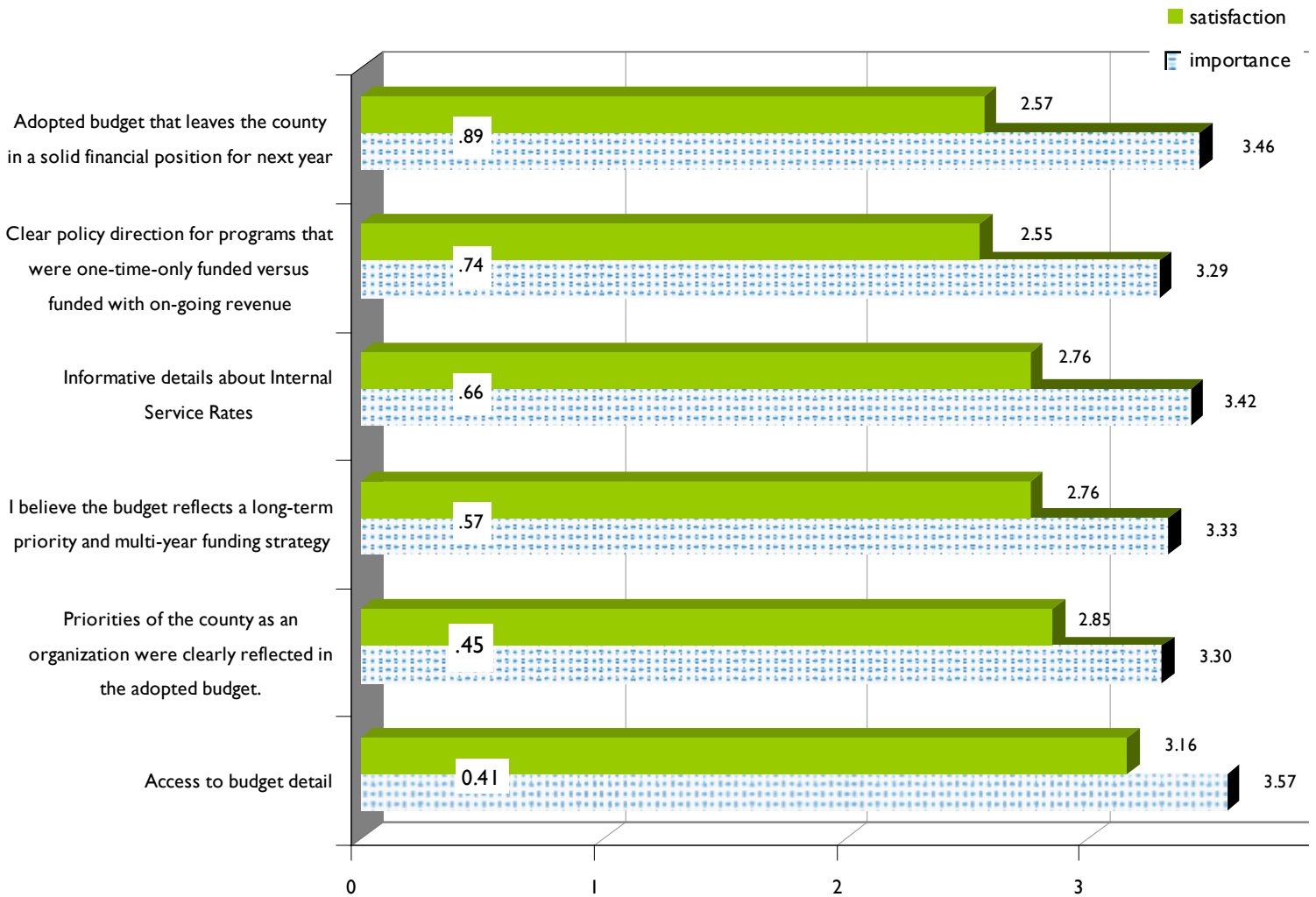|	
3.01	Overall, the budget process was transparent.
2.90	Citizens & other stakeholders were meaningfully involved in the development of the budget.
2.85	The priorities of the County as an organization were clearly reflected in the adopted budget.
2.77	The budget process supports collaboration & shared decision-making.
2.57	I believe the budget leaves the county in a solid financial position for next year.
2.55	There was clear policy direction for programs that were funded with one-time-only vs. ongoing revenue.

Importance and Satisfaction

Survey respondents were asked not only about their satisfaction with multiple aspects of the budget process but also about the importance of each of those aspects. Internal Service Rates (ISRs) continue to show a great deal of dissatisfaction despite their rating as very important to the process. This area, along with "budget leaves the county in a solid financial position" and "clear policy direction for programs that were one-time only," has one of the largest gaps between importance and satisfaction. Other areas with noticeable differences between importance and satisfaction are "priorities of county were clearly reflected in adopted budget," "budget reflects a long-term priority and multi-year funding strategy," and "access to budget detail."

The areas with the lowest satisfaction ratings are "clear policy direction for programs that were one-time-only funded versus funded with on-going revenue," "budget leaves the county in a solid financial position," and "budget reflects a long-term priority and multi-year funding strategy."

Category	Rating
The priorities of the county as an organization were clearly reflected in the adopted budget.	2.85
The budget process supports collaboration & shared decision making	2.77
Informative details about Internal Service Rates	2.76
I believe the budget reflects a long-term priority and multi-year funding strategy	2.76
An adopted budget that leaves the county in a solid financial position for next year	2.57
Clear policy direction for programs that were funded with OTO vs ongoing revenue	2.55

2.3 2.4 2.5 2.6 2.7 2.8 2.9 3

Importance and Satisfaction

The following graph depicts the relationship between the importance and satisfaction of various parts of the budget process.
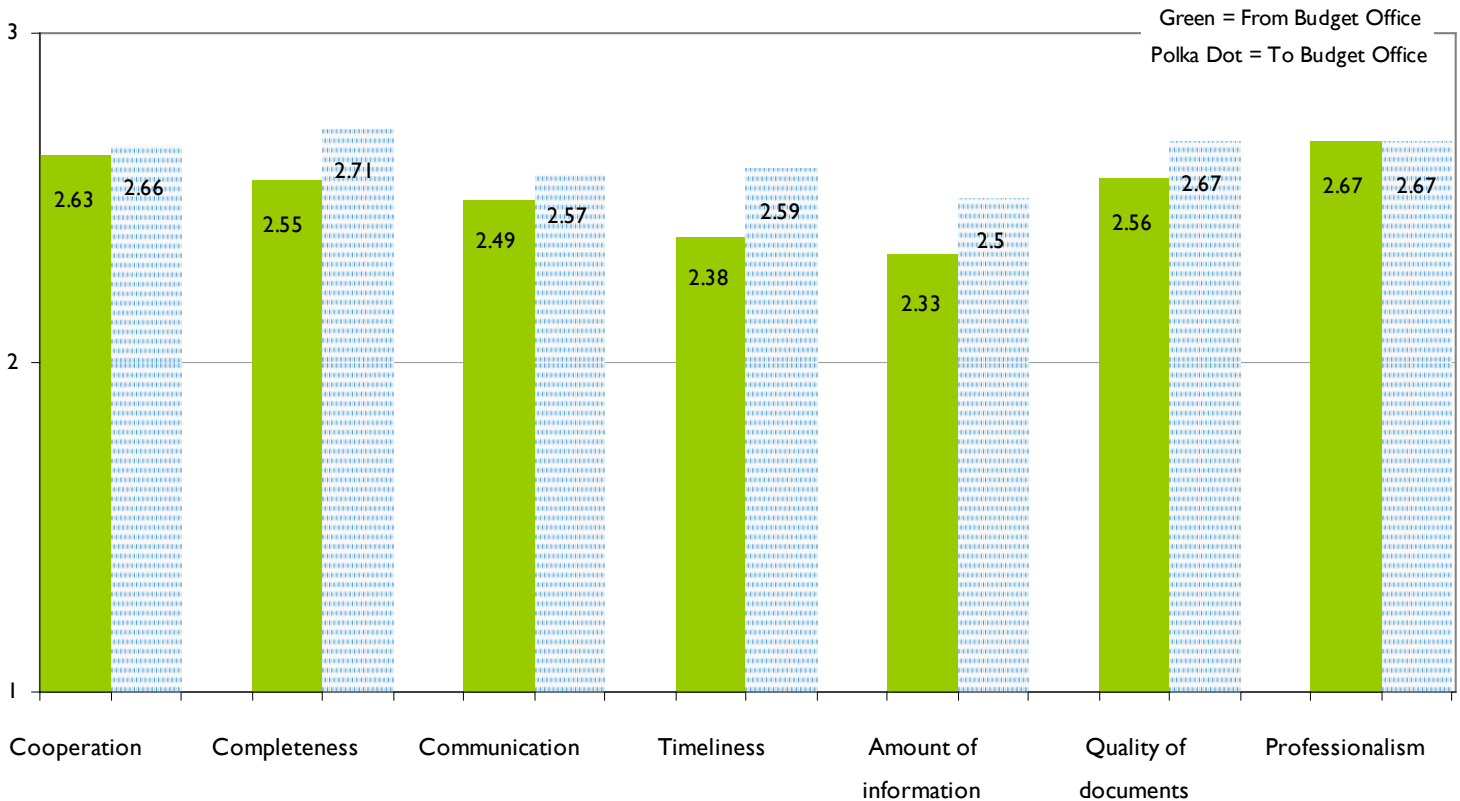

■ satisfaction

▣ importance

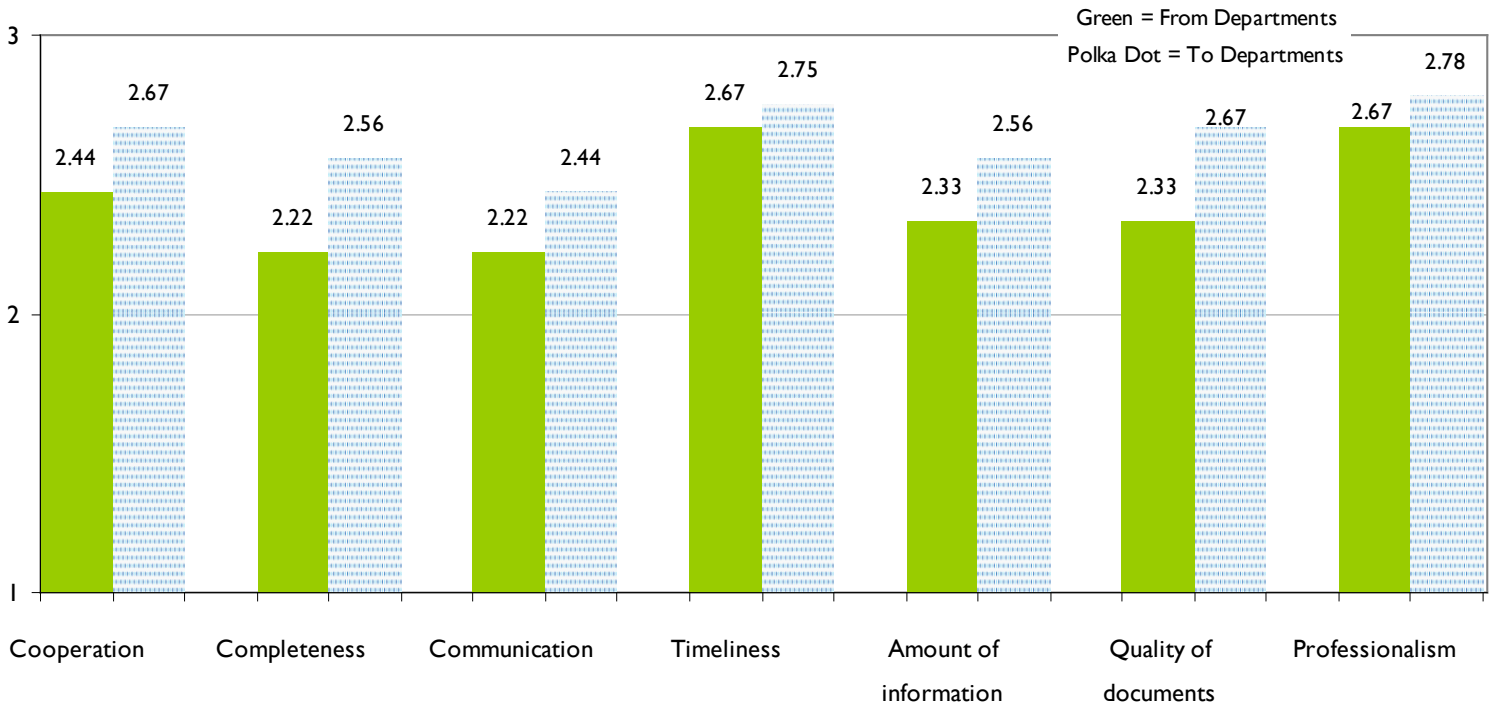|	satisfaction	importance
Adopted budget that leaves the county in a solid financial position for next year	2.57 (.89)	3.46
Clear policy direction for programs that were one-time-only funded versus funded with on-going revenue	2.55 (.74)	3.29
Informative details about Internal Service Rates	2.76 (.66)	3.42
I believe the budget reflects a long-term priority and multi-year funding strategy	2.76 (.57)	3.33
Priorities of the county as an organization were clearly reflected in the adopted budget.	2.85 (.45)	3.30
Access to budget detail	3.16 (0.41)	3.57

Gap shown in the white box

Efforts

The first chart in this section looks at the responses of survey respondents in regards to their level of satisfaction on the amount of effort extended to and the amount of effort received from the Central Budget Office in various areas. The second chart shows how the Central Budget Office (1 response per department) answered the questions. Central Budget Analysts answered once per department they supported during the process.

In the first chart, respondents were asked to rate their level of satisfaction in each area by selecting "needs improvement" (1), "satisfactory" (2), or "excellent" (3). Note in particular that respondents felt that their degree of timeliness to the Budget Office was greater than the Budget Office's degree of timeliness to the departments. Respondents also felt that they provided more information to the Budget Office than the Budget Office provided to them. In fact, respondents found their levels to be higher than the Budget Office's in all areas except for professionalism, which came out as neutral.

Green = From Budget Office

Polka Dot = To Budget Office

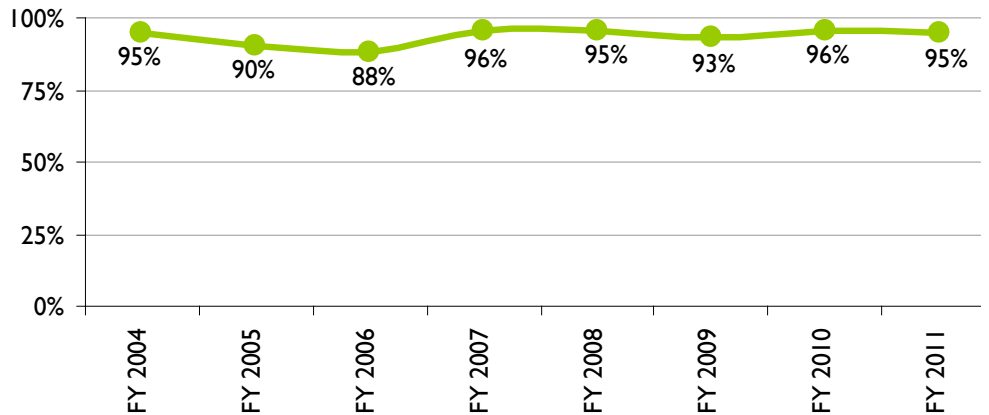| Area	From Budget Office	To Budget Office
Cooperation	2.63	2.66
Completeness	2.55	2.71
Communication	2.49	2.57
Timeliness	2.38	2.59
Amount of information	2.33	2.5
Quality of documents	2.56	2.67
Professionalism	2.67	2.67

Efforts

The Central Budget Analysts, while seen as implementing the budget process, are also participants. Their responses are seen below. Not surprisingly, they found their level of work to be higher than what they received from departments. The largest gaps were in completeness and quality of documents, with the Central Budget Analysts indicating the documents they sent to the departments were both more complete and of higher quality than what they received from the departments.

Green = From Departments
Polka Dot = To Departments

	Cooperation	Completeness	Communication	Timeliness	Amount of information	Quality of documents	Professionalism
From Departments	2.44	2.22	2.22	2.67	2.33	2.33	2.67
To Departments	2.67	2.56	2.44	2.75	2.56	2.67	2.78

Customer Satisfaction

Customer satisfaction was down slightly compared to last year.

FY 2004	FY 2005	FY 2006	FY 2007	FY 2008	FY 2009	FY 2010	FY 2011
95%	90%	88%	96%	95%	93%	96%	95%

Overall

The overall satisfaction rating improved compared to last year (6.92 for FY 2011 vs. 6.70 for FY 2010). Those identifying themselves as Budget/Finance Managers had higher satisfaction and those who are Board Members or Board Staff had lower satisfaction.
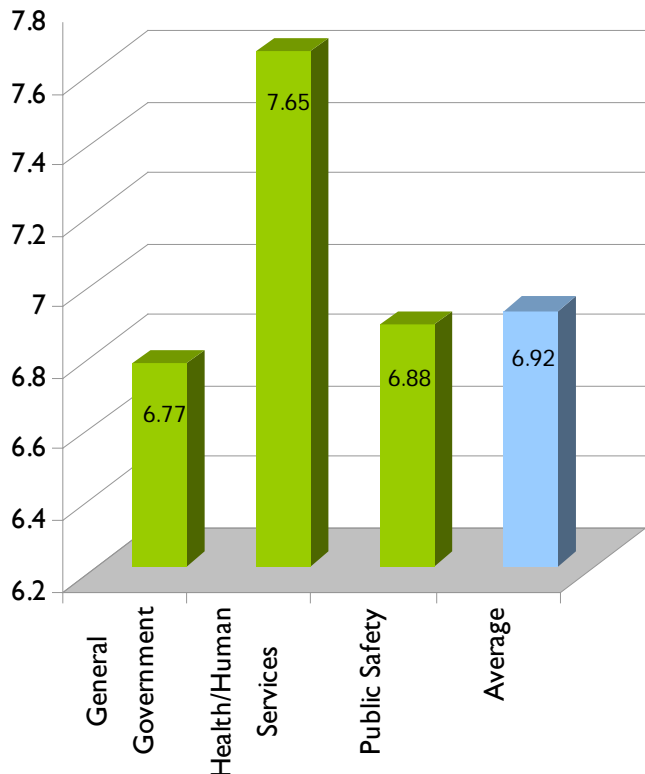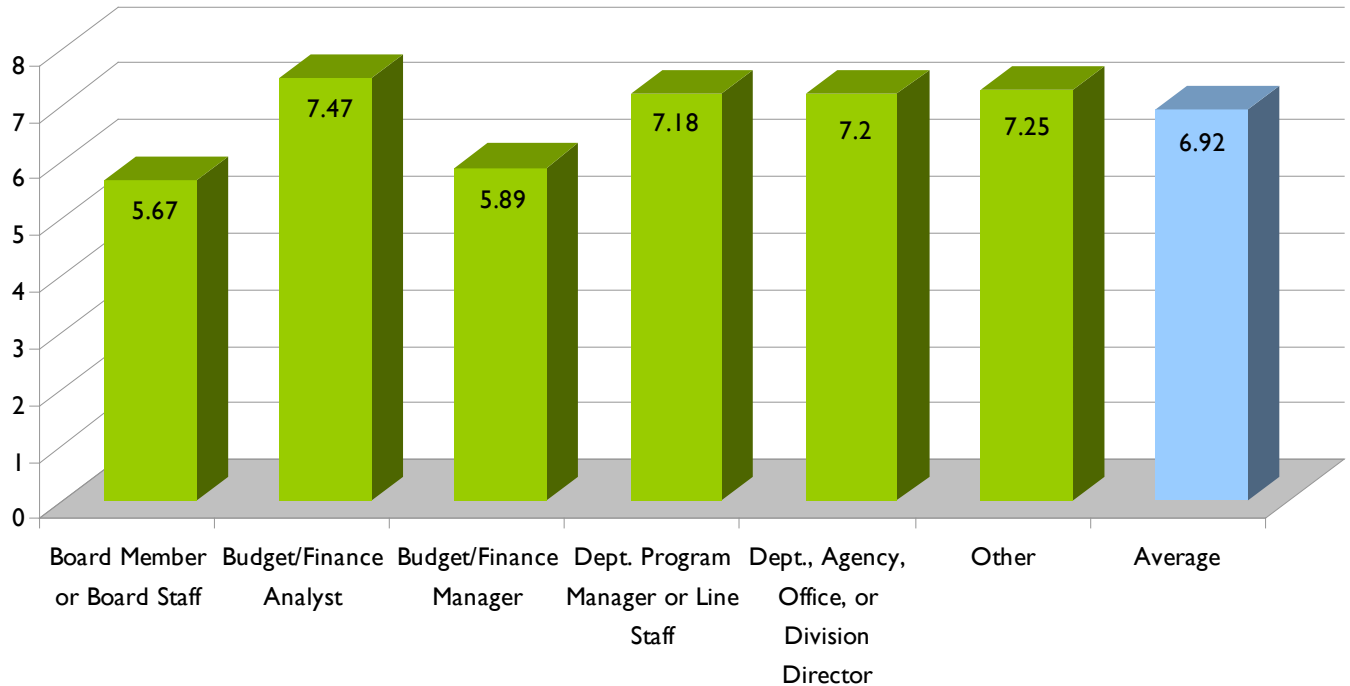
Those identifying themselves as employees in Health and Human Services (Department of County Human Services and Health) rated the budget process with greater satisfaction than Public Safety (Department of Community Justice, District Attorney's Office and Sheriff's Office) or General Government (Department of County Management, Department of Community Serives, Library and Nondepartmental).

Overall

Over half of the respondents found there to be no difference in the budgeting process as compared to last year. Thirty-five percent found the process better and 11.4% found the process to be worse.

One question asked respondents to explain why they rated this year's overall process as Better or Worse compared to last year's process. There were a variety of responses to this question. Several dealt with a lack of directions from the Chair's office.

One respondent said, "The unavoidable transition in the Chair's office was obviously disruptive in terms of timing and direction/policies." Another comment: "Total lack of any real direction from the Board of County Commissioners. Where is the priority based budgeting that governments must implement in order to not only survive but thrive both in good and bad economic times?"

Another respondent remarked on a lack of focus: "The county does not seem to have a consistent mission for us to follow. The focus seems to change from one week to the next. This makes it very difficult to line up our spending requests with county priorities when the priorities are unclear, change frequently, or just flat out are not communicated."

Other comments included:
- "It seemed that the milestones were better defined this year and the internal service rates were finalized and did not change."
- "It could only have gotten better after the large reductions and somewhat confused process of FY 2010."
- "More transparent, more information regarding budget parameters were provided."

Appendix

Question	N	Mean	Standard Deviation
The milestone delivery dates to develop the budget were clearly posted (budget calendar).	89	3.34	0.602
The instructions in the Budget Manual were clear.	85	3.3	0.602
Details about Internal Service Rates were informative	79	2.76	0.866
I was satisfied with the level of budget detail to which I had access	89	3.16	0.782
My department/agency's program offers were of high quality	90	3.39	0.649
Adequate budget preparation training was made available to me.	81	3.16	0.782
Adequate program offer development training was made available to me.	77	3.18	0.721
I had the knowledge/skills/abilities I needed to prepare the budget in the web tool.	83	3.37	0.693
In general, I understand the priority directions driving resource allocation decisions	90	2.96	0.718
I trust the accuracy of the financial information contained in my department/agency's program offers.	91	3.38	0.628
I have confidence in my department/agency's grant and revenue projections.	88	3.4	0.635
I believe the budget reflects a long-term priority and mult-year funding strategy	87	2.76	0.927
My department/agency's program offers used quality performance measures.	86	3.08	0.739
The budget process supports collaboration and shared decision-making	88	2.77	0.739
Excluding the web tool and SAP, I used a shadow/supplemental budget system to build my budget.	65	3	0.968
I had an opportunity to provide input during the program offer creation or revision	87	3.36	0.664
Overall, the budget process was transparent.	90	3.01	0.609
The internet was a convenient way to review the program offers.	89	3.47	0.586
I typically used the internet to locate most budget related documents.	87	3.19	0.775
The priorities of the County as an organization were clearly reflected in the adopted budget.	86	2.85	0.728
Citizens and other stakeholders were meaningfully involved in the development of the budget.	80	2.9	0.704
Program offers adequately described the essential componets of the services to be delivered.	91	3.18	0.569
I believe that the budget leaves the county in a solid finahcial position for next year.	82	2.57	0.754
There was clear policy direction for programs that were one-time-only funded versus funded with ongoing revenue.	78	2.55	0.832
Since the budget was adopted, I typically use the internet versus the printed adopted budget document to view program offers.	87	3	0.915

Question	N	Mean	Standard Deviation
Clear milestone delivery dates to develop the budget	87	3.61	0.557
Clear instructions in the Budget Manual	86	3.53	0.645
Informative details about Internal Service Rates	84	3.42	0.715
Access to budget detail	87	3.57	0.583
High quality program offers	87	3.34	0.626
Available adequate budget preparation training (budget boot camps, rodeo, individual assistance, etc.)	84	3.06	0.766
Available adequate program offer development training	85	2.94	0.822
Available adequate web tool training	83	3.04	0.818
Knowledge/skills/abilities to competently use the web tool	82	3.18	0.687
General understanding of priority directions driving resource allocation	84	3.35	0.668
Trusting the accuracy of financial information in the program offers	86	3.52	0.502
Confidence in department/agency's grant and revenue projections	82	3.5	0.55
A budget that reflects a long-term priority and multi-year funding strategy	87	3.33	0.693
Quality program performance measures	87	3.13	0.712
A collaborative process with shared decision making	84	3.14	0.73
Use of a shadow/supplemental budget system to develop a budget (excluding SAP or the web tool)	67	3.1	0.94
An opportunity to provide input during the creation or revisions of program offers	83	3.25	0.581
A process that overall was transparent	85	3.36	0.687
The convenience of the internet to review program offers	86	3.33	0.622
To locate most budget related documents via the internet	84	3.31	0.64
A budget that clearly reflects the County's priorities	83	3.3	0.728
Meaningful citizen and stakeholder involvement	80	3.01	0.665
Program offers that adequately describe the essential components of the service to be delivered	87	3.33	0.623
Clear policy direction for programs that were one-time-only funded versus funded with on-going revenue	83	3.29	0.708
Adopted budget leaves the county in a solid financial position for next year	82	3.46	0.632
To use the internet versus the printed adopted budget document to view program offers (post adoption)	86	3.21	0.784
The level of cooperation you received from the Budget Office	71	2.63	0.514

Question	N	Mean	Standard Deviation
The level of cooperation you extended to the Budget Office	71	2.66	0.476
The completeness of the documents you received from the Budget Office	69	2.55	0.607
The completeness of the dcuments you submitted to the Budget Office	68	2.71	0.459
The level of communication you received from the Budget Office	71	2.49	0.606
The level of communication you extended to the Budget Office	70	2.57	0.527
The timeliness of the documents you received from the Budget Office	71	2.38	0.663
The timeliness of the documents you submitted to the Budget Office	69	2.59	0.524
The amount of information you received from the Budget Office	72	2.33	0.628
The amount of information you shared with the Budget Office	70	2.5	0.532
The quality of the documents you received from the Budget Office	71	2.56	0.554
The quality of the documents you submitted to the Budget Office	69	2.67	0.475
The level of professionalism you received from the Budget Office	72	2.67	0.531
The level of professionalism you extended to the Budget Office	72	2.67	0.504
Overall from beginning to end, please rate how satisfied you are with the FY2010 budgeting process	78	6.92	1.999
Better or Worse: Clear County policy direction	76	5.59	1.995
Better or Worse: Better communication of policy direction	76	5.7	2.059
Better or Worse: The budget data management system	73	6.08	1.552

For each question, N is the number of respondent
Mean is the average response ratings
Standard Deviation is the level of variation between responses - a high standard deviation = high variation