

Be heard!



Multnomah County Budget Survey **F/Y 2017**

Fiscal Year 2017
Online Budget
Survey Report
April 26, 2016

Executive Summary

The significant shift in budget priorities represented by the current Chair's budget for F/Y 2017 is directly reflected in the current budget survey results. Results from previous years provide both contrasting and consistent feedback.

Health – both physical and mental – represents the highest of priorities in the 2016 survey with Mental Health doubling the number of responses from previous surveys while ranking third in the aggregate behind Animal Services and Roads & Bridges.

Homeless services, while second in overall priority in 2016 and raised as a priority by three times as many respondents as in the past, is ninth in the aggregate.

ADVS and SUN Schools both doubled their support from previous years while Domestic Violence and Communicable Disease services dropped slightly.

Consistent with priorities and past surveys, new funding allocations focused on Mental Health and Homeless Services with Mental Health again outpacing number two (Homeless Services) by almost twice and SUN Schools maintaining a robust third place.

For the first time, the 2016 service priorities directly reflect the new funding allocation priorities with three of the top four matching in rank. That seems to align with the current budget priorities reflected in the Chair's budget for F/Y 2017.

Overall response rates were significantly improved over previous surveys (29.8% in 2016 vs. 15.6% in 2012) and completion rates remained in the upper 70 percentile (77.3%). Geographic distribution of responses was highest in 97214 and District 1, and lowest in District 4 (4%) and east of I-84 (7%).

Comments were varied and appeared focused on the priority services – both past and present.

Wapato was mentioned several times in the context of needing to make decisions on potential uses if not final disposition.

Mental health, Health services, Elder services, and SUN schools dominated the comments regarding new funding as well as service experiences.

Survey Background

The Multnomah County Citizen Involvement Committee (CIC) conducted an online budget survey through its Office of Citizen Involvement (OCI) to give county residents an additional opportunity to provide input into the F/Y 2017 budget-making process. The survey had proven to be a productive tool in 2011, 2012, and 2014 to generate public input about county budget priorities. Initiating a survey this year was particularly useful, given that public input can inform decisions about how to allocate approximately \$10 million in “one-time-only” funding. Additionally, the survey increases the public’s knowledge of Multnomah County, its services, and its budget. CIC members, OCI staff, the Communications Office, and the Budget Office collaborated on the development of the 2016 questionnaire.

Survey Design

The survey consisted of five questions (*pages 12-14*). Two were similar to those asked in the 2011, 2012, and 2014 surveys. Questions 1 & 4 were duplicates from previous surveys providing trackable trends while the remaining questions were open ended to allow for qualitative feedback. Variables for both questions 1 & 4 remained the same with the exception of “renovate or build a new downtown county courthouse” being eliminated as an option in question 4.

As in previous versions, the first question asked respondents to select their top three service categories from 17 choices while questions two & three asked the open ended **“Why are these services important?”** and **“If you use any...tell us about your experience.”**

The fourth question is another follow up from previous years asking for a single choice for investing potential additional funds while question 5 asks the open ended question “Please describe why you selected the choice...Q4”. Question 6 was left open for “Other comments” than may have not been addressed in previous questions.

Survey Methodology

As In previous years, the 2016 the survey was posted online and paper copies were made available between January 30 and March 31. In a continuing effort to broaden the number of Multnomah County residents who could participate, the survey was also offered on paper in the following languages:

Arabic	Korean	Spanish
Chinese	Russian	Swahili
English	Somali	Vietnamese

To maximize participation, the availability of the survey was well-publicized using a number of formats including individual emails and reminders, postings on county websites and social media accounts, and outreach at public events.

Survey Results

A total of 510 online 2016 surveys were collected between 2/1/16 and 3/31/16. (Paper surveys have not been counted or tabulated at this time.) “2014” tabulations include previous surveys input from 2012 and 2011 as well while “Aggregate” represents the total (1760) including 2016.

Respondents represented all the metro zip codes from 97005 through 97294 with the most (by twice) from 97214 (17% - mostly District 1) and District 1 (21% overall) with just 7% coming from east of I-84. Responses included surveys from Salem to Boardman as well as expatriates in Cordoba, Argentina; Paderno, Italy; and Collingswood, Australia.

Question 1

Five of the top seven most-favored service categories are health and human services in nature. These results diverge from previous surveys.

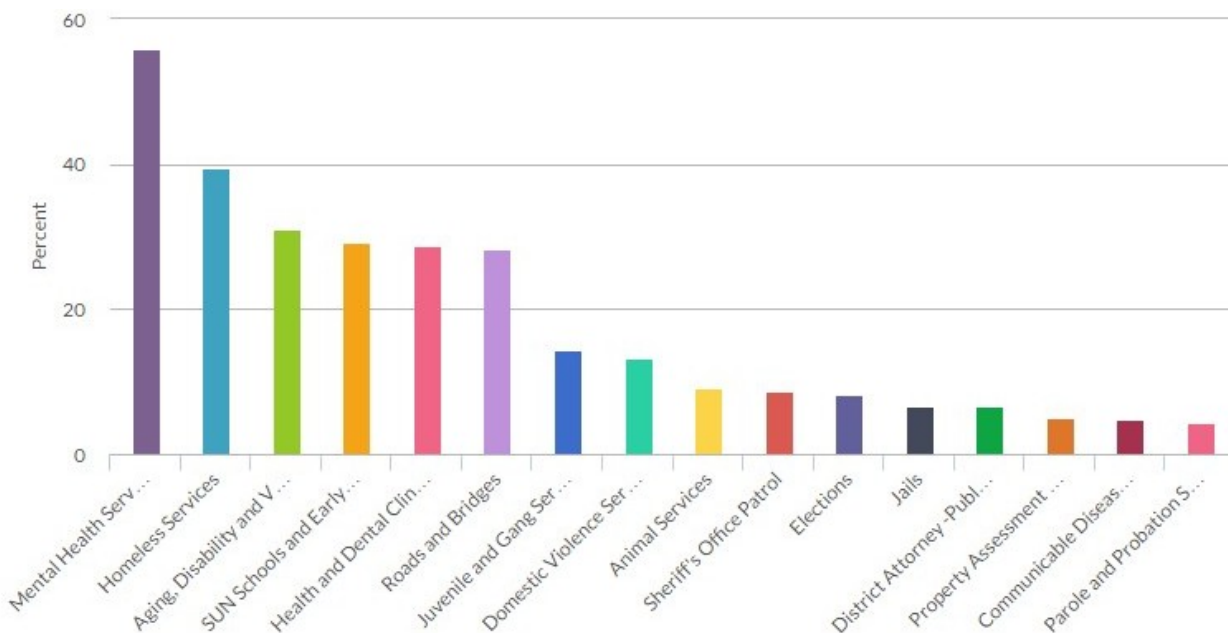
The most compelling result of this question is the dramatic shifts in the rankings from past surveys to 2016. For example, Mental Health Services rose from #8 in previous years to #1 and Homeless Services from #14 to #2. Conversely, Animal Services, while still #1 in the aggregate, dropped from #1 to #9 in the 2016 survey and the DA from #2 to #13.

Worthy of note is the consistent support of Roads & Bridges and the Health Department. Both have generated roughly 28% support regardless of their ranking in the final analysis.

In comparison to previous budget surveys, support for Health and Human Services, particularly Mental Health, increased significantly over past years while Roads & Bridges and Public Safety services all dropped precipitously from previous years.

NOTE: One format difference is that the 2014 & 2016 surveys limited respondents to three selections rather than six as in the two previous versions.

Chart 1: County Services Public Values Most



From a total of 17 service categories, the respondents were asked to choose the three county service categories that they valued he most. These charts reflect the number of respondents who chose each service.

Question 2

Respondents were asked to describe why the services they selected were important to them. Since there were no multiple choice answers, it was necessary to attempt to quantify by summarizing and categorizing the responses. The prevailing themes were:

1. **Generally support our community's most vulnerable and at-risk populations.**

Example comments included: high needs populations frequently unable to care for themselves; difficult circumstances like poor health and homelessness hit these groups hardest; circumstances leading to vulnerable conditions are frequently not people's fault; community is likely to be less safe and functional if support isn't provided.

2. **Prevention and early intervention avoid related societal problems, decrease other service needs, reduce long-term costs and create the best outcomes.**

Example comments included: prevent and/or reduce related societal problems (e.g., crime, poverty, homelessness, infectious disease); limit emergency room visits which saves money and creates healthier people; human productivity improves when basic needs are addressed in the first place; maintained infrastructure limits destruction during natural disasters, decreases damage when used, and reduces costs over the long-term.

Question 3

Again, as in Q2, respondents were asked to describe any experience they may have had with the services they selected as important to them. The prevailing themes were:

1. **The need for continued or expanded services for vulnerable populations, SUN School programming, and well-maintained bridges and roads.**

Example comments included: witnessing affects of limited mental health treatment services; advocating for transportation assistance for youth experiencing homelessness; comments about youth benefiting from SUN Programs which also helps the mother able to remain employed; roads and bridges critical to our safety and commerce.

2. **Animal Services closely connected to human welfare, health workers treating service recipients without discrimination, and elder care.**

Example comments included: animals in need are often found with unsheltered individuals; use of health services is a positive experience but staff need training in equity and working with people without discriminating; elders have the hardest time navigating through our system - strive to bring services to elders' residences to improve their wellbeing and health.

Question 4

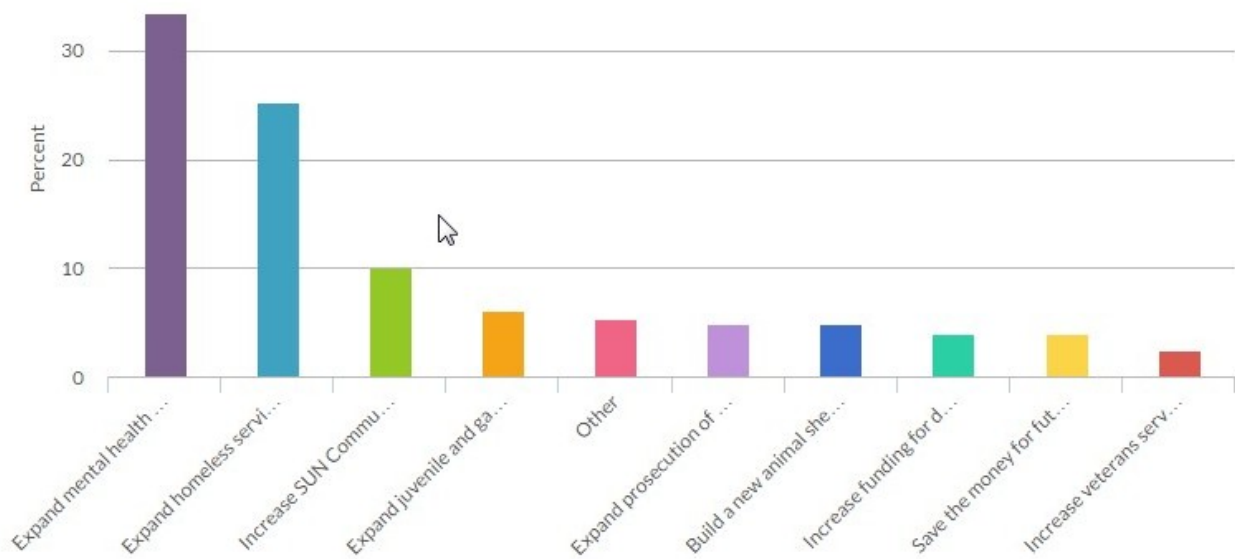
Respondents selected one choice from nine options for allocating potential additional funding.

The same three options were selected by nearly 74% of the time, up from 65% in previous years. They were: expand mental health programs; expand homeless shelters and services; and increase SUN School Community School services or sites.

While 'expand mental health programs' was selected at nearly double the rate of the second highest option it remained consistent being chosen by almost 35% of the respondents each time. Worthy of note is that 'expand homeless services' jumped by a full two percentage points while SUN School support dropped by almost the same amount from previous years yet remained #s two and three respectively. Saving money for future years seems to have become a bit less important than in the past, dropping from fourth to ninth in 2016 yet remaining 4th in the aggregate

Service rankings (Q1) directly reflect expansion priorities (Q4) particularly in the most recent (2016) survey.

Chart 4: Public Priorities for Allocating Additional Funds



From their three service categories, the respondents were asked to choose the ONE county service that they felt most deserved additional funding. These charts reflect the number of respondents who chose a service.

Question 5

Respondents were asked to describe why they selected the program they did for additional funding. Since there were no multiple choice answers, it was necessary to attempt to quantify by summarizing and categorizing the responses.

A total of 373 comments were submitted. The comments were reviewed and categorized by similarity. The most frequent comments with regard to the top three options are listed below:

Expand mental health programs. (32.9%) Example comments included:

- will reduce and prevent a multitude of societal problems (e.g., crime, homelessness, domestic violence, gangs, HIV), as well as reduce other service demands and costs (e.g., health care costs);
- critical to the health and quality of life of those affected as well as the larger community over the long-term;
- major issue that needs funding given the demand and its significant impacts;
- should be accessible to all regardless of economic status;
- critical for preventing crime, homelessness, and other societal problems;
- vulnerable and high needs population that tends to be lower income;
- reduces suffering, and promotes safety, productivity, and public health for affected individuals as well as the larger community;
- pressing problem that is too underfunded to successfully address.

Expand homeless services and shelters. (19.4%) Example comments included:

- help youth, families, domestic violence survivors and people who are among the most vulnerable, poor and needy - everyone needs housing to be productive and well;
- pressing issue given the economy and high housing costs are contributing to homelessness and it can't simply be solved by using enforcement sweeps;
- programs need significant funding to accommodate high need.
- number of people who are homeless is growing and frequently outside their control due to factors like current economy and lack of affordable housing;
- vulnerable population that frequently faces additional issues like health problems;
- housing and safe shelter are the foundation for healthy, productive and successful individuals, families and communities.

Increase SUN Community School services or sites. (13.9%) Example comments included:

- keep youth off the street and limit other problems like crime, poverty and dropouts, as well as other service demands; strong education is key to youth success;
- youth should be prioritized first and receive significant investment given their long-term impacts in society like the economy and community health;
- educational support services are critical for youth to be successful;
- investment prevents longer-term problems (e.g., poverty, crime, dropout rates) and social service needs;
- youth are the future making investment in them crucial; educational settings bring neighborhoods together and create a better community for all; after-school programming and activities help youth stay engaged;
- early intervention services important to set youth up for success;
- provide services (e.g., meals) and educational opportunities for vulnerable and disadvantaged parents and families (e.g., low-income) which, in turn, connects youth to school and promotes their success.

Question 6

1. **Maintain and upgrade county infrastructure.** Example comments included: functioning and safe infrastructure is bedrock of society since everyone uses it; natural disasters will inevitably occur; promotes economy and jobs, and long-term savings are created by maintaining it sooner than later; significant amount of current infrastructure is past its prime and in poor shape (e.g., potholes, seismically).
2. **Everyone needs health care.** Example comments included: must be accessible regardless of background and resources; essentially a human right given all people need it to alleviate suffering and be productive; encourages prevention which keeps people out of emergency rooms and lowers long-term costs; a healthy population benefits all since it creates healthy communities.
3. **Aging and disabled populations must be supported.** Example comments included: vulnerable population (e.g., seniors, veterans) that frequently face a large range of problems (e.g., health, lack of resources) and desperately need attention and services; certain services, particularly for seniors, permit them to remain independent by staying in their homes and being able to care for themselves; provides safety and stability for clients and the larger community.

4. **Community health programs play an essential role.** Example comments included: attributes of healthy communities should be accessible to all regardless of resources; promote healthy children and adults as well as stable communities; prevent or reduce other major problems like crime, poverty and infectious disease epidemics.
5. **Domestic violence programs are necessary for victims.** Example comments included: protect victims and their families by enabling them to flee from abuse; heavy demand requires more resources and increased shelter space; victims are particularly vulnerable given what they are escaping and their lack of resources; changes victims' lives in part by providing opportunities to become self-sufficient; addressing domestic violence benefits all and keeps the community safe.

Online Survey Questionnaire

Welcome to the Fiscal Year 2017 Multnomah County budget survey!

Please complete both pages of the survey and click "Submit" once you have finished.

Context

Multnomah County's budget is about \$1.7 billion. Most of that money comes from federal and state governments. A smaller portion, called the General Fund, is collected locally; mostly from property, business and rental vehicle taxes. It's roughly \$500 million. Nearly 50 percent is spent on public safety. About 30 percent goes to health and human services. Another 20 percent goes to general government operations. By participating in this survey, both you and the Board of County Commissioners get to decide how to spend it. With that in mind:

1. Below are services Multnomah County provides.,Rank your top three:.

[See a description of the programs that each service covers.](#) *

- ☐ Health and Dental Clinics
- ☐ Mental Health Services
- ☐ Communicable Disease Services
- ☐ Aging, Disability and Veterans Services
- ☐ Homeless Services
- ☐ Domestic Violence Services
- ☐ SUN Schools and Early Childhood Services
- ☐ Juvenile and Gang Services
- ☐ Jails
- ☐ District Attorney - Public Prosecutor
- ☐ Parole and Probation Services
- ☐ Animal Services
- ☐ Elections
- ☐ Property Assessment and Taxation
- ☐ Roads and Bridges
- ☐ Sheriff's Office Patrol

2. Why are these services important? *



3. If you use any of these services, tell us about your experience:

4. If the county is able to minimally expand some services or improve critical infrastructure, please select one item below on which you would spend additional funds: *

- ☐ Expand mental health programs
- ☐ Expand juvenile and gang services
- ☐ Expand prosecution of people involved in the commercial sexual exploitation of children
- ☐ Expand homeless services and shelters
- ☐ Increase veterans services
- ☐ Increase SUN Community School services or sites
- ☐ Increase funding for domestic violence programs
- ☐ Build a new animal shelter
- ☐ Other
- ☐ Save the money for future years

5. Please describe why you selected the choice you made in question 4.

6. Other comments:

Comments

Thank You!

Thank You!

If you'd like to receive a copy of the final report, please send us an email at citizen.involvement@multco.us or check our web site at: <https://multco.us/oci>. You can also check our Facebook page at Office of Citizen Involvement - Multnomah County.

Background Information

Your County, Your Services



Service Descriptions

Aging and Disability Services (ADS)

Helps the County's 217,000 older adults, people with disabilities, and veterans live independently by linking them to a wide range of quality services and resources that meet their diverse needs and preferences.

Animal Services

Licenses pets, operates an animal shelter, responds to animal emergencies, and rescues injured, sick, and abused animals. Animal Services receives over 7,500 animals in its shelter.

Community Health Services

Monitors and treats communicable diseases and addresses chronic diseases and environmental health conditions in the community.

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. Over 37,000 people move through the jail system every year.

Developmental Disability Services (DDSD)

Provides case management services linking clients to resources in the community. DDSD serves over 4,950 people with intellectual and developmental disabilities diagnosed prior to the age of twenty-two. Services may span the entire lifetime.

District Attorney - Public Prosecutor

Prosecutes offenders who commit criminal law violations. The DA reviews and prosecutes cases referred by seven police agencies and represents the State of Oregon in cases of juvenile dependency, delinquency, and child support. In 2013, the DA issued more than 20,000 cases – 15,000 misdemeanors and 5,000 felonies.

Domestic Violence Services

Services are provided through a multi-disciplinary, coordinated system that responds to victims and perpetrators: 5,000 victims receive community-based, in-person services; 2,000 receive District Attorney-based services; and 30,000 receive assistance by phone. Over 4,000 offenders are jailed, 1,400 are prosecuted, and 1,000 are supervised annually.

Elections

Conducts all local, city, county, state and federal elections for the citizens of and all political districts within Multnomah County. Under state and local law, special elections and recall elections can also be called at any time of the year. Elections counts anywhere from 200,000 to over 600,000 ballots.

Health Clinics

Provides access to primary health and dental care for low-income and uninsured residents. County health clinics are located in the community and in schools and served over 70,000 people in 2012.

Homeless Services

Services to the homeless and those at risk of losing 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.

Juvenile and Gang Services

Delivers evidence-based services to delinquent youth and their families. Services range from informal handling (diversion) and formal probation, shelter care, mental health assessments, outpatient and secure residential substance abuse treatment, gang prevention and detention. Court Counselors supervise about 300 youth on formal probation per day

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 and Addictions Services (MHASD)

Provides a comprehensive system of care to prevent, intervene in, and treat mental illness and addiction in adults, youth and children. MHASD serves low-income, uninsured, and homeless individuals and families, as well as anyone who is in crisis. MHASD's addiction outpatient providers serve 5,000 non-Medicaid eligible adults each year.

Parole and Probation Services

Supervision of approximately 8,150 probationers and post-prison adult offenders in the community who have been convicted of felony and misdemeanor crimes.

Property Assessment and Taxation

Assesses, collects, and distributes over \$1.2 billion in property taxes for local governments within Multnomah County, while ensuring that all property is valued and taxed fairly and accurately.

Roads and Bridges

Responsible for building and maintaining six major Willamette River bridges and over 800 miles of roads that are located primarily in unincorporated Multnomah County.

Sheriff's Office Patrol

Patrols unincorporated areas of Multnomah County, some East County cities, and the Willamette and Columbia rivers. Patrol deputies make approximately 3,000 arrests and respond to 6,000 calls for service annually.

SUN Schools and Early Childhood Services

Provides extra-curricular and enrichment activities at 67 local elementary, middle and high schools. Early childhood provides health, nutrition services, and parent education in homes and schools.



Please feel free to contact the Office of Citizen Involvement to get more information or with any questions you may have about this report.

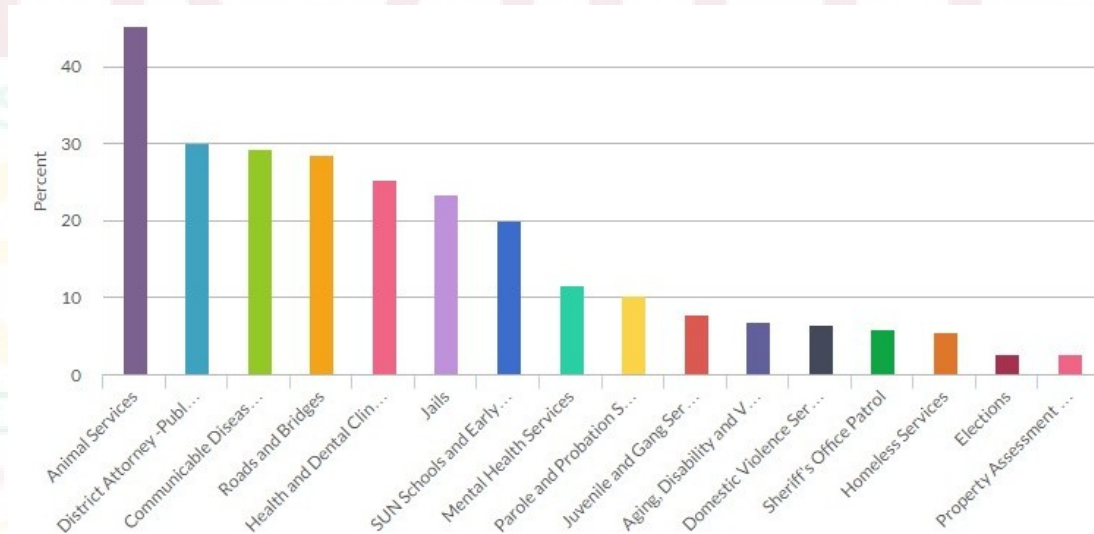
We can be reached at [503-988-3450](tel:503-988-3450) or citizen.involvement@multco.us.

Past Survey Results

The Results

2014

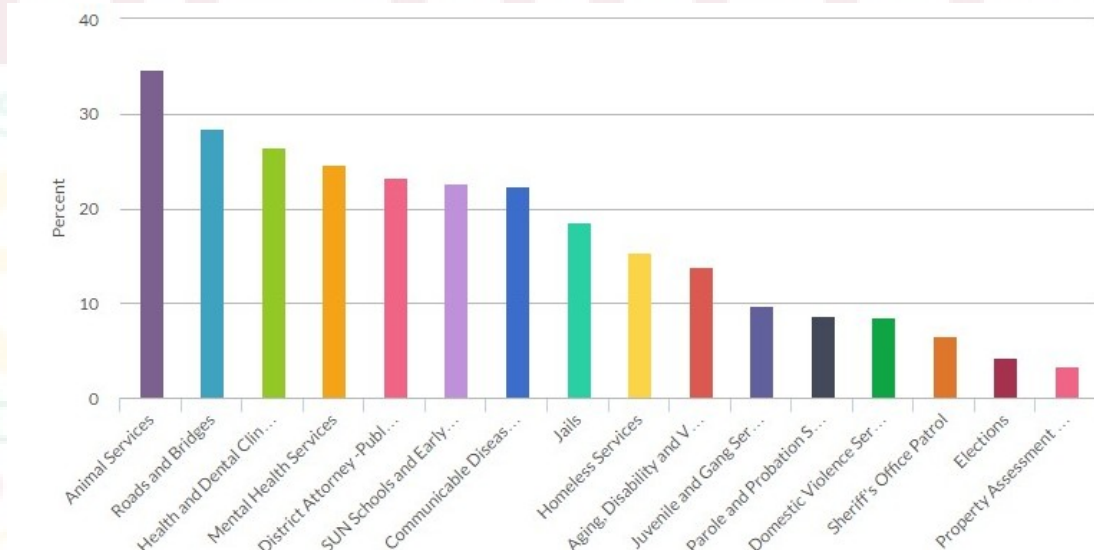
Q 1. Below are services that Multnomah County provides. Rank your top three.
(21 choices offered)



The Results

Aggregate

Q 1. Below are services that Multnomah County provides. Rank your top three.
(21 choices offered)

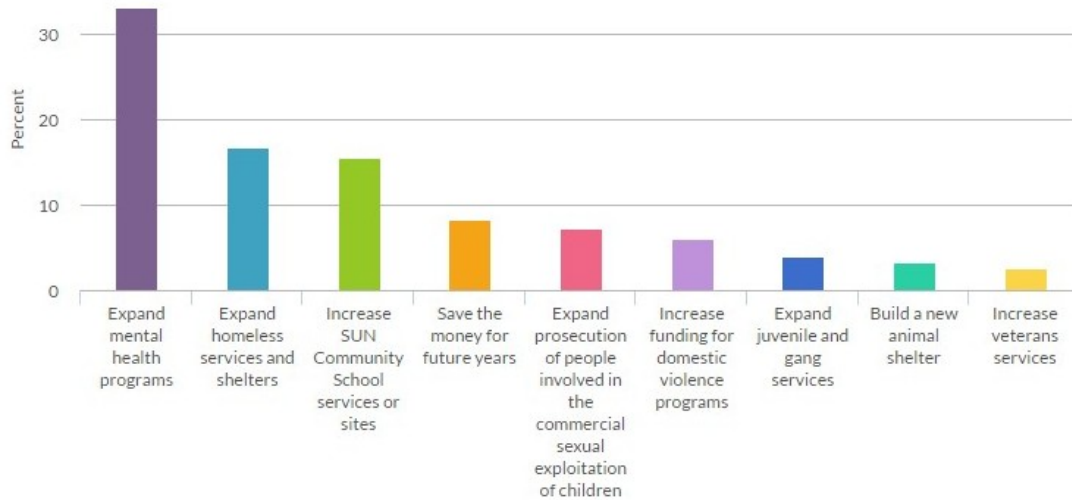


Past Survey Results

The Results

2014

Q4. If the county is able to minimally expand some services or improve critical infrastructure, please select one item below on which you would spend additional funds: (10 choices offered including "other")



The Results

Aggregate

Q4. If the county is able to minimally expand some services or improve critical infrastructure, please select one item below on which you would spend additional funds: (10 choices offered including "other")

