



Internal Assessment

Pathway for Success

To better understand realities DHS employees face every day,
firm up fundamentals and frame pathways for success.



Acknowledgments

The internal assessment was possible thanks to the generosity of all the DHS team members across the entire organization. These team members shared their time, perspective and encouragement. Thanks to them, we are ready to take our next steps. Special thanks to the following DHS staff who helped with all the details, coordination, analysis and wisdom toward making this internal assessment a reality:

- ▶ Matthew Eagles, PhD: Office of Human Resources
- ▶ Andrew Waugh, PhD: Office of Reporting, Research, Analytics and Implementation
- ▶ Oana McKinney: Office of Forecasting, Research and Analysis
- ▶ Robert McGinnis: Self-Sufficiency Programs
- ▶ April Barrett: Office of Director and Policy

Contents

Acknowledgments	2
Letter from the Director of Organizational Development	5
Executive summary	6
Overview.....	6
Outcomes.....	6
Recommendations.....	7
Next steps.....	8
Introduction	9
Overview.....	10
Key findings	11
Leadership	11
Policy, practice and change process	12
Hiring, training and rotations.....	13
Allocation of time.....	14
Work, life and health balance.....	14
Equity, diversity and inclusion	16
Stereotypes, perceptions and media	17
Culture stability	18
Pathways to success: Agency-wide frameworks and recommendations	20
Human Services Value Curve framework and recommendations.....	20
Strategic direction	22
Strategic development.....	24
Transition continuity	29

RiSE: DHS organizational culture.....	30
Talent development	35
Organizational image	39
Support structure	40
Summary	42
Appendix.....	43
Appendix A. Organizational scan.....	43
Appendix B. Data and feedback analysis approach	46
Appendix C. Department of Human Services service locations.....	60

Letter from the Director of Organizational Development

Dear Colleagues,

Now more than ever, the Department of Human Services (DHS) has the potential to advance its mission with a view of delivering sustainable results for all Oregonians. The rapid pace of change requires all human service agencies to be more nimble, responsive, connected and focused. This report was framed around one main question: How do DHS employees recommend we become our best for the Oregonians who need us most and the communities where they reside?

Every day through DHS field offices, lives are being changed for the better. This is because of a dedicated workforce who have committed themselves to serve others. I have had the pleasure of personally speaking with more than 3,500 DHS employees. These employees are more than ready to take the next step for our agency, the clients they serve and each of their respective communities.

From my conversations there was a clear consistent message that if we focus on our organizational fundamentals, we will have the opportunity to expand opportunities for the Oregonians we serve, enhance the overall work environment and experience for all employees, and accelerate our momentum toward the creation of long-term sustainable results.

We can achieve these imperatives by:

- ▶ Using an organizational and cultural framework as DHS moves forward
- ▶ Addressing ongoing contributing factors that reduce organizational momentum
- ▶ Making slight adjustments to the current organizational structure, and
- ▶ Targeting investments that address short-term challenges with a long-term return.

In the end, if we want to be our best we must remove the barriers, firm up our organizational fundamentals, and make the necessary strategic investments that will enable DHS and local communities to achieve the results based on the potential that already exists.

I would like to thank everyone who shared their voice and vision. DHS has the potential to address the greatest challenges that stand before us. At the same time, DHS can create great futures for our team members that serve Oregonians every day in all communities across the state.

Immediate actions started even before this report was published. Significant progress has already been made across DHS based on many of the recommendations in this report.

It is time to accelerate the progress of our next steps!



Timothy E. Sinatra, Director
Organizational Development
Oregon Department of Human Services

Executive summary

Overview

In October 2017, the Department of Human Services (DHS) launched an agency-wide organizational assessment with the objective of developing a better understanding of the realities that DHS employees face every day while supporting Oregonians. The focus of the internal assessment was based on three primary areas concerning organizational development that include climate, alignment and culture. Through this focus, the structure and operations of the organization were evaluated, as well as the culture, strategy development and overall performance of the organization.

Outcomes

Information came from more than 3,500 face-to-face interviews and surveys of more than 1,550 staff. There were more than 9,000 responses about business practices. More than 90,000 quantitative and qualitative responses came from various responses and feedback based on the seven different engagement tools used.

Although not representative of all feedback, eight key themes arose from staff. They include:

- ▶ Leadership
- ▶ Policy, practice and change process
- ▶ Hiring, training and rotations
- ▶ Allocation of time
- ▶ Work, life and health balance
- ▶ Equity, diversity and inclusion
- ▶ Stereotypes, perceptions and media, and
- ▶ Culture stability.

Additional analysis of the data received led to the identification of six priority areas for the agency that include:

- ▶ Investing in culture (Creating a culture where DHS employees feel valued, supported, respected, empowered and accountable to reaching their full potential.)
- ▶ Developing talent (Strengthening the current support systems through Human Resources to stabilize, recruit and leverage the DHS workforce.)
- ▶ Strategic development (Strategically engaging employees and stakeholders in developing strategies to deliver services to improve outcomes, develop best practices and overcome challenges.)
- ▶ Strategic direction (Developing focused decision-making processes that lead the agency in the direction of a common goal(s).)
- ▶ Transition continuity (Building capacity to retain employees and plan for transitions and disruptions in the workforce.)

Recommendations

With a focus on the key findings and priority areas, 25 recommendations were developed that focus on improvements for the agency, employees and clients DHS serves. They are summarized below:

- ▶ Investing in culture includes developing a strategy towards creating an organization with an engaged workforce that allows the agency to continue to take incremental steps toward creating a thriving culture where employees are valued and empowered. This strategy includes developing and providing leadership training so that all employees will have the leadership capabilities to lead from any chair, creating leadership assessment tools and team development plans that focus on equity, diversity and inclusion. Investing in employees and the agency culture will provide the opportunity to put clients first, create fiscal effectiveness and achieve sustainable results.
- ▶ Developing talent with a focus on the hiring and onboarding process that utilizes a recruitment lens that prioritizes equity, diversity and inclusion will allow the agency to retain and recruit top talent. Improvements can be made in the recruitment and retention process by utilizing the Office of Continuous Improvement to evaluate current processes, develop protocols for hiring, assess retention and develop strategies to retain employees, as well as develop succession plans.
- ▶ Engaging employees, partners, clients and other stakeholders to apply best practices and learning opportunities to create strategic development plans will strengthen the agency. Key areas for strategic development include employee and stakeholder engagement, identifying top areas for improvement, and developing organizational and cultural frameworks to assist the agency with achieving its' mission and goals.
- ▶ Developing and agreeing upon a strategic direction will assist the agency with staying the course, achieving consistent results and ensure that we all have a common goal. This can be done by developing short-term action statements, identify agency-wide priorities and developing plans, protocols and goals to achieve success.
- ▶ Transition continuity is essential for the agency to continue to move in a strategic direction and to maintain strong cultural norms. Transition and succession planning as well as the development of a master plan regarding transitions will assist the agency in achieving sustainable results that impact all employees, stakeholders and clients.
- ▶ Strengthening the image of DHS internally and externally through targeted communication plans will deepen relationships with local communities and enhance the overall pride for DHS employees.

Next steps

The internal assessment has been presented in draft form to all DHS employees, as well as the Governor, legislative staff and some key stakeholders. Staff from five regional areas around the state have evaluated the assessment and validated the findings and recommendations, as well as prioritized the key findings and priority areas for the agency. Internal staff are working collaboratively to prioritize the recommendations and develop strategic plans for implementation. Cabinet will review these plans and further prioritize based on capacity and impact for the agency and clients we serve. Within the next 12-18 months key improvements will be implemented with evaluations occurring to determine impact and success.

Introduction

The success of Oregon as a state is dependent on strong communities that have built a resilient platform for success. Thus, Oregonians can be at their very best and achieve personal and professional goals. In October 2017, Department of Human Services (DHS) launched an agency-wide organizational assessment. The objective was to better understand the realities that DHS employees face every day while they support all Oregonians.

The focus of the internal assessment was based on three primary areas that concern organizational development:

1. **Climate:**

- Employee engagement
- Interdepartmental relationships
- Stakeholder connectivity, and
- Leadership capabilities and capacity

2. **Alignment:**

- Core services alignment
- Interdepartmental communications
- Support structure
- Barriers to progress
- Community connectivity, and
- Standards of organizational effectiveness

3. **Culture:**

- Core values consistency
- Valued and empowered employees
- Cross-departmental collaboration
- Agreed-upon expectations
- Ownership, and
- Continuous improvement

Assessment results will be used to develop strategic next steps. These steps will expand results for all Oregonians served across the state and for the DHS staff who support them every day.

Overview

The Oregon Department of Human Services is a vast agency encompassing more than 8,800 employees serving more than 1.5 million Oregonians with a budget exceeding \$5.5 billion annually. Unlike many organizations that have a singular purpose and primary focus, DHS has many legislatively mandated programs that focus on serving different groups within Oregon. While there exists overlap between programs, each has an independent function, various funding methods, different legislation and multiple funding streams that are tied to independent outcomes. Yet despite these differences, what binds the DHS programs together is the mission to serve Oregon's residents. Employees at DHS are bound by a common goal: to ensure that Oregonians in their own communities achieve well-being and independence through opportunities that protect, empower, respect choice and preserve dignity.

- ▶ **Vision:** Safety, health and independence for all Oregonians
- ▶ **Mission:** To help Oregonians in their own communities achieve well-being and independence through opportunities that protect, empower, respect choice and preserve dignity
- ▶ **Core values:** Integrity, innovation, respect, service equity, responsibility, stewardship, professionalism

For this report it is necessary to give a brief overview of the respective parts of the agency. DHS is comprised of many programs. These programs are located throughout the state. DHS serves children, adults, families, seniors and people with disabilities. Those programs and their associated mission statements are as follows:

- ▶ **Office of Self-Sufficiency Programs (SSP) Mission:** *To provide a safety net, family stability and a connection to careers that guide Oregonians out of poverty.*
- ▶ **Office of Child Welfare (CW) Mission:** *Every child and family is empowered to live independent, safe and healthy lives.*
- ▶ **Aging and People with Disabilities (APD) Mission:** *To help Oregonians in their own communities achieve wellbeing and independence through opportunities that protect, empower, respect choice and preserve dignity.*
- ▶ **Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Mission:** *To assist Oregonians with disabilities to achieve, maintain and advance in employment and independence.*
- ▶ **Office of Developmental Disabilities Services (ODDS) Mission:** *ODDS, stakeholders, and the developmental disabilities community come together to provide services, supports, and advocacy to empower Oregonians with intellectual and developmental disabilities to live full lives in their communities.*

Comprehensive Central Services and Shared Services based out of DHS' Salem headquarters support these programs.

Key findings

Eight themes emerged from engaging with staff throughout all districts across the state. Most findings were present in each of the program areas, service sites and districts. The difference of intensity of the eight themes vary and were vetted through strategy follow-up sessions with key leaders from the field, Central Services and Shared Services. Findings are not representative of all feedback, input or comments captured — just ones that continued to repeat.

Leadership

Leadership-related topics across the state always started with the stability and competency of leaders. In the past five years DHS had four different agency directors. Leadership continuity also lacks across many parts of the organization. Leadership changes can happen as often as every few months. Often, leaders:

1. Are hired for a designated position or site
2. Start to gain momentum, and
3. Then are moved to another site where the need seems greater.

The original site of the leader then starts to decline. Sometimes movement comes from leadership “burnout.” Also, leaders may lack confidence due to the intensity of leadership demands each day.

DHS experiences significant impacts to organizational leadership due to management retirements and resignations. Often, there is not a formal succession plan in place. Many vacant leadership positions remain open for an extended time. This leaves a void in direction and continuity. Some vacancies also do not get posted for an extended time. These extended, open vacancies disrupt the continuity of daily business. It also affects the provider community, public and DHS staff.

There is also a significant lack of support and coaching for leaders across the organization. Most are thrust into the position and left to navigate the complexities of their work themselves. The challenge for most leaders is that they need to be subject matter experts, have strong business acumen and, at the same time, have a base of leadership competencies to navigate the daily complexities of their work. When leaders were asked when they last had a check-in or evaluation, the response was usually, “I’m not sure” or, “a while ago.” Yet, of managers who responded:

- ▶ Only 60 percent felt they were appropriately trained, prepared and supported to address the needs and complexities of their daily work and staff they support
- ▶ More than 82 percent stated they have never been trained how to read a budget
- ▶ Only 30 percent were comfortable interpreting budget-related reports, and
- ▶ Almost half (45 percent) were not sure which budget decisions they had authority to carry out.

Many leaders across the organization are inundated with emails and a multitude of meetings that decrease the opportunities to support their team members and hold them accountable. Loss of the appropriate time to lead each day reduces productivity, creates staff morale issues, compromises organizational values, decreases collaboration and supports a punitive environment. Leaders’ demands, their stress and number of hours worked each week divided by their base pay provides little to no incentive to become or stay a leader in many of the high-intensity positions across DHS.

Policy, practice and change process

Policy, practice and the change process were a frequent topic that repeated itself in every conversation and focus group session. Twenty-four percent of all “keep, stop, or start” responses related to policy. One survey respondent’s statement was echoed in focus group after focus group:

“Stop rolling out changes to policy, procedures, and payment changes to the field without testing how it will affect the field offices and consumers.”

Many DHS employees feel that policy development could be more inclusive by use of a representative group of stakeholders directly affected by the policy. Focus group participants felt there needs to be flexibility in policy implementation based on the challenges and opportunities in each local community. Respondents mentioned that it is rare that one policy and practice can be a blanket solution for all. However, consistency in practice was still highly valued.

Due to the nature of work at DHS, changes are pushed through the agency at all levels in relation to policy, IT systems and procedural changes without consistently using basic change management structures. As a result, staff are not emotionally prepared for the change, and direct and ancillary impacts are not fully formed, considered and communicated. Without the appropriate adjustment time, staff are not in a place to work successfully with the change, feel confident about how the change will affect them and own the change in a proactive, positive way.

Respondents felt that, many times, policy changes are made from a reactionary position due to public pressure, without considering their effects or without putting into place measures to track and improve performance. When these policies fail in their execution, it perpetuates the perception that government is ineffective, which in turn leads to decreased support, decreased funding, turnover of employees and challenges in recruiting new employees. Most respondents in the field from both management and non-management spoke of the absence of a strategic plan or priority areas. However, Self-Sufficiency Programs have a strategic plan and there are clear signs that some of the strategic objectives are gaining traction and appreciated by the direct care staff members. The Office of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities has just completed a comprehensive plan that was clear, inclusive in design and focused on achieving outcomes.

In reference to policy and practice, a theme repeated about a disconnect between Central Services and Shared Services and the field. The overall perception of the field was that Central Services and Shared Services lack an awareness of the realities and intensity of providing services to clients in local communities. From the Central Services and Shared Services perspective, there seemed to be a concern of responsiveness that was lacking from the field at times when collaboration and direction was offered. There was also a lack of understanding from the field concerning the number of requests for support that Central Services and Shared Services receive every day.

The respondents from the field spoke about continuous policy changes that created a consistent sense of chaos and instability. Field staff reported that there was never enough time to understand, review, train and even implement the practices that then challenged the fidelity of the original policy intention. The factors behind why policies are being changed are often not explained, and there is also a trend of inconsistent application and interpretation across the field. Incorrect application of policy delays determinations and

services to clients, increases worker errors and re-work to resolve errors, and eventually increases the overall costs for the service that is being delivered. Staff many times would mention that there are so many policy changes they no longer know which change to change.

One shared theme among both the field and Central Services and Shared Services teams is the amount of growth in documentation, technology challenges and processes requirements that ultimately limits the amount of time with the clients. Another consistent theme for both was that the strategies for program services are clearly headed in the right direction, which are becoming more customized and responsive to the clients being served each day. In addition, respondents emphasized the importance of allowing the policy to stay the course so that intended outcomes can be measured for effectiveness.

Hiring, training and rotations

Hiring process

The hiring process issues were in most conversations about fidelity, efficiency and overall effectiveness. Most respondents said it could take four to six months from job posting to starting date for a new employee. While waiting, prospective employees may go on to other companies because of their financial position, which can limit the pool of qualified candidates.

Overall, onboard training was viewed as inadequate and not comprehensive. Many new employees mentioned that initial trainings didn't match realities of what they experienced once they got started. It could take a new employee almost a year to be go-ready and handle a full workload. Readiness depends on the availability of required training sessions and staff to help with onboarding. Taking on workload of a vacant position and extra time to get a new employee up to speed strains the entire team and perpetuates turnover.

Training

Training-related issues were also in most conversations about fidelity, efficiency and overall effectiveness. Trainings seemed to be a theme across the entire state. Consistent comments were about making sure trainers were experts with recent real-time experience to translate training concepts into reality. Having more trainings updated and brought closer to different regions across the state were frequent suggestions.

Respondents mentioned many hardships when travel was required for training. One employee mentioned that, as a single parent, it was very expensive to find childcare when attending a mandatory training in Salem. Depending where an employee lives, many times a one-day training turns into three days with travel. Respondents also said many times, due to family constraints, they can't travel to attend trainings that will help them advance their career. Along with travel, many respondents felt they would rather not attend trainings because going increases workload for their teammates.

Training follow-through and accountability are two topics to review. There may be a gap from the accountability and expectations for staff to advance skills and knowledge from trainings and transfer it to their teams. Also, there seems to be a lack of measurement of the effectiveness of trainings in employee development, operationally-based objectives and goals.

Rotations

The ability to go on a job rotation was valued by most from a cross-training perspective. Most respondents appreciated the opportunity to experience different parts of the organization and learn new skills. The main challenge with rotations only being a year is that they strain both the team the employee left and the team they join. The team the employee leaves must find a temporary replacement and get the new person up to speed. This can take many months and place extra work on remaining team members. The team the employee rotates into also needs to spend more time to get the person on rotation up to speed, which can also take many months. In each case, by the time the person rotating into the new position and the person who temporarily replaces them get up to speed, the cross-training learning opportunity is diminished.

Allocation of time

The “70/30 flip” is a concept that was repeated in every focus group and presented itself through alternate engagement tools. Many employees with DHS for more than 10 years describe the ratio of paperwork to direct time spent with clients as flipped. Years ago, 70 percent of time was spent with the clients and 30 percent on processes and paperwork. Today the trend is 30 percent time spent with clients and 70 percent on processes and paperwork. The allocation of time survey identified client-related support at about 25 percent. Despite less time spent with clients, most employees feel that the program services-related approach is clearly headed in the right direction and has the potential of leading the agency in becoming more responsive and customized for the clients served each day.

What consumes the most time for employees are:

- ▶ Slow operating IT systems
- ▶ Redundancies in documentation, and
- ▶ Transposing information across and within systems.

Many of these last two time consumers are also very challenging to navigate. Newer staff mentioned they were never properly trained on how to use the systems. In addition, peers who know the system are too overwhelmed to help.

Work, life and health balance

Every conversation involved the challenge of finding a work, life and health balance.

Work

Many positions across the organization experienced unmanageable workloads due to service-related demand, turnover, need for updated workload models and lack of continuous improvement efforts to review ongoing operational processes.

Repeatedly, throughout the focus groups and reiterated within the survey data, was a view that managers expect their workers to be able to keep up with the work. There are possibly four intersecting considerations that make this challenging: legislative mandates, associated funding, client-based demand and staff-related capabilities. The Legislature may set the level of service expectations for clients; however, the funding

might not support the actual demand for services by clients, which then skews the workload model and stretches the capabilities of the employees.

The demand for services from clients was a constant, with some fluctuations voiced by focus group respondents throughout the year. It is entirely reasonable for a manager to set forth expectations and for a trained staff to execute that directive to the quality and quantity of work desired. To meet the expectations and workload demand, a few basic principles must be met. First is the fact that the employee is appropriately trained to do the work; second is that the work falls within the individual's job description (within the classification to which the person was hired); and finally, that the timeline given to complete the work is reasonable with the rest of the employee's workload. Most of these requirements based on the qualitative and quantitative data collected trended toward not meeting the overall basic principles described above.

Process improvement was another major factor in work-related issues. There is a trend for process and procedures to continue to be added to the plate without removing processes or steps that may no longer be relevant. As much as possible, maintaining a one new step in and one no longer relevant step out can help bring some balance to the workload. This type of process improvement was not evident in many of the findings and focus group conversations. Continuous improvement sheets are often submitted by employees without response from management or without managerial support.

Management does not consistently tell employees why their continuous improvement sheets were denied. In return, employees lose faith in the process and feel they have no voice to affect positive changes to failing or poor processes. These circumstances create frustration and a lack of worker confidence in the agency and DHS's commitment to continuous improvement; this indirectly affects culture in a negative way, reinforcing the them (management) vs us (non-management) perception.

Self-care

Our services are some of the most critical that Oregonians depend on across the state. The nature of social work can be very taxing for all DHS employees seeking to provide the best services under the most challenging circumstances. Secondary trauma from serving clients daily leads to compassion fatigue. This was evident with direct and indirect line staff across the organization.

Continually helping clients who have experienced difficulties and trauma affects the professional and personal life of DHS employees.

All leadership across the organization encourages self-care. Nevertheless, this lacks application by most employees and leaders. In fact, 21 percent of the responses in each focus group and 46 percent of the responses from the survey were related to the concept of self-care. Many employees pointed out, due to workload, self-care during working hours is next to nonexistent. This affects self-care opportunities after work hours due to exhaustion and work taken home. The turnover rate in the past three years (2015–2017) has stayed in the range of 12.4 percent to 13.9 percent. This directly relates to a lack of opportunities for self-care.

Many staff members are:

- ▶ Working overtime to keep pace, and
- ▶ Trying to reduce accumulating backlogs due to:
 - Vacant positions, and
 - Consistent demand for client-based services.

Overtime hours used has significantly increased over the past three years as seen in the chart above (Figure 1).

Health

The lack of balance between work and life can relate to health issues. Many focus group participants pointed to health-related issues based on a lack of balance and consistent pressures. Unhealthy food and beverage options many times were the only choices employees had due to the demands from their daily work schedules. Vending machines and food marts sometimes were the only convenient choices. Bringing a lunch was still a challenge when finding a moment to enjoy it. The pace and stress of work with no self-care opportunities has led to some focus group participants pointing out:

- ▶ Weight gain
- ▶ Anxiety, and
- ▶ Depression-related issues.

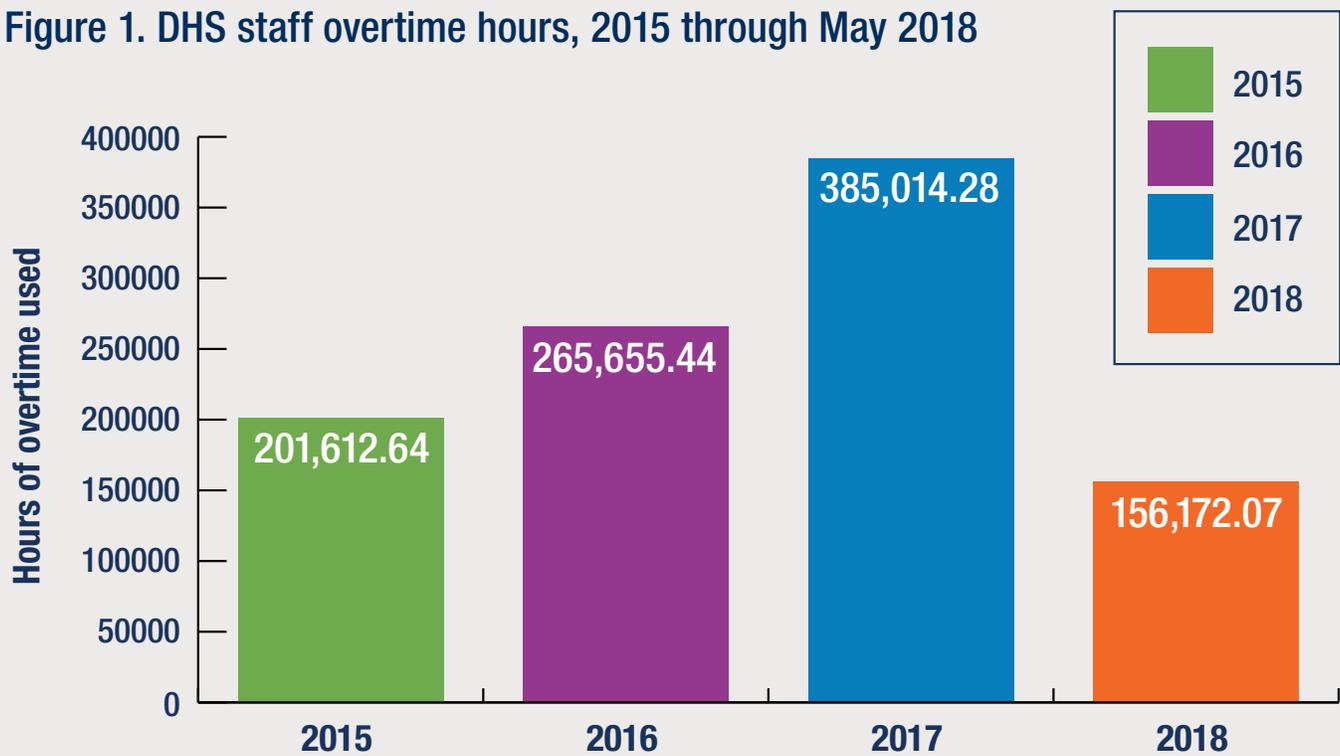
There is an increasing trend in leave without pay, sick leave and unpaid sick leave.

Equity, diversity and inclusion

DHS has an opportunity to ensure development of a culturally and linguistically competent workforce for generations to come. Recruiting a diverse workforce ensures that DHS provides quality and dignified services for all communities served. Based on focus group responses and internal experts, DHS hasn't historically invested in diversity, equity and inclusion. As a result, programs have not had resources to address disparities in service provision. Diversity recruitment and retention plans have not been fully implemented within HR and across all programs to date.

The agency currently faces one of its most significant challenges to provide culturally and linguistically appropriate services to clients across the full spectrum of care, including foster children and their parents. Disproportionate representation of children of color in foster care and differential removal and length of stay rates for Native American and African American children create a moral and legal imperative to ensure DHS diversifies the current and future workforce while consistently using an equity lens across the entire organization.

Figure 1. DHS staff overtime hours, 2015 through May 2018



Stereotypes, perceptions and media

There are hundreds of success stories that happen each day within programs of DHS and partnering agencies. However, the image of the organization is defined by one-off stories not representative of the success that happens each day. When asked why they stay in a high-pressure and challenging environment, answers from DHS employees always center on the difference they make every day. The spirit of this was captured in one of the hundreds of positive comments received through the internal assessment process. This quote provides a great representation of the passion DHS employees have for the clients served each day:

“I believe we can all benefit from grace, acceptance, kindness, and hopefulness and I get the opportunity every day to extend these gifts. I love that we get the opportunity to serve others in a way that says we care and we believe in you.”

In the last two years, despite all the daily positive accomplishments, multiple stories highlighting poor outcomes and issues at DHS have been in the media. Most focus group participants said that internal and external perceptions of the agency are usually developed through negative press. As negative perceptions mount, there is political pressure on the agency to rapidly change the narrative. Pressure can be felt through external forces, such as legislation that requires new accountability measures or changes in practices. This can significantly undermine past progress on established organizational strategies and investments. These changes can also trigger leadership changes that can lead to new strategic directions that reduce organizational momentum and long-term sustainable results.

Negative perceptions, stereotypes and media impact can also be felt internally. It happens through various agency-led reactions or inactions, such as finger-pointing and placing blame on other

Figure 2. DHS staff sick leave totals, by type, 2015 through May 2018



departments, programs or leadership. Focus group participants commented that, after a negative story, many accountability measures with unreasonable expectations are implemented. This can create a culture of fear. Staff frequently stated they are afraid to wear employee badges in public. This is because they feel the community has a negative view of their work and DHS services in general. These key factors build upon each other, lowering employee engagement and detracting from the recruitment of future potential employees.

Culture stability

Many factors influence DHS's culture and climate. High pressure workloads, consistent turnover, negative media stories, leadership transitions, continuous policy changes, shortage of resources and inefficient processes can create some unintentional cultural norms that reduce overall productivity toward achieving sustainable results. When asking questions on culture, both positive and negative factors emerged.

The positive side was clear. DHS employees are passionate and ready to take on the challenges toward making significant steps of improvement on all fronts. The majority of respondents realize, to ultimately be successful, a more integrated internal and external approach will have to be the future strategic path. Basically, DHS has to reach out more to engage and support communities toward helping all Oregonians

in each community across the state. Many DHS field offices had very productive partnerships and strong relationships with local stakeholders. All respondents agree that no one entity can take on all the challenges a community faces. Also, the amount of feedback that came from DHS employees throughout the assessment was solution-oriented.

Some of the negative factors that emerged concerning culture such as retaliation, strained hierarchical relationships, silos and punitive environments can be linked to leaders being overwhelmed, a lack of investment and support for leadership and team development, not taking charge to change the narrative of DHS's organizational image and the absence of a strategic plan that provides consistent direction to align the entire organization.

Pathways to success: Agency-wide frameworks and recommendations

Clear themes emerged from analysis of the statewide assessment engagement tools data. Adoption of a comprehensive framework that includes organizational development and a cultural lens to establish an agency-wide platform will allow DHS to take consistent and intentional action across the entire organization. Development of a 12- to 18-month plan within the comprehensive framework to address the six priority areas will provide DHS with:

- ▶ Capacity to move in an intentional strategic direction to enhance opportunities for the Oregonians served daily
- ▶ Progress toward a culture that thrives, based on a work, life and health balance, and
- ▶ More effective achievement of long-term sustainable results.

These recommendations center around the Human Services Value Curve and a cultural developmental framework. Below is the culmination of DHS employees' input, feedback and departmental suggestions, blended with a few best practices from public and private sectors.

Human Services Value Curve framework and recommendations

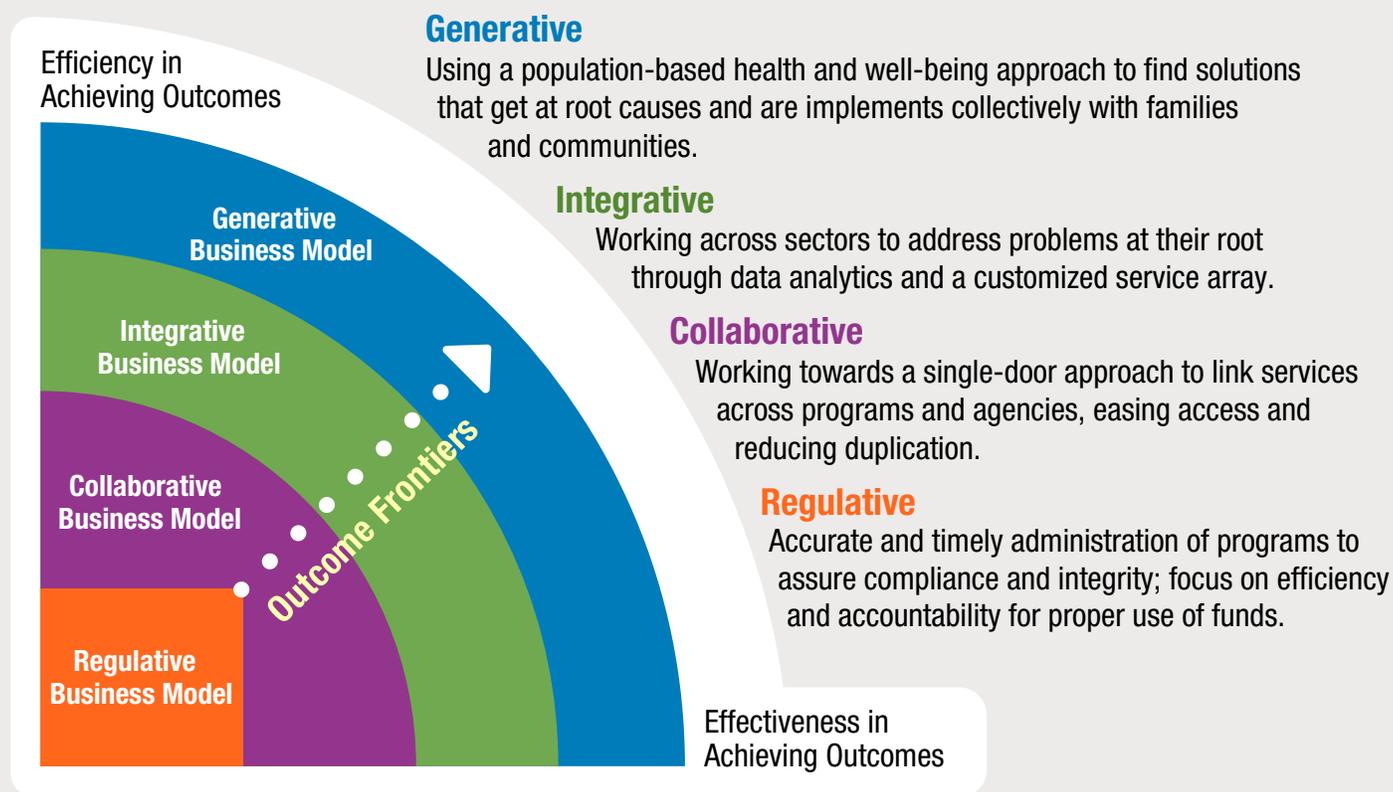
The Human Services Value Curve is a framework to help DHS improve operations. Use of it will provide a more integrated internal and external approach with strategic partners and communities. Adopting and using the value curve as a directional framework creates consistency and momentum toward long-term sustainable outcomes, while developing organizational capacity for DHS. The value curve illustrates movement through four distinct levels. The organization becomes more effective as it makes progress through the curve.

The American Public Human Services Association (APHSA) helps health and human services agencies across the nation move through the value curve. The association and agencies have collaboratively developed “pathway guideposts” (1) that help chart progress through the curve.

Figure 3. DHS six priority areas



Figure 4. Human Services Value Curve levels (1)



Pathway guideposts (1) focus on:

- Person- and family-centered services designed to engage in meaningful ways with families up front and deliver the right services, at the right time, and for the right duration
- Modern, efficient business solutions and customer connections that draw from the best innovations in government and the private sector
- Data-reliant and evidence-informed programs that can achieve better, faster results, provide more targeted interventions and reduce costs
- Application of decades of research in brain science and understanding of executive functioning to improve the ways we engage and empower families
- Accountability for sustainable outcomes, return on taxpayer investment and impacts that matter rather than for compliance with processes and outputs
- Generative partnerships that bridge traditional divisions both within government agencies and across the public-private sectors, and that leverage common resources and strengths, and
- Widespread testing to spark innovations and prompt implementation of what works.

Strategic direction

Collective agreement on a strategic direction by service delivery staff, agency leadership, legislature and executive branch will be key to stay the course and achieve consistent results. Stakeholders across the state have a common goal to assure all Oregonians, despite where they live and individual circumstances, can live to their full potential. That goal is the thread that connects everyone. Collective movement in the same direction guarantees success. Use of organizational and cultural framework helps to advance agency and community goals by focusing on decision-making and investments that have the greatest potential. Consistency in resourcing key objectives and efforts over time will guarantee reaching agreed-upon results for Oregonians needing services. Continuous progression toward mission-based goals is obtainable through:

- ▶ Consistent strategic focus
- ▶ Resource allocation, and
- ▶ Short- and long-term applied metrics.

When a unified strategic direction is in place, DHS will have the ability to take the next step from meeting requirements to fully developing competencies and capabilities for Oregonians served each year.

Recommendation

Short-term focus with a long-term view

Use the most recent organizational and departmental assessments as the start to develop a strategic direction for the organization. DHS currently has an established mission, vision and associated values. The current vision, “Safety, health and independence for all Oregonians,” is an excellent declaration. However, it may be a challenge in the short term to grasp, due to the size of the goal. Building short-term goal statements that support the agency long-term vision will provide greater engagement with measurable benchmarks for gauging progress and success. Breaking down the organizational vision into shorter and midterm goals in reach allows DHS to start creating balance between solving problems and scaling solutions.

Priority action: Short-term goal statement

Develop an agency-wide short-term goal statement that aligns with the long-term agency vision. The short-term goal statement will be used across the entire organization to align and guide all departments within DHS. A short-term goal statement should consider the following and be based on a 24–36 month timeline:

- ▶ An integrated internal and external approach to capacity building that engages employees and stakeholders.
- ▶ Be results oriented; include who is responsible for implementation and how it affects staff.

Priority action: Agency-wide priorities

Establish agency-wide priorities that align all DHS departments to achieve success relative to the short-term goal. Below are a few suggestions about the agency-wide priorities:

- ▶ Use the organizational development and cultural framework to guide major initiatives, objectives and investments throughout DHS.
- ▶ Assess departmental program service models for effectiveness, intended and long-term results. Consider using author Mark Friedman's seven questions (2) based around results accountability:
 1. Who are our customers? Who are our stakeholders?
 2. How can we measure if our customer is better off?
 3. How can we measure if we are delivering services well?
 4. How are we doing on the most important measures?
 5. Who are the partners that have a role to play in helping the strategy move forward?
 6. What will help us move forward?
 7. Focus on the six organizational development priority areas addressed in the internal assessment:
 - i. Investing in culture
 - ii. Talent development
 - iii. Organizational image
 - iv. Strategic direction
 - v. Strategic development
 - vi. Transition continuity

From policy to practice and process

During any proposed policy or practice development, engaging partners, clients, legislators and the staff that implement the policies should be a priority. Policies and procedures are created by agencies that have influence over how they are written and implemented related to the legislation they are based on or the best practice they are trying to instill.

Priority action: Policy development and implementation plan

Establish agency-wide protocols for the development and implementation of any policy and practice. To allow for more fluid adoption and increase chances to achieve results:

- ▶ Involve internal and external stakeholders in the decision-making process.
- ▶ Before scaling organization-wide, take time to:
 - Vet policies
 - Discuss potential affects, and
 - Look for any unidentified unintended effects.

Continued...

Priority action: Policy development and implementation plan, cont.

- ▶ Once a decision is made on a policy recommendation, recognize people who offered advice both internally and externally. Let them know what decision was made and why.
- ▶ Give ample lead time before a change goes into effect. Also, allow time for employees to become fully familiar with all aspects of the change.
- ▶ To ensure everyone understands the desired effect of the change and that you can prove achieving it, set metrics in place before, during and after.
- ▶ Communicate to all stakeholders the results of the policy and lessons learned.

Strategic development

Engaging employees, partners, clients and legislators as co-designers in DHS's design and delivery phases of strategic development allows all key stakeholders to be well informed and have a consistent set of expectations and understanding of the critical services that support clients. Continuing to review processes for effectiveness in relation to the intended impact allows for minor adjustments rather than major changes. Central Services and Shared Services are vital to the delivery side of DHS and building programs and processes that achieve intended results. Ground-up and top-down strategy development is one of the most effective approaches. Strategically engaging staff and clients from the field level and applying best practices or learning opportunities from Central Services creates policies and practices that have a better chance of achieving the intended impact.

Also, by actively engaging the public and private sector through the principles of listening, leading and collaborating, DHS will have the ability to discuss state-level challenges and opportunities, develop collaborative actionable strategies, share best practices and receive expert advice.

Recommendations

Agency-wide platform implementation

Develop a multipath road map that encompasses an organizational and cultural framework. This road map will guide DHS to increase its overall effectiveness as an agency and for clients served every day.

Priority action: Organizational developmental framework

Consult with APHSA to provide support and direction toward using the Human Services Value Curve framework as the guiding strategy. Use the strategy to enhance organizational development and capacity building across the entire organization.

- ▶ Involve internal and external stakeholders in the decision-making process. Also, in the development of long-term organization development goals that align with implementing a cultural framework.

Priority action: Cultural developmental framework

Use cultural developmental framework and lessons learned from Oregon Youth Authority to adjust and implement a framework that creates a culture where employees feel:

- ▶ Valued
- ▶ Empowered
- ▶ Accountable, and
- ▶ Supported toward achieving their full potential.

Review and align the cultural developmental framework rollout with the implementation of the Human Services Value Curve.

Strategic goals and planning

Develop 36-month strategic goals with an associated plan for each program area. Use organizational and cultural developmental frameworks to develop key impact strategies. Then, align with DHS' short-term goal statement and agency priority areas.

Priority action: Strategic plan

Develop program-related strategic plans that include use of:

- SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and timely) goals, and
- An inclusive process with staff and key stakeholders during the development phase.
- ▶ Strategic plans should include plans for:
 - Implementation
 - Sustainability, and
 - Measurable goals to track progress.
- ▶ Present plans to Cabinet. Cabinet members can provide feedback about overall objectives and ensure alignment with organizational and cultural frameworks.
- ▶ Align each program areas' fundamental maps with the strategic plan objectives and goals.

Strength-based public and private partnerships

Public and private partnerships can be one of the greatest assets to accelerate some of DHS' top priorities. Maintenance of active participation of local and statewide partners to support DHS is vital to deepen the agency's positive outcomes for Oregonians and to create sustainable results in every community.

Priority action: Establish an Agency Development Cabinet

By actively engaging the public and private sector through the principles of listening, leading and collaborating, DHS will have the ability to:

- ▶ Assemble key leaders from outside state government to:
 - Discuss state-level challenges and opportunities
 - Develop actionable strategies
 - Share best practices, and
 - Use the strengths of cabinet participants to help create sustainable results.
- ▶ Strategically provide cross-sector and community-based opportunities for partners to:
 - Build relationships
 - Exchange information, and
 - Collaborate to strengthen local communities.

Roles and responsibilities of cabinet members can focus around these objectives:

- ▶ Support development of a targeted response to one DHS priority objective.
- ▶ Contribute to:
 - Recruitment and connection of resources
 - Formal action and assistance in the removal of any identified barriers, and
 - Initial progress to reach the agreed-upon outcome.

The term for cabinet members may be as short as 12 months. Meetings may be quarterly with group sessions in between.

Priority action: Establish a Local Community Development Cabinet

By actively engaging regionalized staff through the principles of listening, leading and collaborating, DHS will have the ability to:

- ▶ Assemble key staff within a region to:
 - Discuss community specific challenges and opportunities
 - Develop actionable strategies
 - Share best practices, and
 - Use the strengths of cabinet participants to help create sustainable results.
- ▶ Staff will have the opportunity to:
 - Exchange information, and
 - Provide feedback and solutions that strengthen local areas.

Continued...

Priority action: Establish a Local Community Development Cabinet, cont.

Roles and responsibilities of cabinet members can focus around these objectives:

- ▶ Support development of a targeted response to one DHS priority objectives, or
- ▶ Identify an additional priority objective of the local area.
- ▶ Contribute to:
 - Recruitment and connection of resources
 - Formal action and assistance in the removal of any barriers, and
 - Initial progress made to reach the agreed-upon outcome.

The term for cabinet members may be as short as 12 months. Meetings may be quarterly with group sessions in-between.

Community engagement

Develop opportunities for DHS employees and partners to strategically think about the services they provide in their local communities and opportunities to become even more innovative.

Priority action: Identify existing community stakeholders

Develop strategic plan to identify community stakeholders and partners to:

- ▶ Engage and identify stakeholders and partners to ensure all available resources and connections in the community are documented.
- ▶ Exchange information about services available. Also, discuss best practices for engagement.
- ▶ Explore opportunities to expand partnerships that support our clients, while building trust.
- ▶ Develop a local resource list for services.
- ▶ Host community engagement events.

Employee engagement

Priority action: Feedback strategy sessions

Collaborate with DHS partners and employees from all program areas to:

- ▶ Evaluate current services
- ▶ Address challenges, and
- ▶ Review and discuss changes and progress that can help achieve long-term results.

Expectations for feedback sessions include:

- ▶ Ensure program staff from the field connect with central office staff
- ▶ Determine what we are doing well, and
- ▶ Discuss areas for improvement.

Priority action: Identify agency top initiatives for improvement

Identify top agency priorities with implications across the entire organization. Focus a significant portion of Office of Continuous Improvement resources on those objectives. Some objectives for consideration, based on findings of this report are to:

- ▶ Reassess the current recruitment, hiring and retention process.
- ▶ Relaunch the Lean Daily Management System (LDMS) across DHS. Focus on building site-based and departmental competencies, such as:
 - Require LDMS training for all newly hired employees.
 - Require LDMS biannual online refresher training for all staff.
 - Ensure LDMS training includes the short interval leadership component.
 - Create consistency in DHS communications to stress that employee ideas to improve processes and outcomes for clients is vital to a healthy and high-performing organization.
- ▶ Develop a consistent change management process across DHS to use in a two-tier approach:
 - Use change management strategies for large agency initiatives to prepare staff well before any major change.
 - For smaller, but still important, initiatives, develop internal skills around Prosci change management components (3) to use at the program level. Components are:
 - i. Readiness assessments
 - ii. Communication and communication planning
 - iii. Sponsor activities and sponsor road maps
 - iv. Coaching and manager training for change management
 - v. Training and employee training development
 - vi. Resistance management
 - vii. Data collection, feedback analysis and corrective action
 - viii. Celebrating and recognizing success
 - ix. After-project review
- ▶ Develop a policy development, implementation, change and rollout protocol that takes into consideration all parties affected and potential unintended consequences.

Transition continuity

The capacity to achieve results in DHS is directly related to the continuity between transitions. Success for all Oregonians across the state highly depends on continuity relative to strategy, people and information. Ultimately, any fragmentation or disruption between transitions can dramatically reduce the ability to build upon previous efforts, reduce information transfer and maintain the momentum relative to the agreed-upon objectives. Developing an agreed-upon future direction and approach toward achieving intended impact allows efforts and investments to build the momentum toward achieving sustainable results beyond transitions or external disruptions. Transitions and disruptions can relate to leadership changes, legislative cycles, changing funding streams and fluctuating economies. The most important aspect of transition continuity is around being able to continue moving in a strategic direction, measure the success of ongoing efforts related to investments and maintain strong cultural norms as an organization.

Recommendations

Master plan — agency-wide level

The development of an agreed-upon strategic direction and approach combined into a master plan bridges transitions, maintains organizational momentum and achieves both short- and long-term results. The master plan should be built upon foundational biennial investments and an agreed-upon approach with the flexibility to adapt to changing circumstances. Using the master plan as a platform for agency and statewide decisions sustains momentum for clients, communities, DHS and the state. For example, when 85 percent of a master plan is maintained and 15 percent is adjusted each biennium to changing variables and innovative opportunities, the overall inertia starts to build toward reaching the intended results. Success becomes predictable.

Priority action: Develop a DHS Master Plan

Develop a master plan that focuses on the future DHS vision of “Safety, health and independence for all Oregonians” with no more than five agency strategic priorities that support the continuity of DHS program services delivery, provide consistency of an integrated internal and external approach, and is results-oriented.

- ▶ From a collaborative perspective, identify the top five agency priorities.
- ▶ Provide opportunities for legislative and executive branch leadership to add value and perspectives on the overall master plan. Develop a fundamental agreement with DHS leadership, legislative stakeholders and executive branch leaders to support the continuity of the master plan and decisions that affect momentum.
- ▶ Develop an onboarding plan for all key leaders who have ownership and responsibility for the plan during any transition.
- ▶ Provide quarterly updates and semiannual strategy sessions to discuss priority area results and effectiveness against return on effort and investment.

Continued...

Priority action: Develop a DHS Master Plan, cont.

- ▶ Develop a communication plan to ensure all staff understand:
 - The master plan and how it impacts them, and
 - The services we provide.

Master plan — field level

Using the department level strategic plans, develop a practice that maintains the continuity of client-based progress, important operational capabilities and momentum around strategic imperatives.

Priority action: Transition and succession plan

Develop a transition and succession plan that maintains the critical information for the clients being served or critical specialty processes that need to be maintained for the continuity of services. Some suggestions to be considered are listed below:

- ▶ Cross-training opportunities.
- ▶ Transition teams: Once an employee announces their intention to leave, designate an interim person or team to help.

RiSE: DHS organizational culture

Providing human services in a public service context is a commitment to assisting a segment of the population that benefits all the people in a society or community.

The traditional public service organizational culture follows a regulatory approach and is prone to inertia and lack of creative resilience, which can lead to diminishing returns for those being served by the organization. Taking steps toward creating an intentional organizational culture where all state employees are valued, empowered, accountable and supported toward reaching their full potential will naturally result in positive engagement for those who receive services as well as those who provide them, create fiscal accountability and achieve sustainable results.

Through the guidance and support of the DHS Leadership team, the Office of Reporting, Research, Analytics and Implementation team is engaged in an intentional organizational culture shift to create environments of engagement for all employees, clients, consumers and stakeholders interacting with the agency. This culture embodies a positive, respectful and growth-focused approach where each touchpoint with the agency is focused on improving the lives and outcomes of individuals, families and communities.

When the needs of people with diverse backgrounds and experiences are supported, individuals feel safe and cared for; they feel a sense of belonging, become engaged and thrive through a balance of empowerment and accountability. DHS's goal is for people to feel safe enough to push back without fear and with a focus on outcomes.

When the organizational culture becomes embedded in every day work, the mission of the agency becomes much easier to accomplish. DHS will do this through safety and well-being, caring and

supportive relationships, high expectations and accountability, meaningful participation, and community engagement. DHS believes that all individuals have great potential to make a difference and should be provided opportunities to take an active role in self, partnerships and collaborations that lead to greater individual, family and community health and an opportunity to live a life of purpose.



Figure 5. DHS organizational culture change

The cultural framework already underway within DHS will align with organizational efforts including equity, trauma-informed care, and DHS’s mission, vision and values. The framework will be embedded across the entire organization. The cultural framework implementation plan and specific recommendations related to culture follow:

Investing in culture

DHS is investing in creating an inclusive culture. This culture is rooted in the agency’s mission and cultivated by our employees. The creation of environments and interactions that honor individual and collective experiences and knowledge can inspire DHS to RiSE to be better tomorrow.

RiSE is the positive and intentional organizational culture of Oregon’s Department of Human Services. It will build a better DHS through the collective commitment of:

- ▶ Employees
- ▶ Leadership
- ▶ Stakeholders, and
- ▶ Clients.

We will achieve this through:

- ▶ Individual and collective engagement
- ▶ Leadership commitment, and
- ▶ Organizational development.

RiSE envisions a DHS that ensures each touchpoint with the agency is focused on improving the lives and outcomes for:

- ▶ All employees, and
- ▶ The individuals, families and communities we serve.

Recommendations

Leadership development

Three concepts that affect the entire organization are:

- ▶ Leadership instability
- ▶ Competency, and
- ▶ Capacity.

Successful leaders transform organizations, even in the most challenging circumstances. Investing in leaders today and developing DHS' frontline staff who will lead tomorrow provide a deep and wide talent bench.

Priority action: Leadership training

Ensure management and leadership training is available for all staff. Training should include successful leader foundations that can advance DHS' commitment to safety, health and independence.

Priority action: Agency leadership development training for managers

The Organization and Employee Development (OED) Unit currently has a comprehensive leadership development training curriculum called NAVIGATE. The curriculum should be reviewed against findings in this assessment. Consider the following:

- ▶ NAVIGATE curriculum should be mandatory for all managers, once any gaps are found and addressed.
- ▶ Develop a practical plan that allows for leadership time constraints.
- ▶ Link trainings to established monthly or quarterly meetings to help leaders meet the requirements and curriculum components of NAVIGATE.
- ▶ Reinforce and expand the current leadership model of "lead from any chair." *Continued...*

Priority action: Agency leadership development training for managers, cont.

- ▶ Develop a three-day leadership basics training for those who support teams. Within the first 90 days of a new leadership role, the leader should take the training.
- ▶ Develop a plan to rollout and provide a brief training on the 13 leadership stabilization techniques. These techniques were developed during the internal assessment in response to trends in leadership challenges.

Priority action: Leadership assessment tools

Consider development of self-administered and independent oversight assessment tools through OED.

- ▶ Tools should help leaders to better understand:
 - Climate
 - Culture, and
 - Daily operational realities.
- ▶ Tools should have the ability to reveal issues related to key findings about balance of:
 - Work
 - Life, and
 - Health.
- ▶ Use efficient audit techniques such as:
 - Keep, stop or start
 - Targeted engagement surveys that communicate the results to team members with related action items, and
 - Annual 360 feedback techniques.
- ▶ Implement a communications strategy through OED that shares:
 - Leadership best practices
 - Team development across the entire organization, and
 - Peer coaching opportunities for all leaders.

Team-oriented organization

Supporting leaders to build high performing teams creates the foundation to address organizational challenges and leverage emerging opportunities. Current investment in team development and recognition is not apparent across the organization.

Consider supporting a culture of self-managing teams both formal and informal that are responsible for results and empowered to make decisions.

Priority action: Team development plan

Strategic investments in team development, recognition and establishment of strategic task forces can:

- ▶ Help stabilize current operations
- ▶ Build a supportive culture among team members, and
- ▶ Achieve greater results.

Align all team-related development under the Organization and Employee Development Unit.

- ▶ Develop specific trainings for leaders to achieve agreed-upon objectives and goals by working with team members daily to:
 - Engage
 - Support, and
 - Challenge.
- ▶ Commit to quarterly trainings and team building experiences with a focus on trust, recognition, problem solving, and individual and group dynamics.
- ▶ Include teams in strategic planning.
- ▶ Develop floating task force teams. These teams can assemble across the state to help targeted operations get up to speed.
- ▶ Provide leaders recognition opportunities to support their team as a group through celebrations.

Equity, diversity and inclusion

The strength of equity, diversity and inclusion efforts is imperative. Efforts need to meet the greatest challenges and potential opportunities that face workforce and program services today and in the future. To realize the potential of an inclusive environment where success is based on the potential of people, leadership across DHS needs to invest:

- ▶ Sufficient time
- ▶ Appropriate resources, and
- ▶ Consistent ongoing efforts.

Priority action: Strategic plan

Consider development of a strategic plan to provide tools to support equity, diversity and inclusion efforts across DHS. These tools will increase the competency and effectiveness of the agency.

- ▶ Provide support and guidance to develop equity, diversity and inclusion plans. This includes dashboards for all departments and Central Services and Shared Services.
- ▶ Require all programs use dashboards as accountability mechanisms. This will help to ensure equity, diversity and inclusion across DHS.
- ▶ Develop resources, trainings and strategies that can cascade across all of DHS.

Talent development

Strengthen current support systems through DHS' Human Resources. The strength of support systems are vital to stabilize and leverage the potential of DHS' current and future workforce. To allow DHS to retain and recruit top talent there must be focus on:

- ▶ All hiring and onboarding processes
- ▶ Professional development of current DHS employees, and
- ▶ Use of a recruitment lens that prioritizes equity, diversity and inclusion.

Developing competency pathways both internally and externally will assure that DHS has the critical talent with the insight, training and support to achieve mission-based objectives.

Recommendations

Recruitment, hiring and onboarding

The recruitment, hiring and onboarding process has been one of the greatest challenges for DHS. To attract top talent to DHS can be a big challenge due to:

- ▶ Stiff competition from the private and nonprofit sector
- ▶ Lengthy hiring processes, and
- ▶ Negative stereotypes about government operations.

Priority action: Assessment

Use the Office of Continuous Improvement to conduct an assessment on the current state of the recruitment, hiring and onboarding process using the appropriate team members from the following departments. Provide recommendations to the DHS Cabinet members:

- ▶ Human Resources (HR), Office of Equity and Multicultural Services (OEMS), Office of Organization and Employee Development (OED), and Communications
 - Consider focusing the assessment on these areas:
- ▶ Recruitment techniques, data trends on position demand and dashboards
- ▶ Application process, user friendliness and barriers
- ▶ Hiring panels, scoring techniques, decision points
- ▶ Removing favoritism and retaliation in the hiring process
- ▶ Onboarding practices
- ▶ Time to hire assessment
- ▶ Ongoing support techniques

Develop and implement a diversity recruitment and retention plan in collaboration with the Office of Equity and Multicultural Services (OEMS) for HR.

Retention

Investments in employees and valuing their contribution is the foundation of retention efforts. Many times, DHS can focus on recruitment and hiring instead of retaining and developing the current workforce. Employee turnover rate at DHS causes a cascade effect of the same challenges across the organization. Efforts to increase retention rates will:

- ▶ Directly support staff morale
- ▶ Enhance productivity
- ▶ Create a balance between work and life, and
- ▶ Save significant costs across DHS.

Priority action: Retention assessment and strategy development

Through the Office of Continuous Improvement, conduct an assessment that includes recommendations on current retention rates. Also, assess efforts already in action across DHS. Use the recommendations to:

- ▶ Develop a formal employee retention strategy plan, and
- ▶ Adopt as a consistent strategy across the organization.

Assessment review points and recommendations for consideration should include:

Review points:

- ▶ Track turnover and oversight practices
- ▶ Exit survey; look to see if it is:
 - Available
 - Effective
 - Consistent in process, and
 - Utilization rates
- ▶ Current practices of initial onboarding and beyond
- ▶ Current retention strategies:
 - Recognition
 - Mentorship programs, and
 - Cross-training
- ▶ Participation rates in professional development opportunities by employees, and
- ▶ Staff engagement surveys: Why do staff stay?

Succession planning

Develop a formal succession plan to address the transition continuity of all DHS positions.

Priority action: Departmental succession planning

Develop a simplified succession plan structure. Use a diversity lens toward all positions.

Require an annual goal of succession planning for each department.

- ▶ Identify key leadership positions that require specific candidates. Prepare to uphold business continuity during transitions.

Career pathways

Develop a plan to create more accessible career pathways and opportunities for employees who want to grow inside or outside of DHS.

Priority action: Talent development plan

The plan should contain some of the following focus areas.

- ▶ Identify and remove any systemic barriers to career advancement in DHS.
- ▶ Review the current qualifications concerning each position relative to the actual work conducted and recommend adjustments as appropriate.
- ▶ Determine if an internal and external competency ladder can be developed to meet the position requirements.
- ▶ Competency ladders may be a variety of options from rotations, cross-training, job shadowing opportunities and formal trainings programs.
- ▶ Consider semi-annual regionally based internal/external career fairs with components such as:
 - Hiring managers host booths with potential openings and types of positions within their department.
 - Available jobs are posted ahead of time to increase awareness.

Training

Provide relevant accessible training for all employees. The right type of training is critical to deliver the mission of DHS across the entire organization.

Priority action: Inventory and audit current training programs

Audit current training program for relevancy, inventory of training opportunities, duplication, use and accessibility. Provide recommendations.

Priority action: Strategic training plan

Use audit results to develop a strategic training plan that supports the next steps of DHS.

- ▶ Embed in all trainings:
 - Future organizational approaches
 - Practices, and
 - Expectations.
- ▶ Identify current and future foundational skills. Incorporate into trainings.
- ▶ Consider different styles and innovative types of training that have a greater return.

Organizational image

Strengthening the image of DHS internally and externally will deepen relationships with local communities, enhance the overall pride for DHS employees and increase the intersections of local, regional and statewide opportunities from public and private sectors.

Recommendations

Organizational image and awareness

Increase and manage the organizational image. Address views and improve awareness of the important work done each day. Image and awareness are critical to fulfill DHS' mission.

Priority action: Develop a communication plan to strengthen DHS' organizational image

Develop a communication plan that considers the following:

- ▶ Different message formats and platforms to create awareness
- ▶ Local opportunities to engage with key stakeholders, and
- ▶ Opportunities to speak at local civic organizations.

Support structure

The perspective toward enhancing current organizational structure is based on the key findings and recommendations in this report. There are five main concepts to consider about the current organizational structure and associated changes:

1. Develop a more integrated internal approach at all levels
2. Align related areas for programs, Central Services and Shared Services
3. Engage stakeholders and partners in a more integrated external approach
4. Increase a focus on organizational developmental fundamentals across DHS, and
5. Create a consistent culture based on DHS' mission, vision and values

Develop a more integrated internal approach at all levels

The internal assessment results highlighted the opportunity to create more opportunities for horizontal integration opportunities such as connecting, collaborating, innovating, sharing best practices, and developing shared strategy and communication channels.

The internal integration would focus on:

- ▶ Program service area to program service area
- ▶ Central Services and Shared Services to program service areas
- ▶ District level program areas
- ▶ District to neighboring districts and statewide districts, and
- ▶ Region to region.

Align related areas for programs, Central Services and Shared Services

Organizing units within DHS by moving programs or services together that share like function, natural synergies or even dependencies will help increase productivity, collaboration and innovation. Considering programs and areas that align functionally or strategically will also support the reporting structure for any given leader. Also, a study on the amount of direct reports each leader has should be considered. Many leaders have significant work-related demands and too many direct reports can create an inability for managers to remove the barriers their employees face, can reduce the time provided for coaching opportunities and the development of possible delays in decision-making.

Also, strengthening vertical alignment between program and Central Services that are in Salem with associated field resources will make a significant difference. Some of the benefits with greater vertical alignment are listed below:

- ▶ Direct channels for both program and central service specific communications
- ▶ Clear lines of authority, planning and decision-making
- ▶ Greater lines of sight for increased policy and practice implementation, oversight and evaluation
- ▶ Enhanced fiscal management oversight and awareness of central services

Staff have expressed a desire for key administrative functions to be closer to where the work is being performed. Alignment of those functions within the field structure will allow program staff the opportunity to focus on program delivery and outcomes relates to supporting the families in our communities, while administrative functions are being performed by dedicated administrative staff. Increasing both vertical alignment and horizontal integration throughout DHS will potentially allow experts more time to focus on their area of expertise by removing responsibilities that might not directly be related to their individual strengths or daily work. Vertical alignment and horizontal integration has the potential to accelerate inter-agency learning and increase productivity.

Engage stakeholders and partners in a more integrated external approach

External horizontal integration between DHS and the community partners both for-profit and non-profit, will provide more opportunities to leverage local resources, create strength-based partnerships, and enhance the organizational image. Also, connecting with other state-based agencies locally and at the state level will create greater outcomes for both clients and communities.

Increase focus on organizational developmental fundamentals

Key findings of the internal assessment gives insight of the need to focus on foundational organizational development priorities that support the current DHS service model. Development of opportunities will be vital to achieve mission-based outcomes for DHS.

Create a consistent culture based on DHS' mission, vision and values

DHS organizational structure with horizontal integration and vertical alignment will create greater opportunities to develop and keep a pulse on culture and climate at all levels. This allows for greater consistency to create cultural norms that match the mission, vision and values DHS embraces at its core.

Use of the internal assessment results with leaders and team members across DHS in strategy sessions will help confirm other key elements to consider about any future potential structural changes.

Summary

The internal assessment started with this question:

How do DHS employees recommend we become our best for the Oregonians who need us most and the communities where they reside?

In the quest by the Department of Human Services to provide the greatest public value across the state and local communities, two things stand true:

- ▶ DHS team members across the state are ready to move forward toward success, and
- ▶ “Change is inevitable. Progress is optional.” (4) It doesn’t have to be.

Most of the capacity to deliver broader, more effective and sustainable outcomes lies within DHS today. Success doesn’t always require extensive changes. If everyone takes part in the effort to move forward, success is within reach. To position DHS to make sure progress already in our current potential is acted upon takes:

- ▶ Collective commitment to a unified vision
- ▶ Intentionality to make short-term decisions with a long-term view, and
- ▶ People first perspective.

Addressing key findings and recommendations in this report will position DHS, its partners, stakeholders and staff to provide pathways for individuals, families and communities we serve toward being their very best. This includes the staff who support them.

Endnotes

1. American Public Human Services Association [Internet]. Creating a Modern and Responsive HHS System [cited 2019 Feb 1]. Available from: https://aphsa.org/APHSA/Policy_and_Resources/pathways_initiative_papers.aspx (<https://trayinc.cld.bz/Pathways/Creating-a-Modern-and-Responsive-HHS-System>).

Note: © The Human Services Value Curve by Antonio M. Oftelie & Leadership for a Networked World is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License. Based on a work at <https://lnwprogram.org/hsvc>. Permissions beyond the scope of this license may be available at <https://lnwprogram.org/>.

2. Friedman M. Trying hard is not good enough: how to produce measurable improvements for customers and communities. Santa Fe, NM: Parse Publishing; 2009.
3. Management PC. Change Management Process [Internet]. Prosci. Change Management Articles [cited 2019 Feb 8]. Available from: <https://www.prosci.com/resources/articles/change-management-process>.
4. Tony Robbins [cited 2019 Feb 8].

Appendix

Appendix A. Organizational scan

The internal assessment organizational scan was made to gain a deeper understanding of DHS' key focus areas:

1. Climate
2. Alignment, and
3. Culture.

The framework to assess these three focus areas was built on a maturity model from an organizational development fundamentals perspective. In other words, the assessment was made on current effectiveness. The assessment helped find capabilities DHS needs to improve performance. Four categories and subcategories were used to formulate the engagement tools of the internal assessment. (Figure 6)

Preliminary research

Preliminary research was conducted to help develop questions for the internal assessment engagement process. More than 200 DHS employees from the field, Central Services and Shared Services participated to help:

- ▶ Focus the assessment, and
- ▶ Ask the most important questions.

Below are some sources used to build the internal assessment engagement tools.

Figure 6. Categories of organizational development maturity

1. Structure and operations	2. Culture and strategy development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership structure • Consistency • Succession plans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vision • Mission • Strategic priorities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lines of authority: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Site » Field, and » Central office 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employee: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Engagement » Expectations, and » Recognition
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staffing distribution patterns 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decision-making processes • Data use
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Central services: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Use, and » Support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collective impact approach
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communications channels 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic coaching • Mentoring • Training
3. Service delivery	4. Performance
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service model: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Transactional » Segmented, and » Integrated 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategy development • Priority metrics • Results accountability
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workload patterns • Staffing capacity • Retention 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reporting requirements • Meeting framework
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Target population engagement • Constituent engagement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance accountability • Consistency
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Geographic service area • Site location mapping 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Process barriers • Protocol barriers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interdepartmental partnerships • Community connectivity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuous improvement practices

Engagement process

The internal assessment was comprised of:

- ▶ In-person focus groups
- ▶ One-on-one interviews
- ▶ Group strategy sessions, and
- ▶ Follow-up surveys throughout the DHS employee population.

Groups were comprised of DHS:

- ▶ Executives
- ▶ Managers
- ▶ Supervisors
- ▶ Direct service staff, and
- ▶ Support staff.

There were separate sessions to elicit position-specific responses.

Each focus group took part in “keep, start or stop” sessions. These sessions helped identify:

- ▶ Areas of improvement
- ▶ The organizational health of the local group, and
- ▶ Perspective on what employees feel they need to be successful.

Besides the keep, start or stop exercises, groups were asked a series of questions that created dialogue. This dialogue spanned everything from DHS culture and process, to the people who lead the units and those that do the valuable work. From these discussions, field surveys were conducted to elicit:

- ▶ Deeper understanding of the work, and
- ▶ Workers’ perceptions of that work.

Respondents were kept anonymous to ensure greater data validity. The order and methodology of the questions remained relatively consistent throughout each district and program.

Figure 7. Preliminary research sources used to create assessment instrument



Data facts:

More than **90,000** responses were analyzed. These came from:

- **Over 3,500** focus group participants
- **1,550** other survey respondents, and
- **16** operational districts that cover every area of the state, that includes Central Services and Shared Services.

Some qualitative responses are included in this report verbatim to offer context. However, these responses do not identify the responders.

Engagement process and data limitations

The main goal of the internal assessment was to capture voices and views of employees across DHS. The data collection approach and analysis are limited to the information captured. Qualitative data interpretation may be subject to bias due to the translation of responses by data analysts. Data analytical software was used with all data and input when possible. Analysis should only be used as a start to more deeply understand trends across DHS.

Appendix B. Data and feedback analysis approach

For the internal assessment, DHS experts from their respective fields were pulled together to assist in analysis of:

- ▶ Data
- ▶ Feedback, and
- ▶ Strategy session results.

These DHS team members are:

- ▶ Matthew Eagles, PhD: Office of Human Resources
- ▶ Andrew Waugh, PhD: Office of Reporting, Research, Analytics and Implementation
- ▶ Oana McKinney: Office of Forecasting, Research and Analysis
- ▶ Robert McGinnis: Self-Sufficiency Programs
- ▶ April Barrett: Office of Director and Policy

Figure 8. Individual data points from research participants

Engagement tools	Respondents	Data points
Keep, start or stop	1,598	9,118
Allocation of time	531	4,248
Organizational priority	657	2,648
Stress rating	646	646
Central Services and Shared Services priorities	92	552

Engagement tools	Respondents	Questions	Quantitative	Qualitative
Management survey	193	59	11,387	744
Non-management survey	1,357	44	42,067	17,641

Above (figure 8) shows a breakdown of data points by the engagement tools.

Engagement tool analysis

The section below highlights the seven engagement tools used in the internal assessment:

1. Keep, stop or start
2. Stress rating
3. Organizational strengths
4. Allocation of time
5. Management survey
6. Non-management survey
7. Interviews and focus group strategic questions

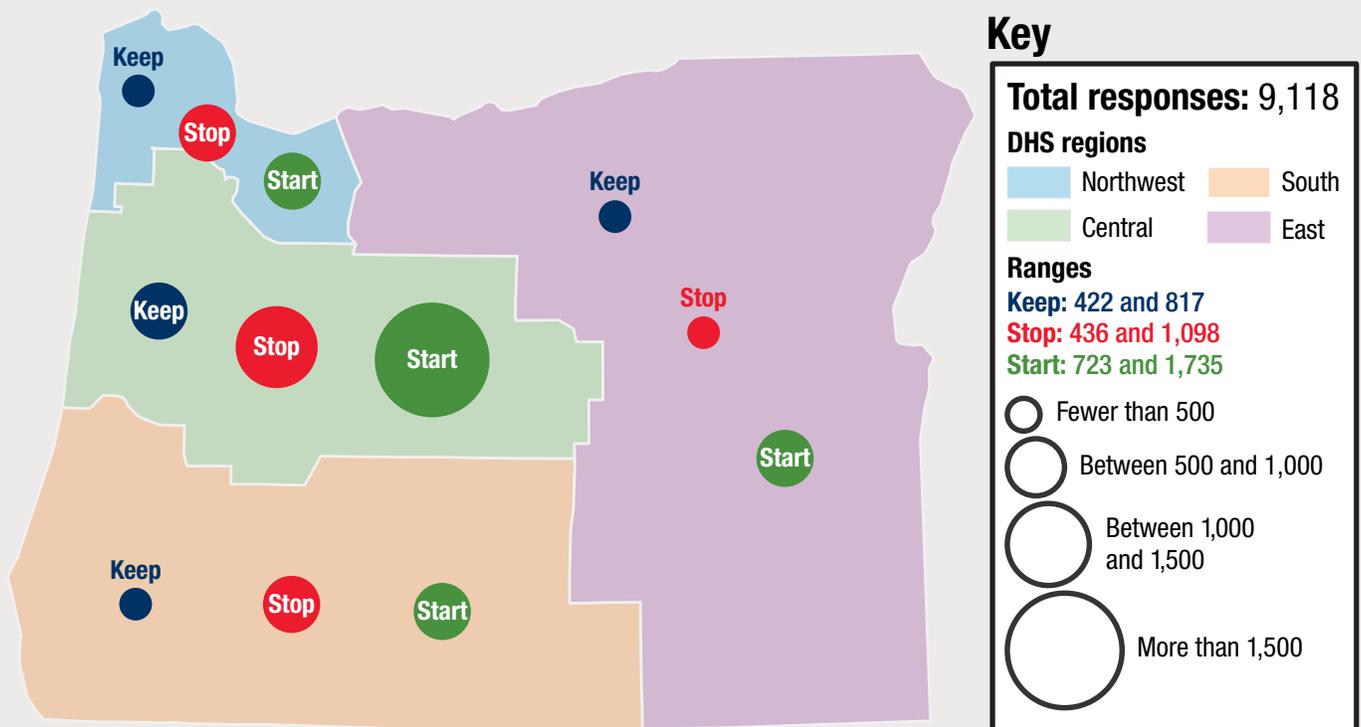
For each engagement tool listed, there is a brief description of the tool used and a summary of the highlights. Resources related to the tools are in the appendix below. Engagement tools results are expanded upon in the key findings section of this report.

Keep, stop or start

One of the main engagement tools used to better understand the organizational health in each of the districts was the *keep, stop or start* technique. Basically, what should DHS *keep doing, stop doing or start doing*. Most focus groups in the assessment took part in the *keep, stop or start* exercise. Results were grouped by districts. The goal of this technique was to get a quick snap-shot of how each group perceived they were doing overall. Each focus group was intentionally instructed to provide their *keep, stop or start* responses from any point of view they desired. Most responses related to their specific location from where they worked each day. The results across all districts represented in regions were consistent. The critical mass of input was in the *start* category 90 percent of the time. Usually, the second most populated responses fell under *stop*. The fewest were in the *keep* category. More than 9,000 responses were collected from the *keep, stop or start* exercise from more than 1,500 respondents.

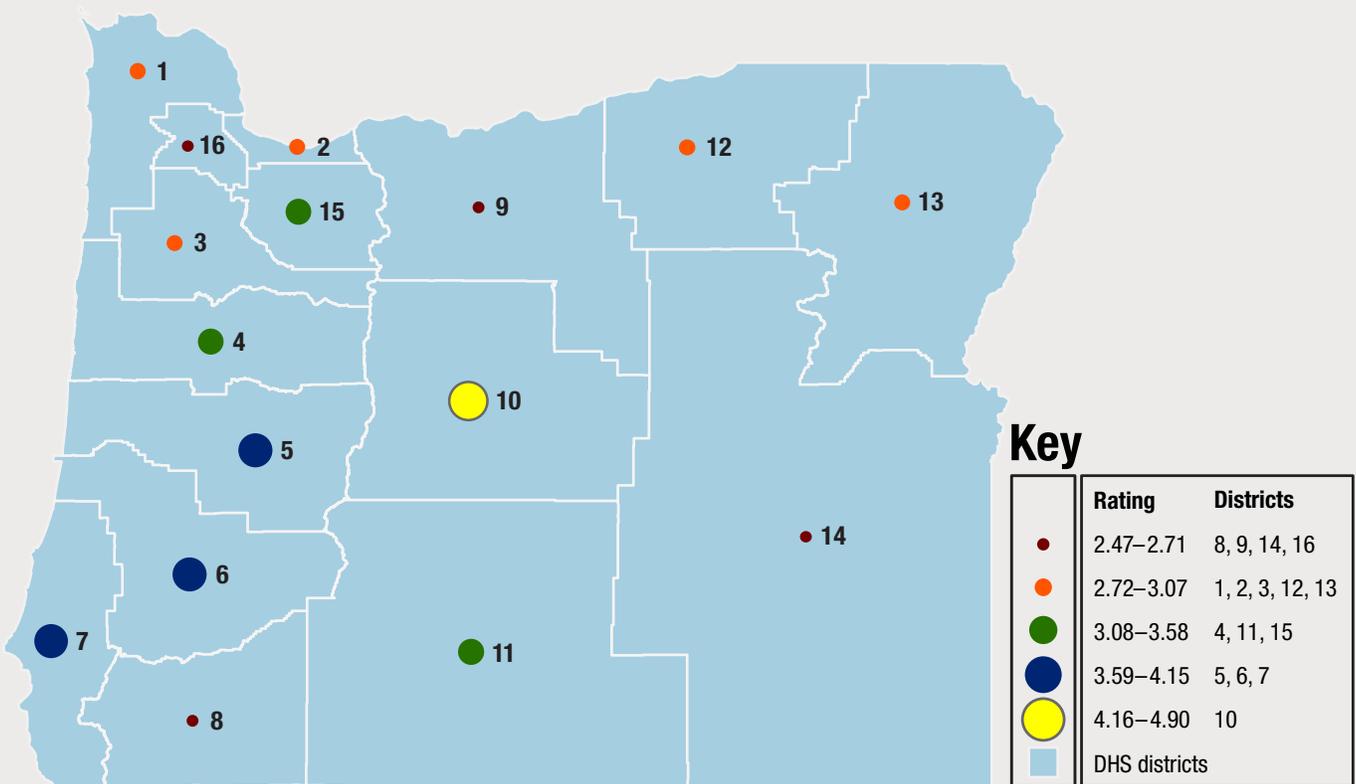
There was also a *change keep ratio*. This ratio represents the sum of *start count* and *stop count* divided with *keep count*. Any *start* or *stop* might be a different way of framing the same issue. However, the basic

Figure 9. Keep/stop/start engagement tool responses, by region



Programs in descending frequency of responses: SSP, CW, APD, VR, HR, OHP, OEMS.

Figure 10. Change keep ratio, by district



Programs in descending frequency of responses: SSP, CW, APD, VR, HR, OHP, OEMS.

message is, “I want something different.” This is as opposed to a *keep*, which is, “I like some aspect of the status quo.” In districts where the *change keep ratio* is high, we surmise that respondents are particularly concerned about the status quo. This is because top-of-mind issues were change as opposed to *keep*.

As an organization progresses toward its vision, mission and goals, *keep* usually becomes the largest category identified by employees. This is because most practices in organizations that are progressing:

- ▶ Are specifically designed to produce a benefit
- ▶ Are tested and approved by both employees and consumers alike, and
- ▶ Ensure sustainability of the practice with the ability to flex as needed.

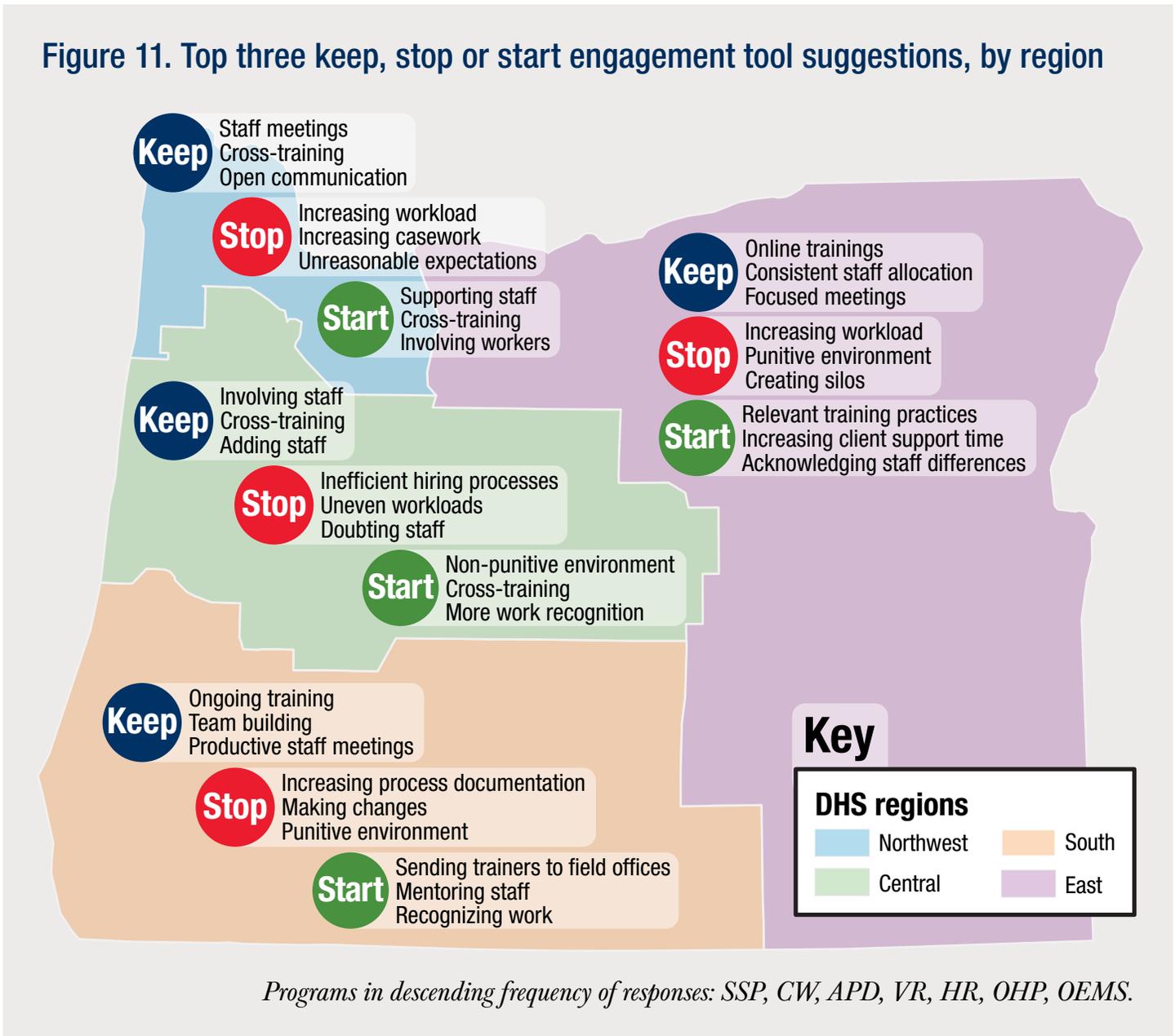
Stop in such an organization would be minimal in comparison, as most of these would:

- ▶ Already be addressed, and
- ▶ Things that don’t work, or cause barriers, would already be removed and not tolerated.

Start would likewise be minimal as:

- ▶ Good ideas are tested and, if successful, adopted agency-wide, and
- ▶ Then become future *keeps*.

Figure 11. Top three keep, stop or start engagement tool suggestions, by region



The overall results of the *keep, stop or start* exercise proves that:

- ▶ DHS employees have great ideas to move the organization forward, and
- ▶ They are ready for the change.

Figure 11 shows, by region, the top three most frequent comments related to the *keep, stop or start* engagement tool.

Stress rating

Gauging the stress level was another measurement used during the internal assessment. During some of the focus groups, participants were offered a chance to self-rate individual stress levels from 0 to 10, with 8 to 10 being the range of burnout. Respondents placed their individual stress level between 5.0 and 7.5,

with an average of 6.3. The map below shows the ratings for 646 respondents across the districts where the stress rating engagement tool was used. The circles on the map represent the DHS districts and their size displays the average rating for each district based on the number of participants. Self-rating tool results and focus group responses concerning stress were slightly disconnected. Many focus group participants spoke repeatedly of:

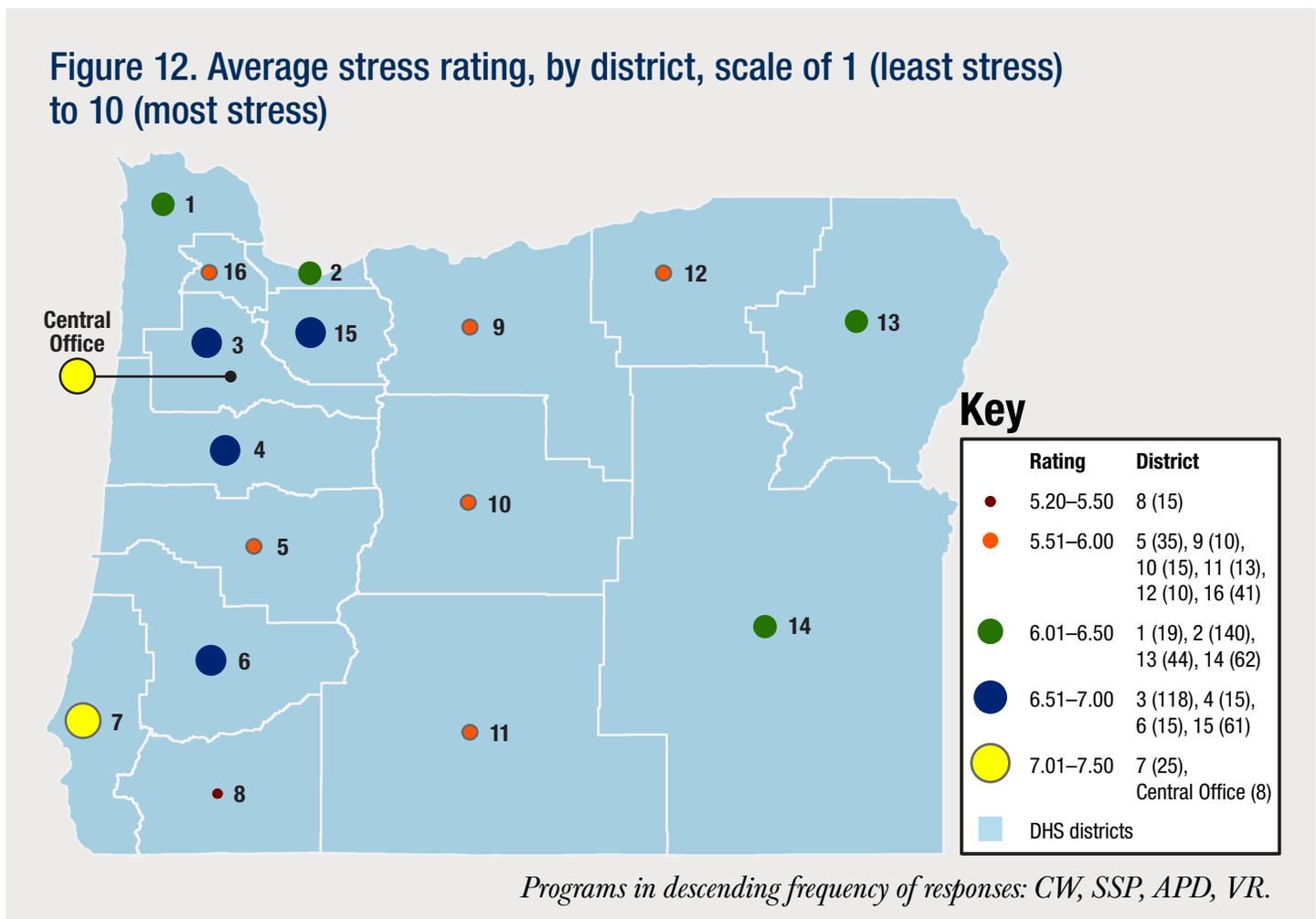
- ▶ Overwhelming workload, and
- ▶ Pressure and fatigue they experience daily trying to keep up with the work.

However, when asked to self-rate their stress, it was rare that it ever crossed the rating of 8, the bottom of the burnout range. In fact, the average rating was 6.3.

Organizational strengths

Organizational strengths perspective was another measurement used to understand the areas DHS was perceived as doing well and areas for improvement. Each area had a question that requested the respondent to rate from a range of 1 to 7. Where 1 represented the weakest and 7 the strongest. There were ratings for 657 respondents across the districts. The four main areas that respondents were asked about are listed in Figure 13.

Figure 12. Average stress rating, by district, scale of 1 (least stress) to 10 (most stress)



Overall ratings were below the midpoint of 4. “Client focus” had the strongest rating of 3.9 and “nimbleness” had the lowest rating of 2.8.

Allocation of time

Figure 13. Organizational strengths, DHS agency level, on a 1 to 7 scale

Category	Question (Scale: 1 weakness to 7 strength)	Average rating
Organizational connectivity	How well do we share best practices, communicate and strategize across departments?	3.1
Client focus	How well do we create services for clients that have meaningful value, are client-designed and data-informed, and have a lasting impact?	3.9
Nimbleness	How well do we simplify how work gets done, sense changing environments that affect our staff, act on those changes in a timely manner and institutionalize what works?	2.8
Sustainability	How well do we analyze, build strategies and implement changes that prioritize prevention as a primary strategy and intervention as a secondary strategy?	2.9

The time allocation survey asked respondents to:

- ▶ Estimate the percentage of time they devote to each of eight work duty categories, and
- ▶ Give each category a 0–5 importance score.

The ranking was from 0 (least important) to 5 (most important). This allowed respondents to self-assess importance on use of their time.

Results of the allocation of time survey identified a couple of key points about how respondents typically spend their time. Client-related support ranked the highest on average with a rating of 4. It also happened to be where most employees applied 25 percent of their time. This rating also correlates with recurring comments from focus group sessions. In these sessions, respondents shared that 75 percent of their time is spent on work-related categories other than direct “client-related support.” Many other work-related categories indirectly support or are a required part of services to clients.

Figure 14. Staff estimates of time spent on duties and their assessment of importance of duties, statewide

Work-related category	Average percent	Average importance
Client-related support	25.6 %	4.0
Administrative, reporting and data input	22.3 %	3.0
Staff or team support and development	17.3 %	3.9
DHS-related meetings	13.5 %	2.5
Strategy development	6.5 %	3.2
Community engagement and development	6.5 %	3.2
Travel	6.5 %	1.4
Other	2.2 %	0.5

Management survey

The management survey covered a variety of topics including leadership competencies, supportive organizational structure, annual review of progress and stakeholder engagement. Of the management participants who responded to the survey, 64 percent considered the relationship with their immediate supervisor was built on trust, transparency and consistent feedback. Only 60 percent of the respondents felt that they were appropriately trained, prepared and supported to address the needs and complexities of their daily work and the staff they support. The managers who responded stated that at least 82 percent have never been trained how to read a budget; only 30 percent were comfortable interpreting their budget-related reports; and 45 percent were not sure which budget decisions they had authority to affect.

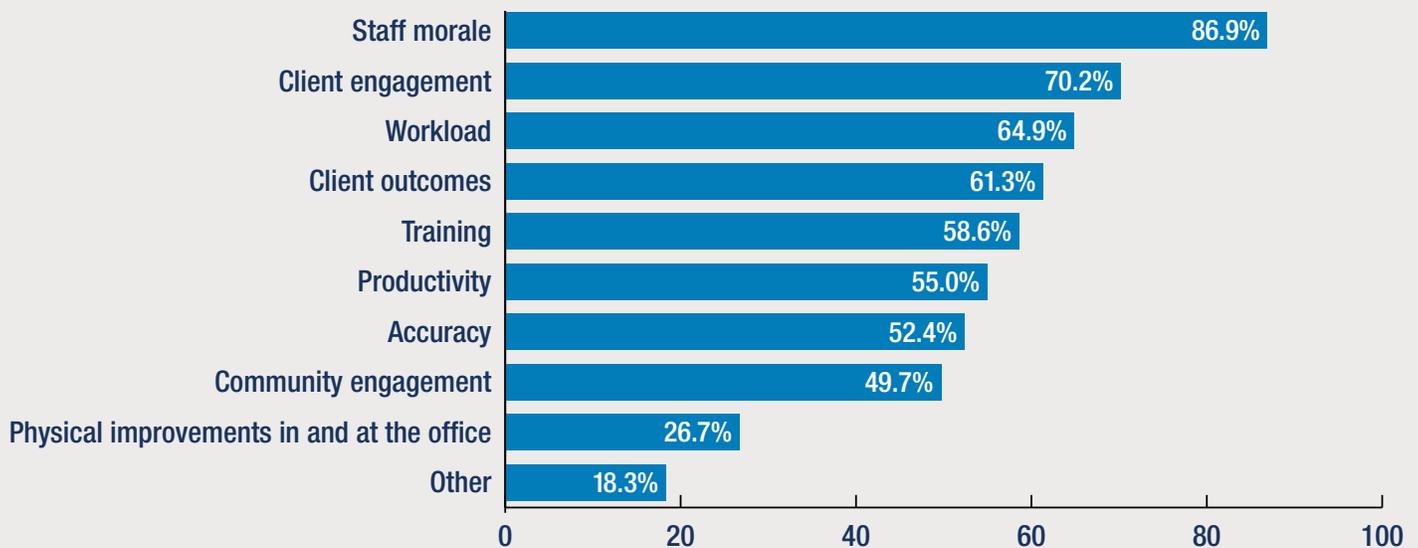
Relating to leadership competencies was the organizational structure, which only 41.6 percent rated as being supportive of the workload managers and fellow team members addressed daily. Respondents also referred to that same structure only supporting their strategic goals 45 percent of the time. Relative to the strategic goals, respondents rated their top four priorities as staff morale, client engagement, workload and client outcomes. Despite the above percentages, 79 percent said that they felt there were clear lines of authority, reporting and accountability to their direct supervisor.

When asked which shared and central support services that they frequently used, human resources, facilities, equity/multicultural services, continuous improvement and communications were the top five.

Figure 15 shows all categories and their associated ratings.

Only 32 percent of managers felt they had a clear understanding of the Central Services and Shared Services available and how to access them. Respondents felt 31 percent of the time that Central Services

Figure 15. Projected strategic focus over next two to three years



and Shared Services consistently provided the appropriate updates, succinct informational reports, learning opportunities along with the sharing of best practices. Also, when rating responsiveness, 38 percent considered Central Services and Shared Services as being responsive to their requests.

When managers were asked about currently having any backlogs, 60 percent of them said yes, and 61 percent said they review processes at least annually with the goal of reducing backlogs and inefficiencies, and increasing accuracy rates. Sixty-three percent of the respondents use data to forecast outcomes, yet 63 percent said ongoing data literacy training is not being provided to staff. Thirty-six percent of managers annually review their service model for strengths, weaknesses and opportunities and only 20 percent of managers collect feedback from clients concerning the relevancy of the services provided. Only 22 percent of respondents said that post-service participation data are collected to measure the intended outcomes of the services provided.

Approximately 75 percent of managers use external partnerships to enhance or expand services in their local community. Over 63 percent said that they involve local and regional stakeholders in developing their service delivery strategy using a strength-based approach, yet only 8 percent of managers interact or engage with their local legislators around the services provided to clients.

Policy change information is efficiently delivered 68 percent of the time, yet only 14 percent of the time are all appropriate team members kept up to date with timely information on policy updates and changes.

Concerning safety protocols, 64 percent of respondents said that ongoing training is being provided to all staff, and 84 percent of respondents said that these protocols were accessible to all staff.

The management survey was completed by respondents listed in Figure 16.

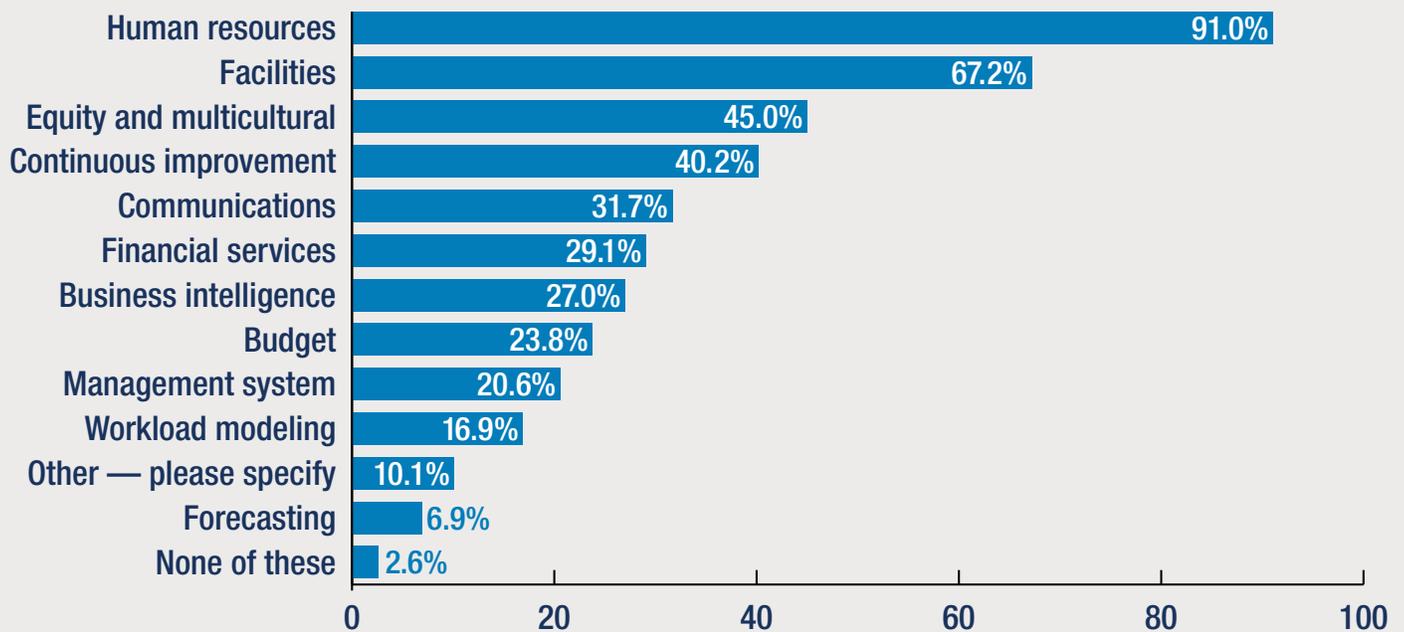
Non-management survey

The non-management survey covered a variety of topics ranging from leadership capabilities, strategy development, culture and client-based results. Over 88 percent of respondents felt that they understood their roles and responsibilities, and they feel they had a clear understanding of who their clients are and what their specific needs might be toward helping them reach their full potential. Just over 78 percent of the time respondents felt that they were kept up to date on policy changes and other work-related information, yet only 32 percent of respondents felt they had time to work on long-term continuous improvement projects. Respondents said they invited feedback from their client-only 38 percent of the time

Figure 16. Completion of non-management survey, percent and count by program

Service area	Percent of total	Count
Aging and People with Disabilities	13.6%	184
Child Welfare	38.7%	525
Self-Sufficiency Programs	44.1%	599
Vocational Rehabilitation	2.9%	40
Central Services and Shared Services	0.4%	5
Director's Office	0.3%	4
Total:	100%	1,357

Figure 17. Most frequently used Central Services and Shared Services



yet, as highlighted below, client engagement and outcomes will become even more of a priority over the next two to three years, along with workload and staff morale.

The non-management survey also had a few insights into employee engagement and support. Manager and employee relationship are driving factors in employee engagement. Therefore, the results revealed were less than ideal (Figure 18).

Most respondents reported the amount of support and engagement from their supervisors as low to very low. Only 54 percent reported receiving annual performance appraisals. Seventy-four percent of respondents are aware of clear lines of authority. However, staff seems to only have limited access to their supervisors.

Figure 18. Completion of management survey, percent and count by program

Service area	Percent of total	Count
Aging and People with Disabilities	7%	13
Child Welfare	44.3%	85
Self-Sufficiency Programs	43.6%	84
Vocational Rehabilitation	3.1%	6
Central Services and Shared Services	1%	2
Director's Office	1%	2
Total:	100%	192

Interviews and focus group strategic questions

During the internal assessment, a variety of strategic questions were used to explore organizational topics. Notes of these sessions, showed a few consistent themes, such as leadership, policy, practice, training, staffing and community outreach. Below is a brief description of the highlights of each theme.

Leadership

Leadership-related topics across the state always started with the stability and competency of leaders. There is a lack of leadership continuity across many parts of the organization. Sometimes movement comes from leaders:

- ▶ Burnout, or
- ▶ Lack of confidence due to the intensity of the leadership demands each day.

Most leaders are thrust into their position and left to navigate the complexities of their work by themselves. When leaders were asked when they last had a check-in or evaluation, the response was usually:

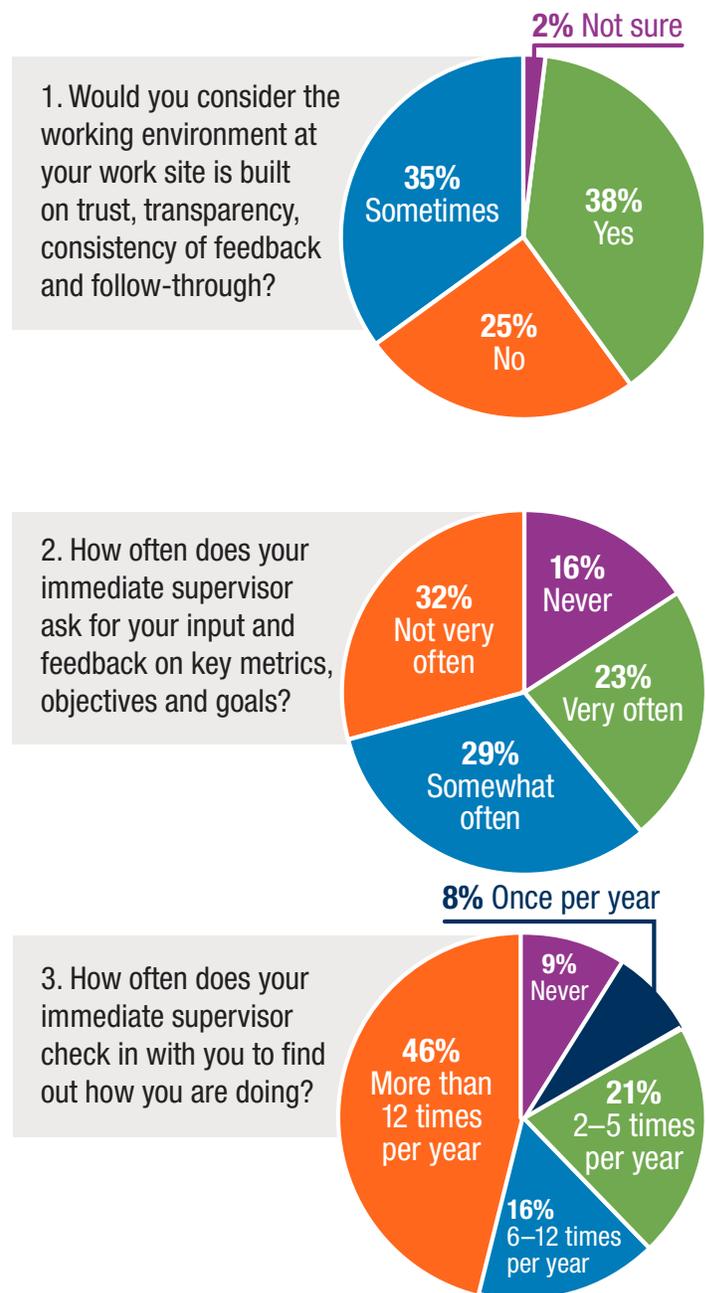
- ▶ “I’m not sure,” or
- ▶ “A while ago.”

Policy, practice and change process

Policy, practice and the change process were frequent topics repeated in every conversation and focus group session. There was a repeated theme about a disconnect between Central and Shared Services and the field. Respondents from the field spoke about continuous policy changes that create a consistent sense of chaos and instability. One consistent theme among both the field and Central and Shared Services teams is continued growth in:

- ▶ Documentation
- ▶ Technology challenges, and
- ▶ Processes requirements.

Figure 19. Staff responses to questions about supervisory engagement



The above ultimately limits the amount of time with the clients. In contrast, a consistent theme for all was that strategies for program services are clearly headed in the right direction. That is, by becoming more customized and responsive for the clients being served each day.

Training and hiring process

There were consistent comments on making sure the trainers were experts with recent real-time experience to help translate the training concepts into reality. Having more trainings that were updated and brought closer to the different regions across the state was a comment frequently mentioned. Many hardships by respondents were mentioned when travel was required for training purposes.

Staffing

There was a consistent concern in virtually every conversation about imbalance between:

- ▶ Work
- ▶ Personal life, and
- ▶ Health.

Many positions across the organization experienced unmanageable workloads due to:

- ▶ Service-related demand
- ▶ Turnover, and
- ▶ Process-related challenges.

Finding and recruiting qualified candidates continues to be a challenge. DHS' organizational image also plays a part in slow recruitment of new employees. Many respondents, when deciding to come work for DHS, were told by family and friends they might want to reconsider. This was due to negative press, stereotypes and perceptions.

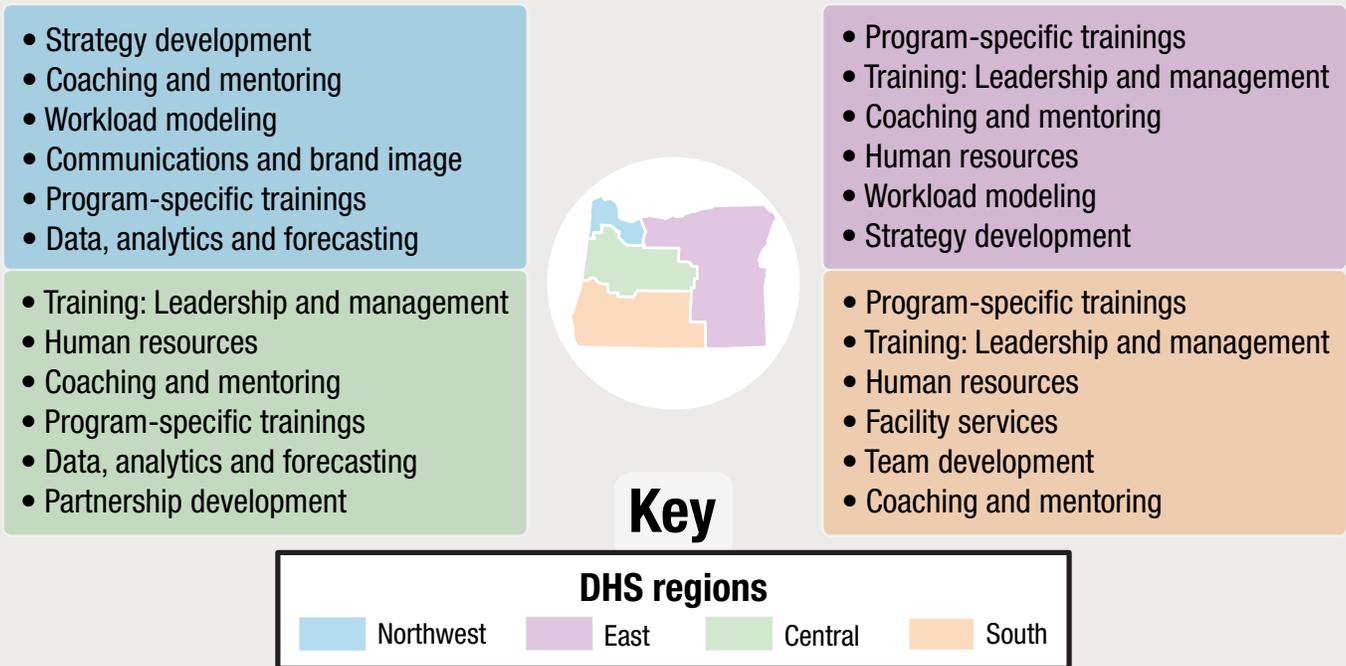
Community engagement

Respondents understand the importance of community engagement and increasing local partnerships when it comes to achieving mission-based goals. The allocation of time engagement tool verified this with an above average rating of importance. However, the average percentage of time spent on community engagement was only 6.5 percent. Based on workloads and staffing shortages, finding time to reach out to the community and take part at a high level was very limited based on feedback. Most respondents feel their community doesn't understand the breadth and scope of services of their local DHS office. This in turn lessens the chance that community partners reach out to their local office to establish a partnership.

Central Services and Shared Services priorities

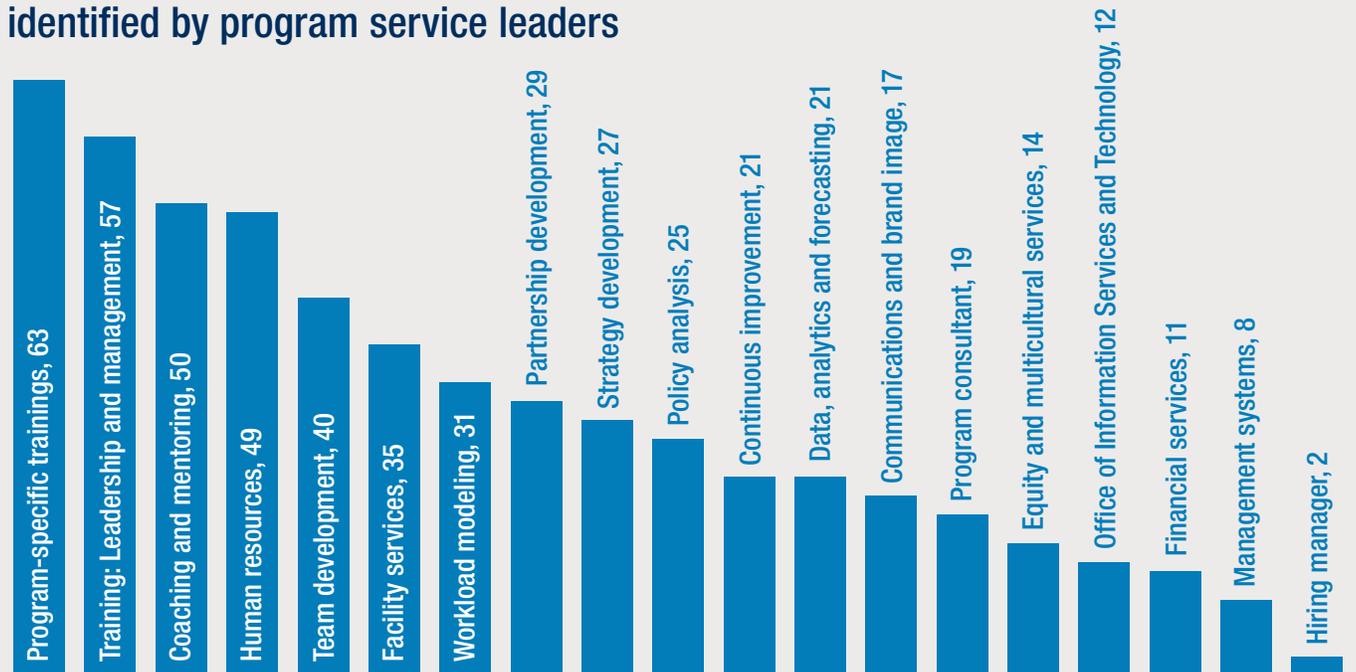
Ninety-two program service leaders were asked to identify the top six most important Central Services and Shared Services that they would like to have greater access to on a more frequent basis (Figure 21). The top six are listed in Figure 20 by frequency with the majority trending around employee and leadership development.

Figure 20. Top six requested services from DHS Central Services and Shared Services, by region



Programs in descending frequency of responses: CW, APD, SSP, VR.

Figure 21. Most important services of Central Services and Shared Services identified by program service leaders



Data validation and prioritization

Data was gathered through face-to-face meetings, focus groups and surveys. Analysis was then made of all data received. A draft internal assessment report was then disseminated to all staff across the agency.

The internal assessment was then taken to five different regions across the state to:

- ▶ Obtain feedback, and
- ▶ Verify overall findings, priority areas and recommendations.

Through these efforts individuals who perform the work in the field and serve individuals in our communities confirmed:

- ▶ Validation of data in the assessment, and
- ▶ Prioritization of key findings, priority areas and recommendations.

The six focus areas listed below are based on staff preference (Figure 22).

Aligning with the outcomes and feedback received throughout the research sessions,

Staff prefers that DHS focus on key findings (Figure 23) that improve outcomes in:

1. Work, life and health balance
2. Hiring, training and rotations
3. Leadership development,
4. Allocation of time
5. Policy, practice and change process
6. Culture stability
7. Equity, diversity and inclusion, and
8. Stereotypes, perceptions and media.

The first draft shared with staff had 24 recommendations with action items to improve the agency.

Staff reviewed the recommendations at length. Then, they either agreed or disagreed with action items associated with the recommendation. There was further assessment to determine what action items should move forward or needed revision. Based on staff feedback, two recommendations were completely revised. Also, one more recommendation for improvement was added to this final report. Before completion of this final report, work had begun to further prioritize the 25 recommendations based on:

- ▶ Impact to our staff and clients we serve, and
- ▶ Feasibility and sustainability.

Planning and implementation is starting in stages. This will lead to full implementation of key improvements to the agency. Ultimately, these improvements will benefit the clients we serve.

Figure 22. Six focus areas prioritized by staff

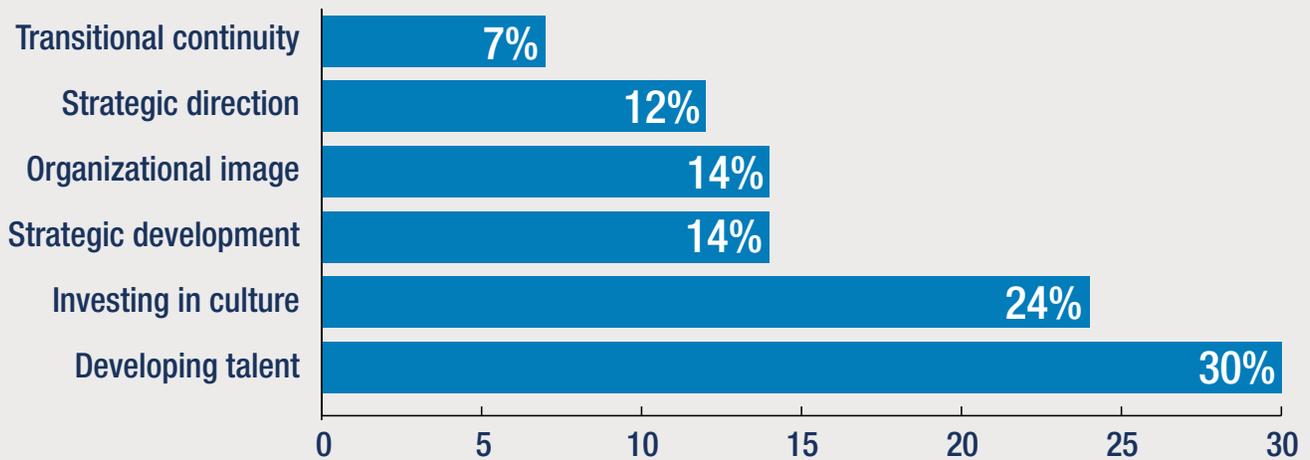
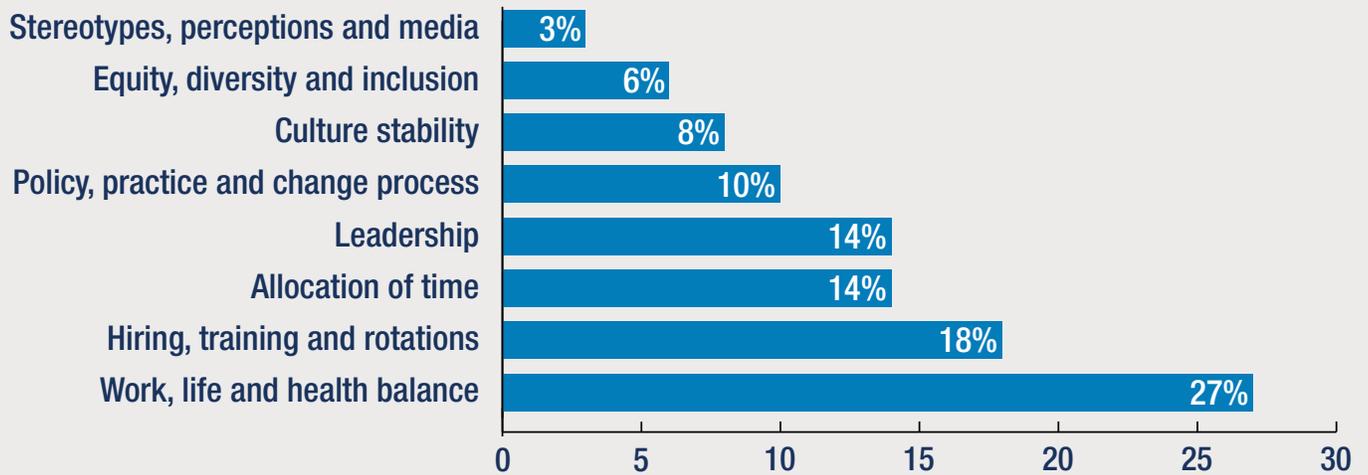


Figure 23. Key findings



Appendix C. Department of Human Services service locations

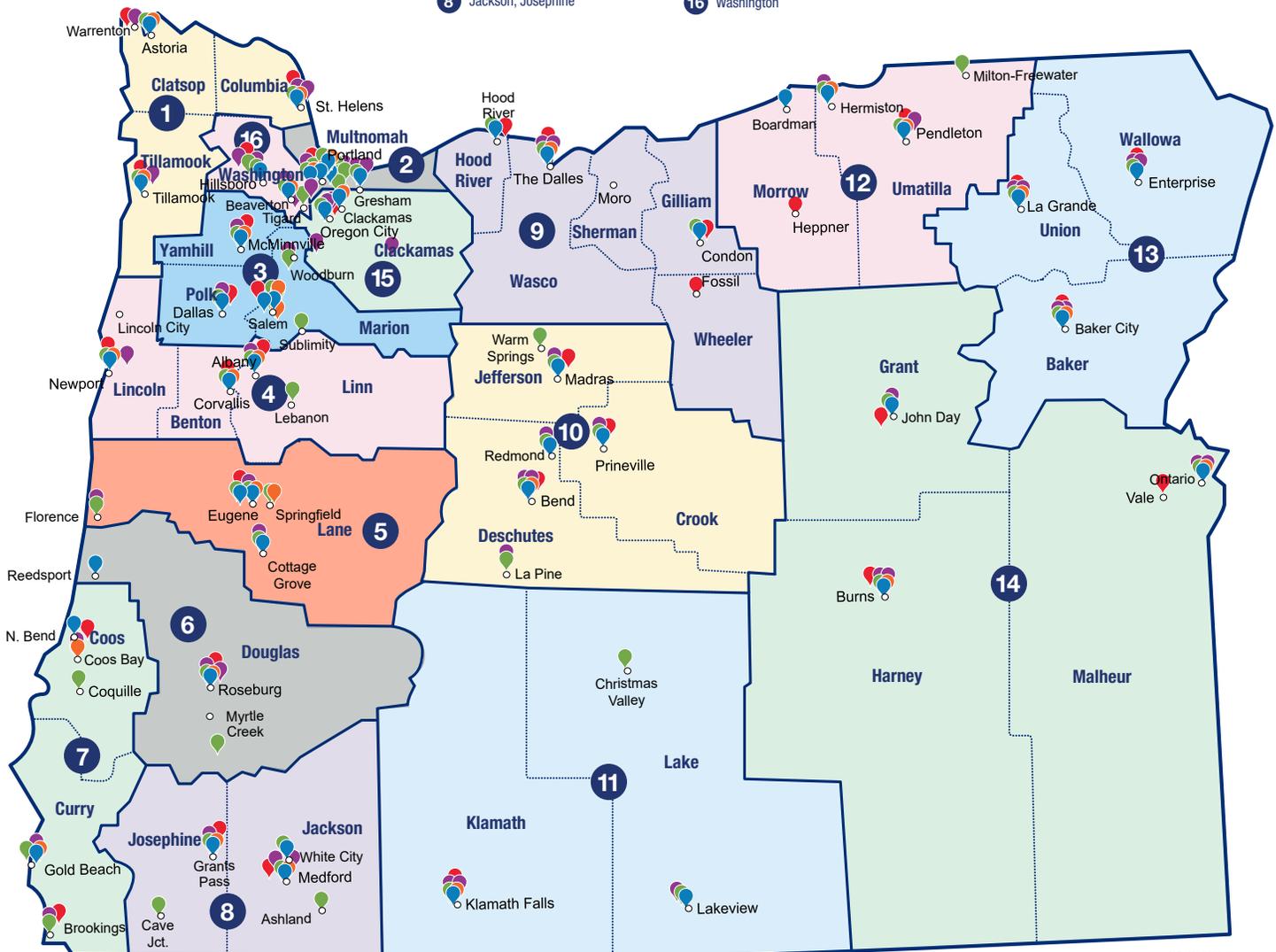
DHS Service Locations

-  Child Welfare (CW)
-  Self-Sufficiency Programs (SSP)
-  Vocational Rehabilitation (VR)
-  Aging & People with Disabilities (APD)*
-  Office of Developmental Disability Services (ODDS)**

DHS districts for Child Welfare & Self-Sufficiency Programs

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| 1 Clatsop, Columbia, Tillamook | 9 Gilliam, Hood River, Sherman, Wasco, Wheeler |
| 2 Multnomah | 10 Crook, Deschutes, Jefferson |
| 3 Marion, Polk, Yamhill | 11 Klamath, Lake |
| 4 Benton, Lincoln, Linn | 12 Morrow, Umatilla |
| 5 Lane | 13 Baker, Union, Wallowa |
| 6 Douglas | 14 Grant, Harney, Malheur |
| 7 Coos, Curry | 15 Clackamas |
| 8 Jackson, Josephine | 16 Washington |

Street addresses for local offices available at www.oregon.gov/dhs



DHS 9204 (02/2017)

* Services provided by APD or Area Agencies on Aging (AAA)
 ** Services provided by Community Development Disability Programs or Support Services Brokerages



You can get this document in other languages, large print, braille or a format you prefer. Contact OEMS Language Services at 503-947-5448 or email OEMSLanguage.Services@dhs.ohs.state.or.us. We accept all relay calls or you can dial 711.