State Assessment:
Framing the Pathways for Success

Developing a better understanding of the realities that DHS employees face every day, firming up the fundamentals and framing the pathways for success.

August 2018

Draft

Acknowledgments

The state assessment was possible thanks to the generosity of all the DHS team members across the entire organization who 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 state 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: Project Manager, Self-Sufficiency Programs
- April Barrett: Administrative Support Specialist 2, Office of Director and Policy

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Letter from director of Organizational Development

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 the most vulnerable 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 because of a dedicated workforce who have committed themselves to serving others. I have had the pleasure of personally speaking with more than 2,000 DHS employees over the last six months who are more than ready to take the next step for our agency, 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 deepen the impact for the Oregonians we serve, enhance the overall working environment and experience for all employees, and accelerate our momentum toward creating long-term sustainable results.

These three imperatives can be achieved by:

- Using an organizational and cultural framework as DHS moves forward
- Addressing the 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 and create great futures for our team members in order to serve Oregonians every day in all communities across the state.

Already to the date this report was published, significant progress has been made across DHS on many of the recommendations in this report.

Time to accelerate the progress of our next steps!

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

Introduction

The success of Oregon as a state is dependent on strong communities that have built a resilient platform for success so that Oregonians can be at their very best and achieve their personal and professional goals. In October 2017, Department of Human Services (DHS) launched an enterprise-wide organizational assessment with the objective of developing a better understanding of the realities that DHS employees face every day while supporting the most vulnerable Oregonians.

The focus of the state assessment was based on three primary areas concerning organizational development:

- **Climate:** Employee engagement, interdepartmental relationships, stakeholder connectivity and leadership capabilities and capacity
- **Alignment:** Core services alignment, interdepartmental communications, support structure, barriers to progress, community connectivity and standards of organizational effectiveness
- **Culture:** Core values consistency, valued and empowered employees, cross-departmental collaboration, agreed-upon expectations, ownership and continuous improvement

The results of the assessment will be used to develop strategic next steps that will deepen the impact for all Oregonians served across the state and the DHS staff who support them every day.

Overview

The Oregon Department of Human Services is a vast agency encompassing more than 8,000 employees serving more than 1 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 most vulnerable 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, located throughout the state, that serve 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 Programs (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.*

These programs are supported by comprehensive Central Services and Shared Services based out of DHS's Salem headquarters.

Organizational scan

The state assessment organizational scan was based on acquiring a deeper understanding of DHS's key focus areas of climate, alignment and culture. The framework used to assess these three focus areas was built on a maturity model from an organizational development fundamentals perspective. Below are four categories including subcategories relative to the organizational development maturity model used in formulating the engagement tools of the state assessment.

Figure 1. Categories of organizational development maturity

Structure and operations	Culture and strategy development
Leadership structure, consistency and succession planning	Vision, mission and strategic priorities
Lines of authority — site, field and central office	Employee engagement, expectations and recognition
Staffing distribution patterns	Decision-making process and data use
Central services use and support	Collective impact approach
Communications channels	Strategic coaching, mentoring and training
Service delivery	**Performance**
Service model: Transactional, segmented, integrated	Strategy development, priority metrics and results accountability
Workload patterns, staffing capacity and retention	Reporting requirements and meeting framework
Target population and constituent engagement	Performance accountability and consistency
Geographic service area and site location mapping	Process and protocol barriers
Interdepartmental partnerships and community connectivity	Continuous improvement practices

Preliminary research

Preliminary research was conducted to help inform the overall development of the questions for the state assessment engagement process. More than 200 DHS employees from the field and Central Services and Shared Services were engaged to help focus the assessment and ask the most important questions. Below are some of the sources used in building the state assessment engagement tools.

Figure 2. Preliminary research sources used to create assessment instrument

Engagement process

The state assessment was comprised of in-person focus groups, one-on-one interviews, group strategy sessions and follow-up surveys throughout the Oregon DHS employee population. The groups were comprised of DHS executives, managers, supervisors, direct service and support staff alike, though in separate sessions to elicit position-specific responses. Each focus group participated in keep/start/stop sessions that helped to identify areas of improvement and the organizational health of the local group as well as provide perspective on what employees feel they needed to be successful.

In addition to the keep/start/stop exercises, groups were asked a series of questions that created dialogue that spanned everything from DHS culture and its 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 the 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. More than 88,501 responses were analyzed from 1,947 focus group participants and 1,550 other survey respondents across 16 operational districts that cover every area of the state including Central Services and Shared Services (Appendix A). Some of those qualitative responses are included in this report verbatim to offer context; however, they do not identify the responders.

Engagement process and data limitations

The main goal of the state assessment was to capture the voice and perspective from DHS employees across the organization. The data collection approach and analysis are limited to the information captured. The qualitative data interpretation is subject to possible bias due to the translation of the responses by the data analysts. Data analytical software was used with all data and input where applicable. The analysis should only be used as a starting point toward developing a deeper understanding of the trends across DHS.

Data and feedback analysis approach

DHS experts from their respective fields were pulled together to assist in the analysis of the data, feedback and strategy session results of the state assessment. The respective team members across DHS who supported the analysis of all the data, feedback and input provided are listed below:

- 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: Project Manager, Self-Sufficiency Programs
- April Barrett: Administrative Support Specialist 2, Office of Director and Policy

Below is a breakdown of data points by the engagement tools:

Figure 3. Individual data points from research participants

Engagement tools	Respondents	Data points
Keep/start/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

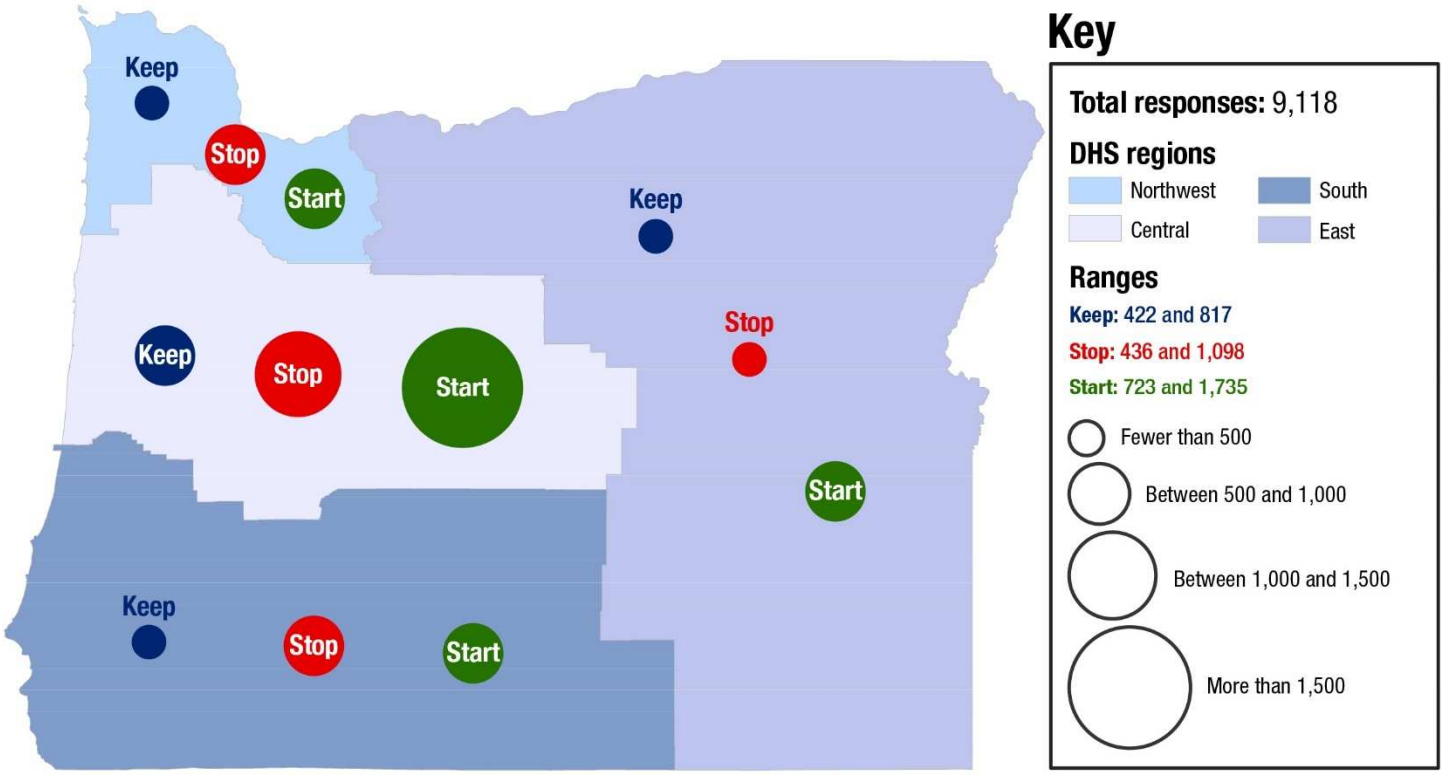
Engagement tool analysis

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

1. Keep/stop/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

Each engagement tool has a brief description of the actual tool used and a summary of some of the highlights. Also, additional maps and resources related to the tools are in the appendix. The results of all the engagement tools are expanded upon in the key findings section of this report.

Figure 4. Keep/stop/start engagement tool responses, by region

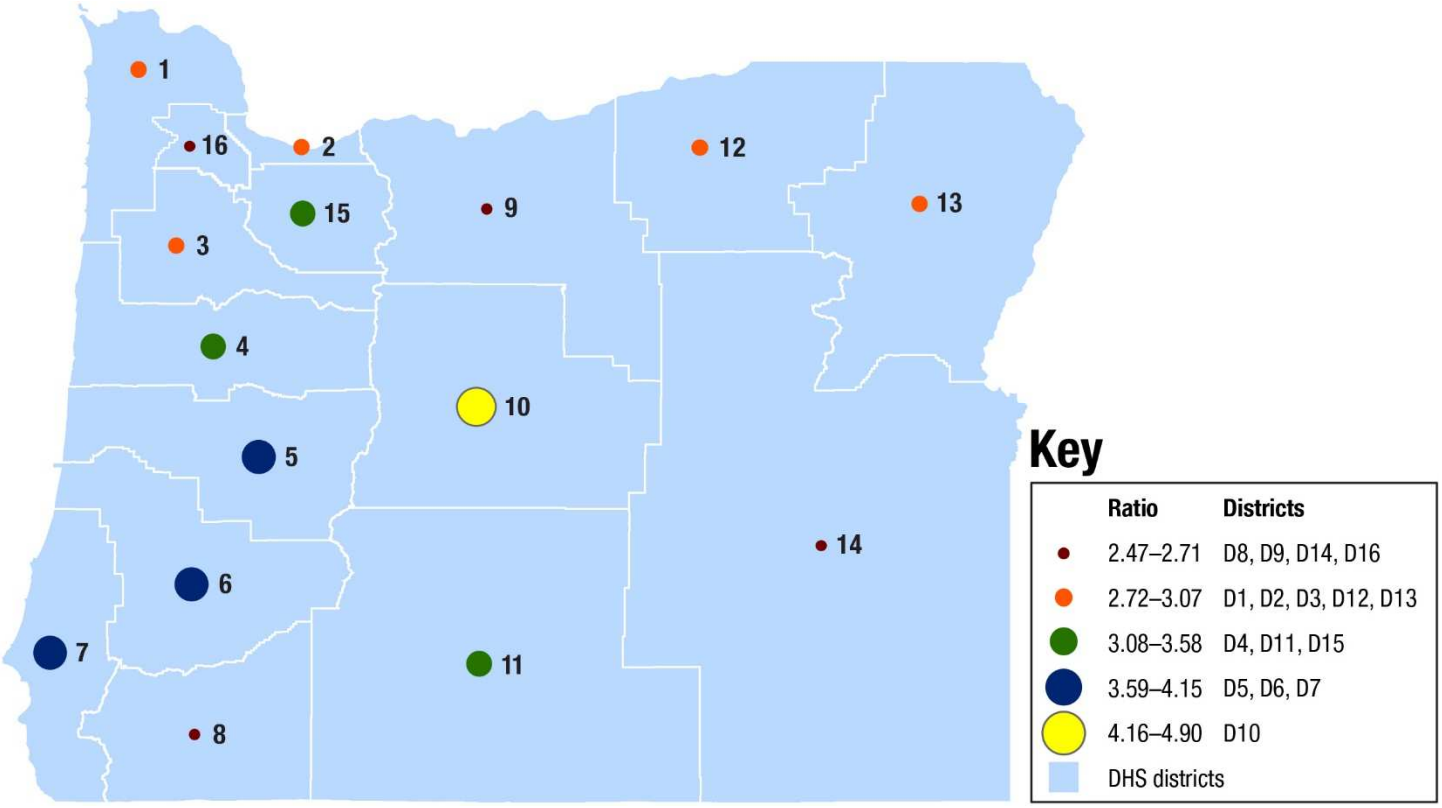


Programs in descending frequency of responses: SSP, CW, APD, VR, HR, OHP, OEMS.

Keep/stop/start

One of the main engagement tools used to better understand the organizational health in each of the districts was the keep/stop/start technique. Basically, what should DHS keep doing, stop doing and start doing. Most of the focus groups in the assessment participated in the keep/stop/start exercise and the results were grouped by districts and into regions as seen above. 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/start responses from any point of view that they desired. Most responses related to their specific location from where they worked each day. The results across all districts represented in regions were very consistent (see Figure 4). The critical mass of input landed in the “start” category 90 percent of the time. Usually the second most populated responses fell under the “stop” category and least amount in the “keep” category. More than 9,000 responses were collected from the keep/stop/start exercise with over 1,500 respondents.

Figure 5. Change keep ratio, by district



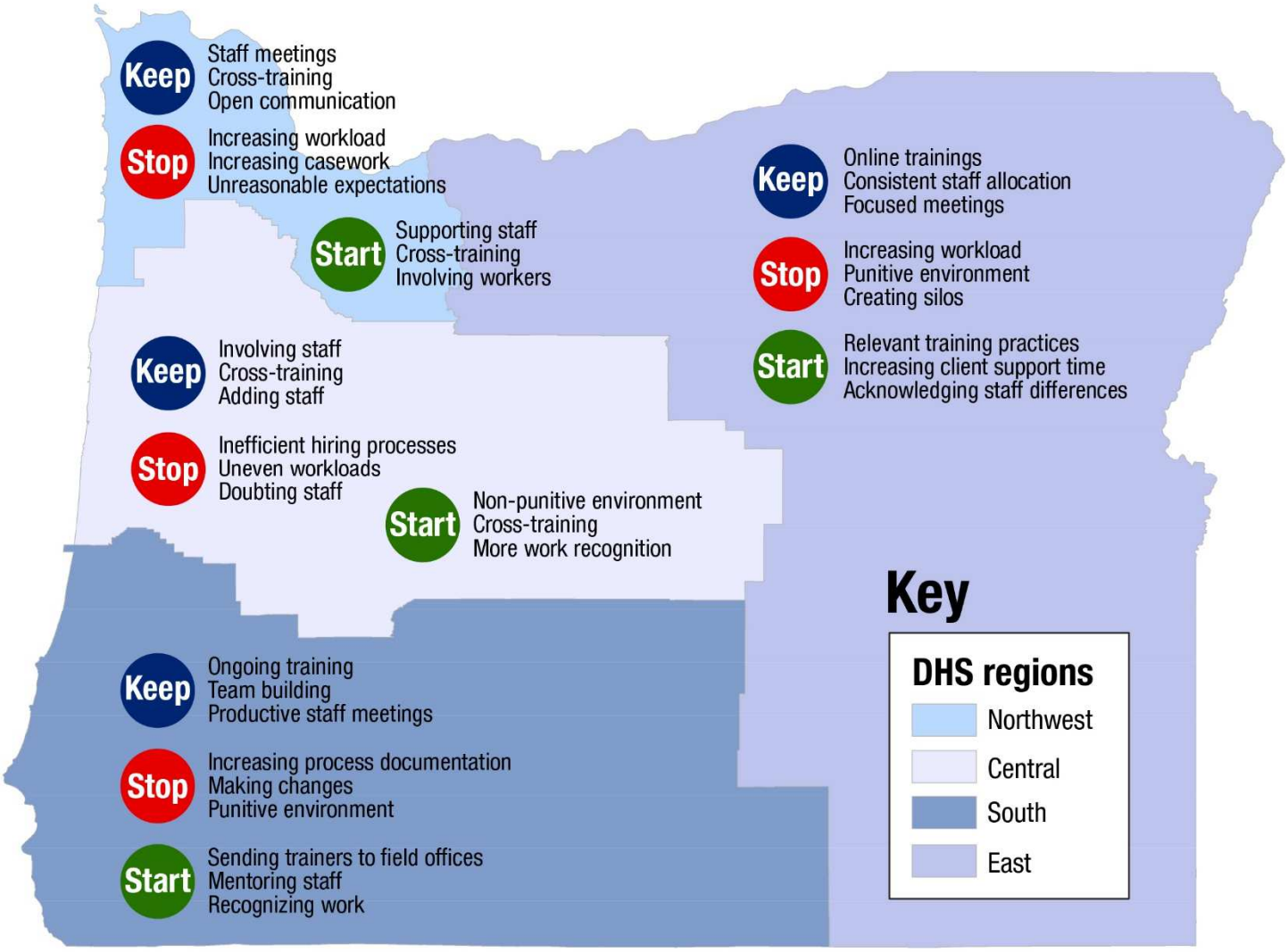
Programs in descending frequency of responses: SSP, CW, APD, VR, HR, OHP, OEMS.

The *change keep ratio* represents the sum of *start count* and *stop count* divided with *keep count*. Any given "start" or "stop" might be a different way of framing the same issue, but the basic message is, "I want something different," as opposed to a keep, which is, "I like some aspect of the status quo." In districts where this ratio is high, we might surmise that respondents are particularly concerned about the status quo, because their top of mind issues are changes as opposed to keeps.

As an organization progresses toward its vision, mission and goals, "*keeps*" usually become the largest category identified by its employees. The reason for this is that most practices in progressing organizations have been specifically designed to produce a benefit, have been tested and approved of by both the employees and the consumer alike and ensure the sustainability of the practice with the ability to flex as needed. The "*stops*" in such an organization would be minimal in comparison, as most of these would have already been addressed, and things that don't work, or things that cause barriers, would have been removed and not tolerated. The "*starts*" would likewise be minimal as good ideas are tested and, if successful, adopted enterprise-wide and then become future keeps. The overall results of the keep/stop/start exercise proves that DHS employees have great ideas to move the organization forward and they are ready for the change.

Figure 6 shows, by region, the top three most frequent comments related to the keep/stop/start engagement tool.

Figure 6. Top three keep/stop/start engagement tool suggestions, by region

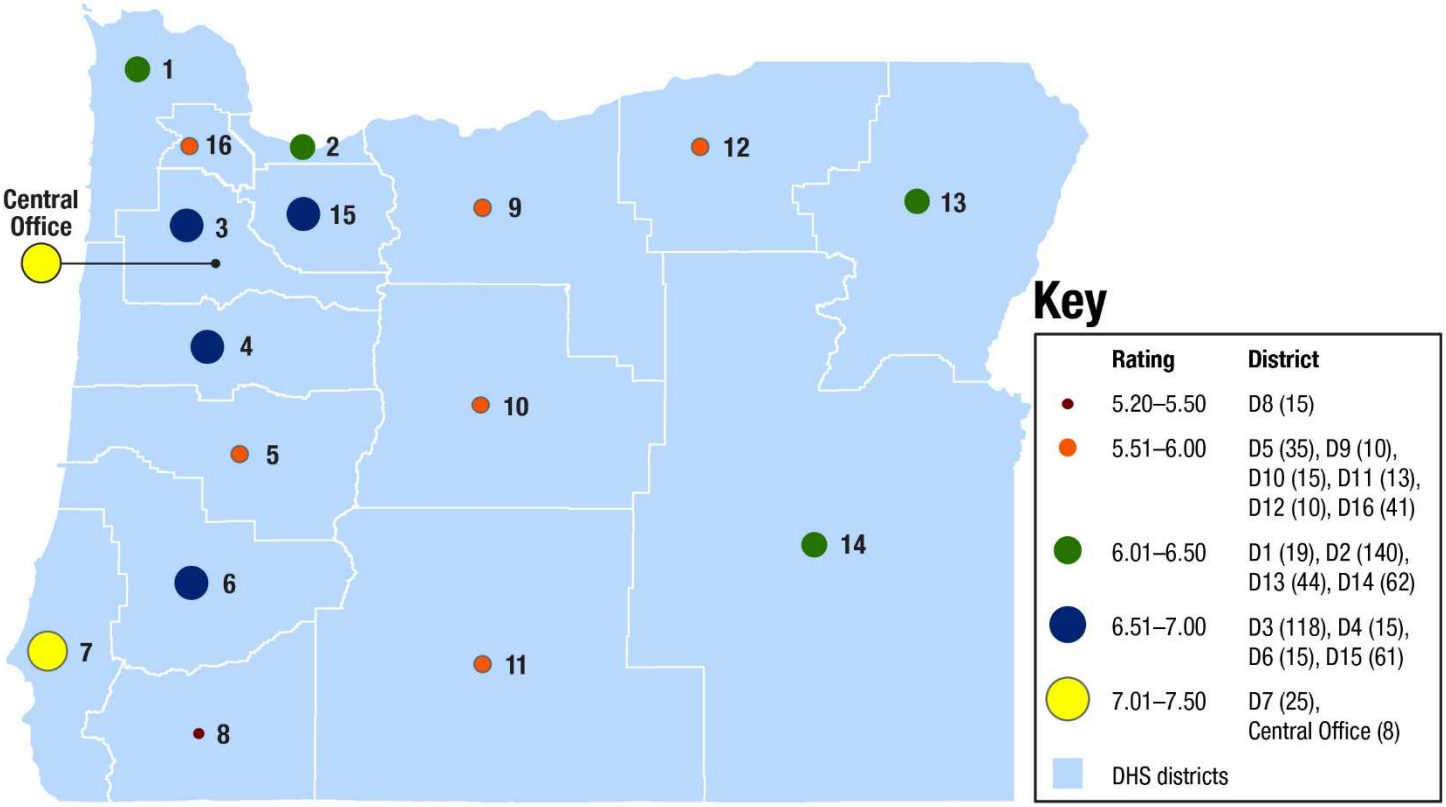


Programs in descending frequency of responses: SSP, CW, APD, VR, HR, OHP, OEMS.

Stress rating

Gauging the stress level was another measurement used during the state assessment. During some of the focus groups, participants were offered a chance to self-rate their 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. The self-rating tool results and focus group responses concerning stress seemed to be slightly disconnected. Many focus group participants spoke repeatedly of the overwhelming workload, pressure and fatigue they experience daily trying to keep up with the work, yet when asked to self-rate their stress, it was rare that it ever crossed the rating of 8, which is the bottom of the burnout range. In fact, the average rating was 6.3.

Figure 7. Average stress rating, by district, scale of 1 (least stress) to 10 (most stress)



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

Organizational strengths

Organizational strengths perspective was another measurement used to understand the areas where 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 whether they felt it was a weakness 1 or a strength 7. The maps in Appendix B show the ratings for 657 respondents across the districts. The four main areas that respondents were asked about are listed in Figure 8:

Figure 8. Organizational strengths, DHS enterprise level, 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 overall ratings were below the midpoint of 4 with “Client focus” having the strongest rating of 3.9 and “Nimbleness” having the lowest rating of 2.8 (Appendix B). (See appendix for individual categorical maps.)

Allocation of time

The time allocation survey asked respondents to give an estimate of the percentage of their time devoted to each of eight work duty categories and to associate those categories with a 0–5 importance score. The ranking was from 0 least important to 5 most important. This allowed respondents to provide a self-assessed importance toward their individual time usage.

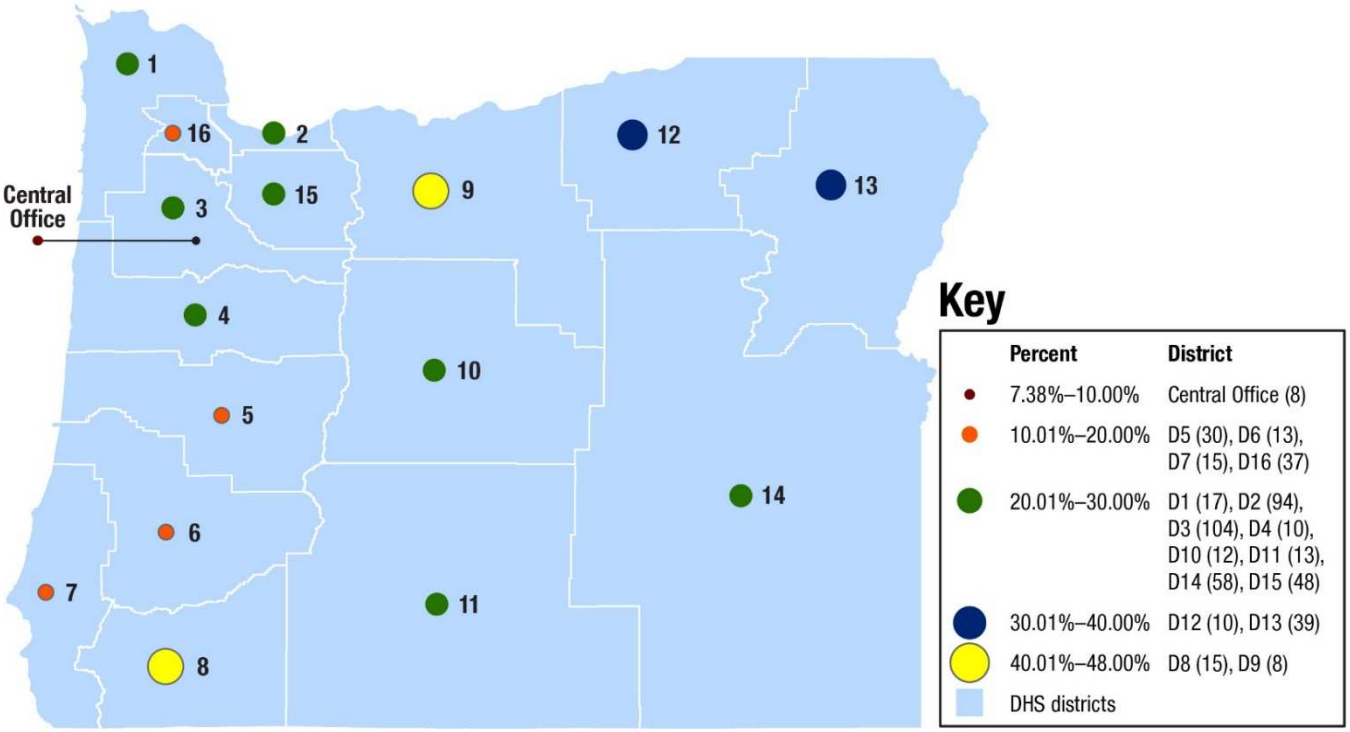
Figure 9. Staff estimates of time spent on duties and their assessment of duties' importance, statewide

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

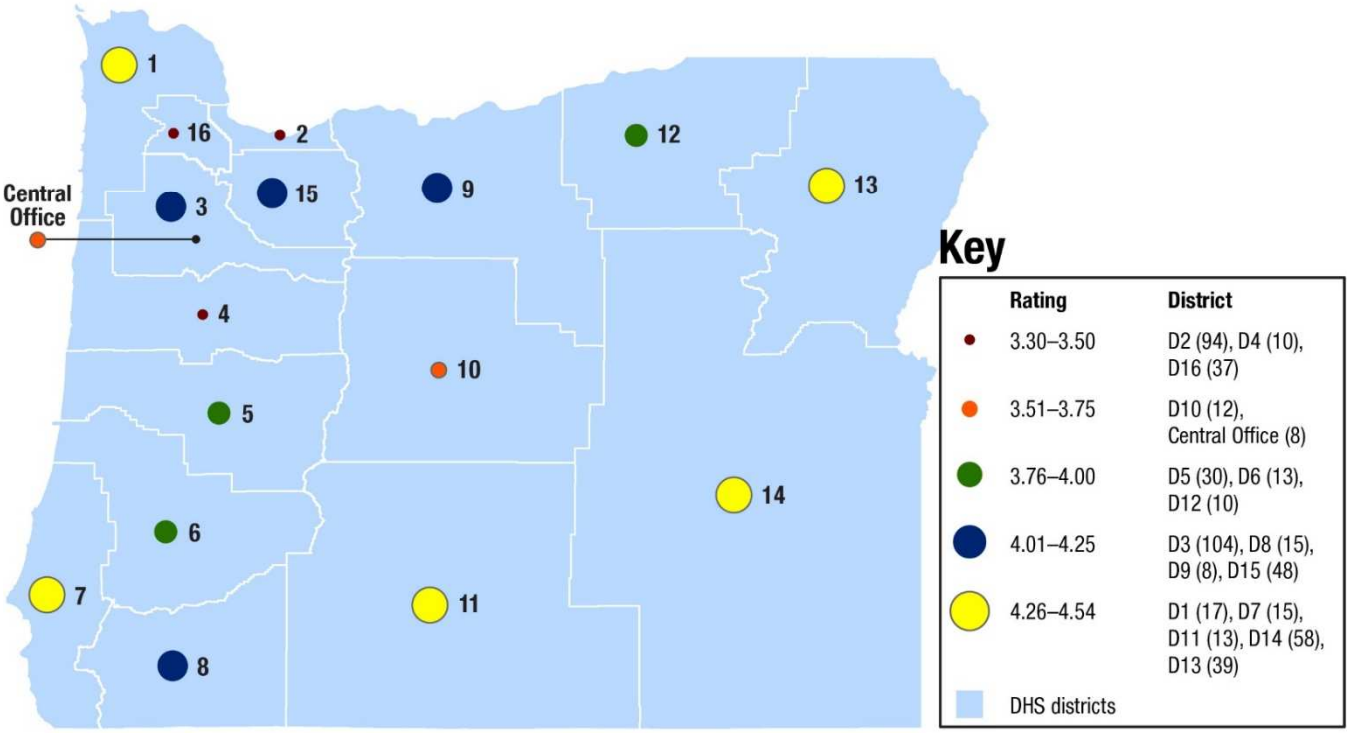
The results of the allocation of time survey identified a couple of key points concerning where time is typically spent by the respondents. Client-related support ranked the highest on average with a rating of 4, and happened to be where most employees applied 25 percent of their time. This rating also cross-references with the recurring comments from focus group sessions where respondents shared that 75 percent of their time is spent on other work-related categories than direct "Client-related support." Many of the other work-related categories indirectly support or are a required part of the services provided to clients. Figure 10 is a map of the ratings and percentages for the "Client-related support" category by district (see Appendix C for additional work-related category maps.)

Figure 10. Client-related support, by district

Average percent time spent on client-related support



Average importance of client-related support, 0–5 scale



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

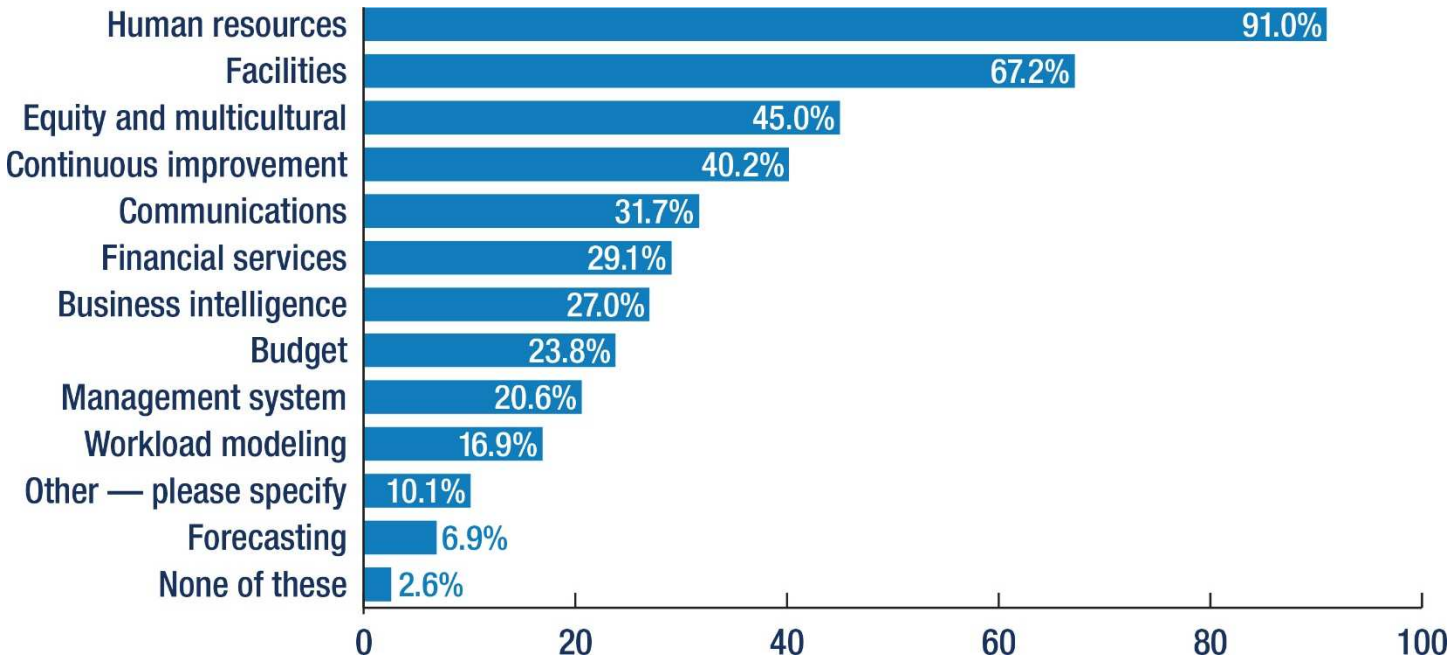
Management survey

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 11 shows all categories and their associated ratings:

Figure 11. Most frequently used central and shared services



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 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 from the following areas:

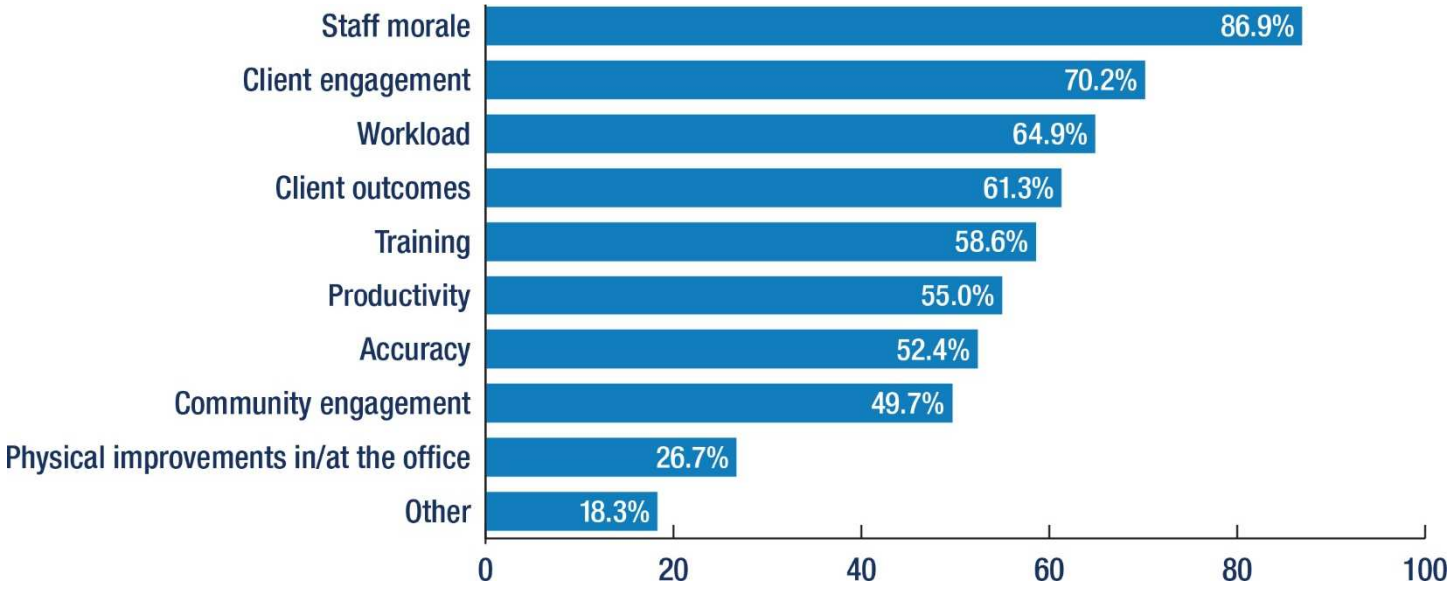
Figure 12. Completion of management survey, percent and count by program

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**

Non-management survey

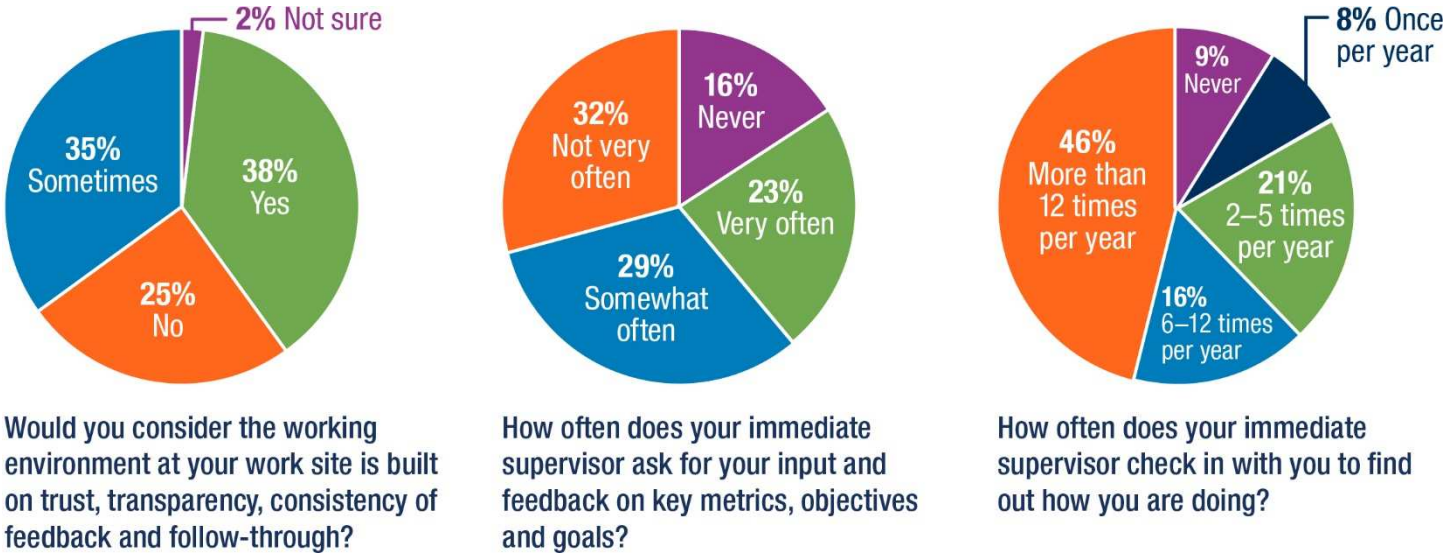
The non-management survey covered a variety of topics ranging from leadership capabilities, strategy development, culture and client-based results. Over 88 percent of respondents felt that they understood their roles and responsibilities, and they feel they had a clear understanding of who their clients 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 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.

Figure 13. Projected strategic focus over next two to three years



The non-management survey also had a few insights into factors of employee engagement and support. Since the manager and employee relationship is a driving factor in employee engagement, the results revealed were less than optimal as denoted in Figure 14.

Figure 14. Staff responses to questions about supervisory engagement



Most respondents reported that the amount of support and engagement from their supervisors was low to very low, with only 54 percent of respondents receiving annual performance appraisals. Seventy-four percent of survey respondents were aware of clear lines of authority, yet accessibility from employees to supervisors seems limited.

Figure 15. 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**

Interviews and focus group strategic questions

During the state assessment one-on-one interviews and focus group sessions, a variety of strategic questions were also used to explore targeted organizational topics. From the notes of these sessions, there were a few themes that consistently formed such as leadership, policy, practice, training, staffing and community outreach. Below is a brief description of the highlights in each area:

Leadership

The 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 the movement comes from leaders experiencing burnout or a lack of confidence due to the intensity of the leadership demands each day. Most leaders are thrust into the 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 was a frequent topic that repeated itself in every conversation and focus group session. There was a repeated theme about a disconnect between Central Services/Shared Services and the field. The respondents from the field spoke about continuous policy changes that created a consistent sense of chaos and instability. One consistent

theme among both the field and Central Services and Shared Services teams is the amount of documentation, technology challenges and processes requirements that seem to continue to grow, which ultimately limit the amount of time with the clients. In contrast, a consistent theme for both was that strategies for program services are clearly headed in the right direction by becoming more customized and responsive for the clients being served each day.

Training and hiring process

The hiring process and training-related issues reoccurred in most conversations concerning fidelity, efficiency and overall effectiveness. In reference to the hiring process, most respondents said it could take four to six months from job posting to the first start day of work for a new employee. Depending on the availability of required training sessions and staff to help with onboarding, it could take a new employee almost a year to be go ready and handle a full workload.

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

A consistent concern became evident in virtually every conversation regarding 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's organizational image also played 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 the choice due to negative media stories, 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, yet the average percentage of time spent on community engagement was only at 6.5 percent. Based on the workloads and staffing shortages, finding time to reach out to the community and participate at a high level was very limited based on feedback. Most participants in the state assessment felt that their community didn't understand the breadth and scope of services their local DHS office provided, which in turn lessened the chance that community partners would reach out to their local office to establish a partnership.

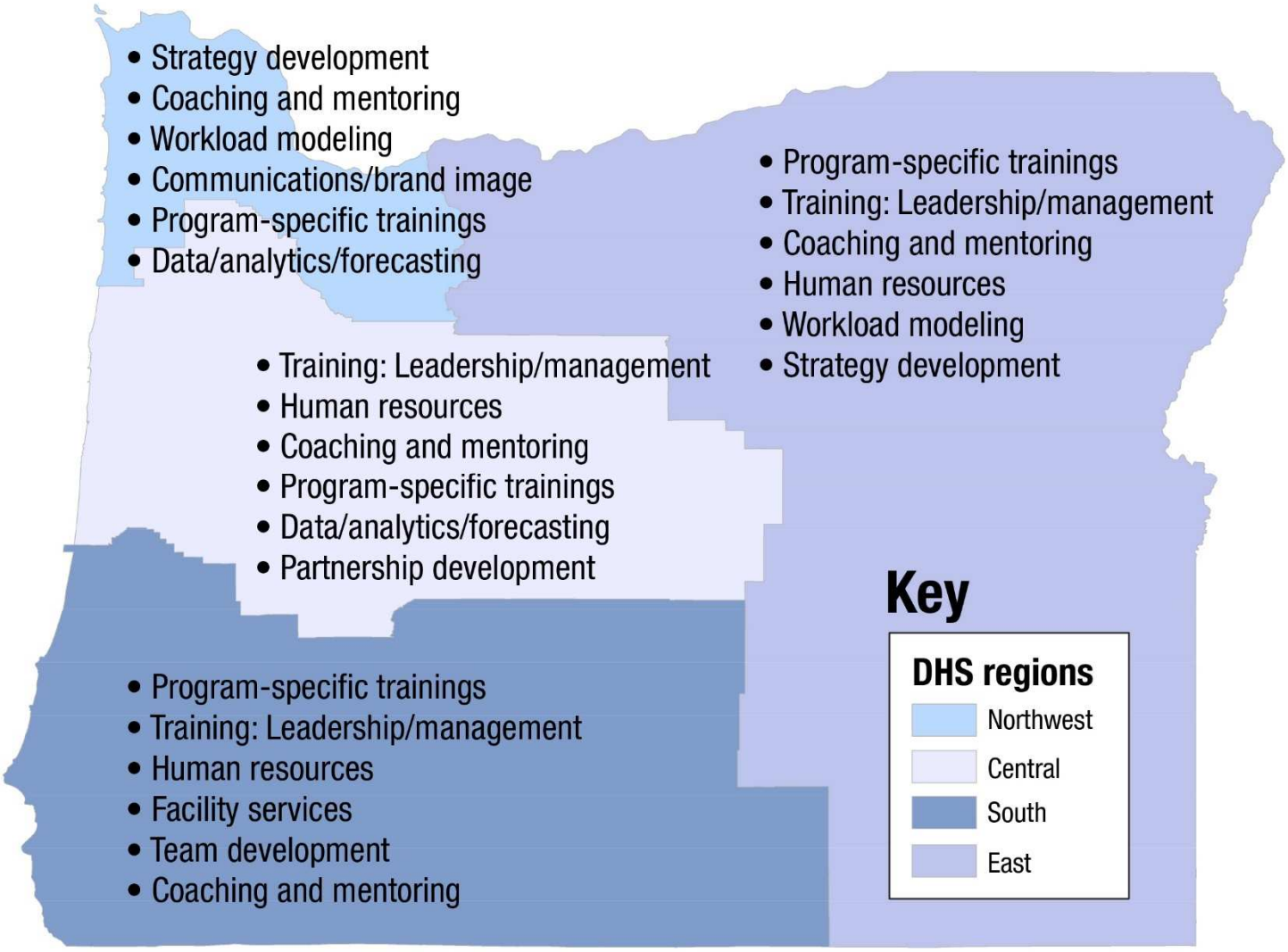
Central services and shared services priorities

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. The top six are listed below by frequency with the majority trending around employee and leadership development.

Figure 16. Most important central services and shared services programs identified by program service leaders

Central services and shared services — most important	
Program-specific trainings	63
Training: leadership and management	57
Coaching and mentoring	50
Human resources	49
Team development	40
Facility services	35
Workload modeling	31
Partnership development	29
Strategy development	27
Policy analysis	25
Continuous improvement	21
Data, analytics, forecasting	21
Communications and brand image	17
Program consultant	19
Equity and multicultural services	14
Office of Information Systems and Technology	12
Financial services	11
Management systems	8
Hiring manager	2

Figure 17. Top six requested services from DHS Central Services and Shared Services, by region



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

Key findings

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

Leadership

The leadership-related topics across the state always started with the stability and competency of leaders. In the past five years DHS has had four different agency directors. There also is a lack of leadership continuity across many parts of the organization. Leadership changes can happen as frequently as every few months. There is a trend that leaders are hired for a designated position or site, start to gain momentum and then are moved to another site where the need seems to be greater. Their original site then starts to decline. Sometimes the movement comes from leaders getting burnout or lacking confidence due to the intensity of the leadership demands each day.

DHS has experienced significant impacts to organizational leadership due to retirements and resignations of managerial staff with no formal succession planning present. Many vacated leadership positions have remained open for extended periods of time, leaving a void in direction and continuity. Some of the vacancies have remained open with no postings for extended periods of time. These extended, open vacancies of leadership disrupt the continuity of daily business. The provider community, public and DHS staff are all affected due to leadership vacancies.

There is also a significant lack of ongoing support and coaching for leaders across the organization. Most are thrust into the position and left to navigate the complexities of their work by 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. Only 60 percent of the managers who responded felt that they were appropriately trained, prepared and supported to address the needs and complexities of their daily work and the staff they support. At least 82 percent of the managers who responded stated that they 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 implement. 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.”

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 was a frequent topic that repeated itself in every conversation and focus group session. Twenty-four percent of all keep/stop/start responses were related to policy. One survey respondent's statement, which was echoed in focus group after focus group, was, "*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 using a representative group of stakeholders that would be directly affected by the policy. Focus group participants felt that there needs to be some flexibility in reference to policy implementation based on the challenges and opportunities in each of their local communities. Respondents mentioned that it is rare that one policy and practice can be a blanket solution for all, yet 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 Developmental Disabilities Services 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 and training-related issues reoccurred in most conversations concerning fidelity, efficiency and overall effectiveness. In reference to the hiring process, most respondents said it could take four to six months from job posting to the first start day of work for a new employee. Prospective employees waiting to see where they are at in the process might go on to other companies because of their financial position, which can then limit the pool of potential qualified candidates.

The overall onboard training was viewed as inadequate and not comprehensive. Many new employees mentioned the initial trainings didn’t match the realities of what they experienced once they got started. Depending on the availability of required training sessions and staff to help with onboarding, it could take a new employee almost a year to be go ready and handle a full workload. The workload of the vacant position including the additional time to get a new employee up to speed once hired puts strain on the entire team and perpetuates ongoing turnover.

Training

Trainings in general seemed to continue to be a theme across the entire state. 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 frequent suggestion.

Many hardships by respondents were mentioned when travel was required for training purposes. 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. Despite the travel, many respondents felt that they would rather not attend trainings because going to them increases the workload for their teammates.

Training follow-through and accountability are two topics to be reviewed. There is possibly a gap concerning accountability and expectations toward advancing skills and knowledge obtained during trainings to teams back at their worksites. Also, there seems to be a lack of measurement of trainings' effectiveness in relation to 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. The opportunity to experience different parts of the organization and learn new skills was appreciated by most respondents. The main challenge with rotations only being a year in duration is that they strain both the team the employee left for a year and the team they join during their rotation. The team that the employee leaves must find a temporary replacement and get the person up to speed, which can take many months and place extra workload on the remaining team members. The team the employee rotates into also needs to spend additional time to get the person up to speed, which can 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 and can possibly strain both teams related to the rotation.

Allocation of time

The 70/30 flip was a concept that repeated itself in every focus group and also presented itself through alternate engagement tools. Many employees who have been with DHS for more than 10 years described the amount of paperwork to direct client interaction has flipped. Years ago, it was 70 percent of time with the client and 30 percent for documentation and processes. Today the trend stated was 30 percent client-related interactions and 70 percent related to processes or paperwork. The results of the allocation of time survey identified client-related support at about 25 percent of their time. Despite lower allocation of time spent with direct client-related support, most employees felt that the program services-related approach was clearly headed in the right direction, which was referred to as becoming more responsive and customized for the clients being served each day.

Slow operating IT systems was a major aspect of what was consuming most of the time for employees, along with redundancies in documentation and transposing information across and within systems. Newer staff mentioned that they were never properly trained on how to use the systems and their peers who do know the system were 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.

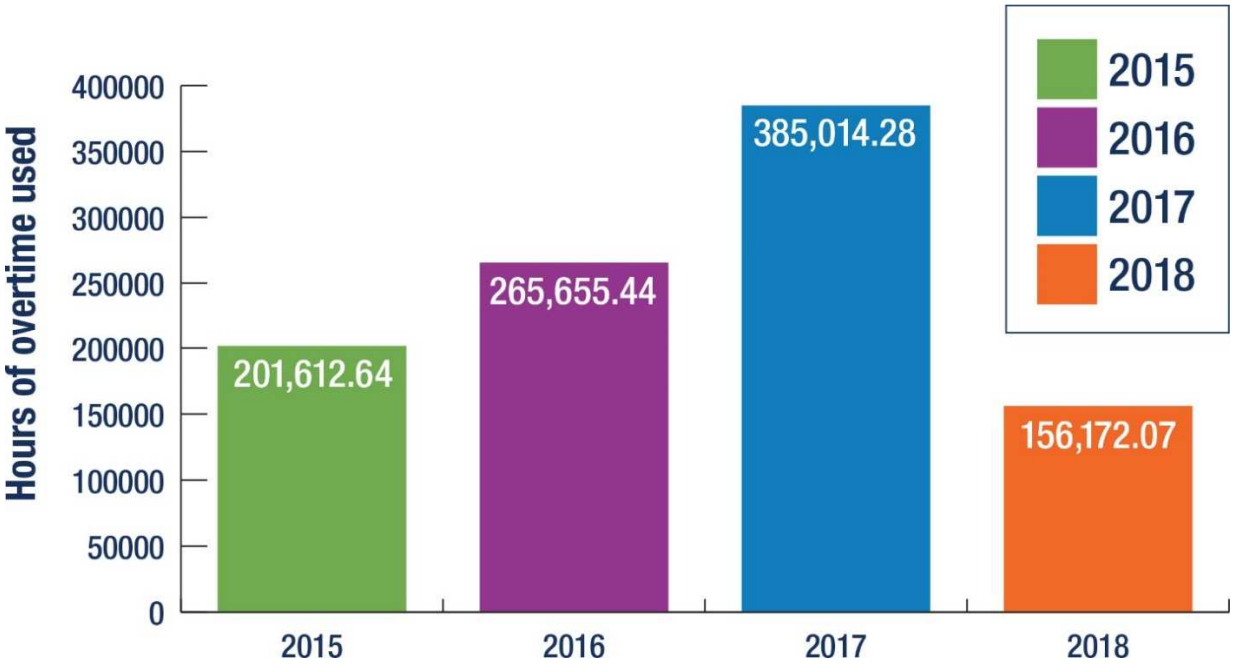
Self-care

DHS's services are some of the most critical services that vulnerable Oregonians depend on across the state. Work/life balance and self-care were both repeatedly mentioned as one of the highest priorities for staff members. The nature of social work can be very taxing for all DHS employees who seek to provide the best services under the most challenging circumstances. Secondary trauma from daily serving the most vulnerable clients, which then leads to compassion fatigue, was evident with direct and indirect care employees across the organization. The continuous daily exposure to helping clients who have experienced difficulties and trauma carries over into the professional and personal life of DHS employees.

Self-care is encouraged by all leadership across the organization but is lacking in application by most employees and their 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, that self-care during working hours is next to nonexistent and affects self-care opportunities after working hours due to exhaustion and work being 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, which 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 below.

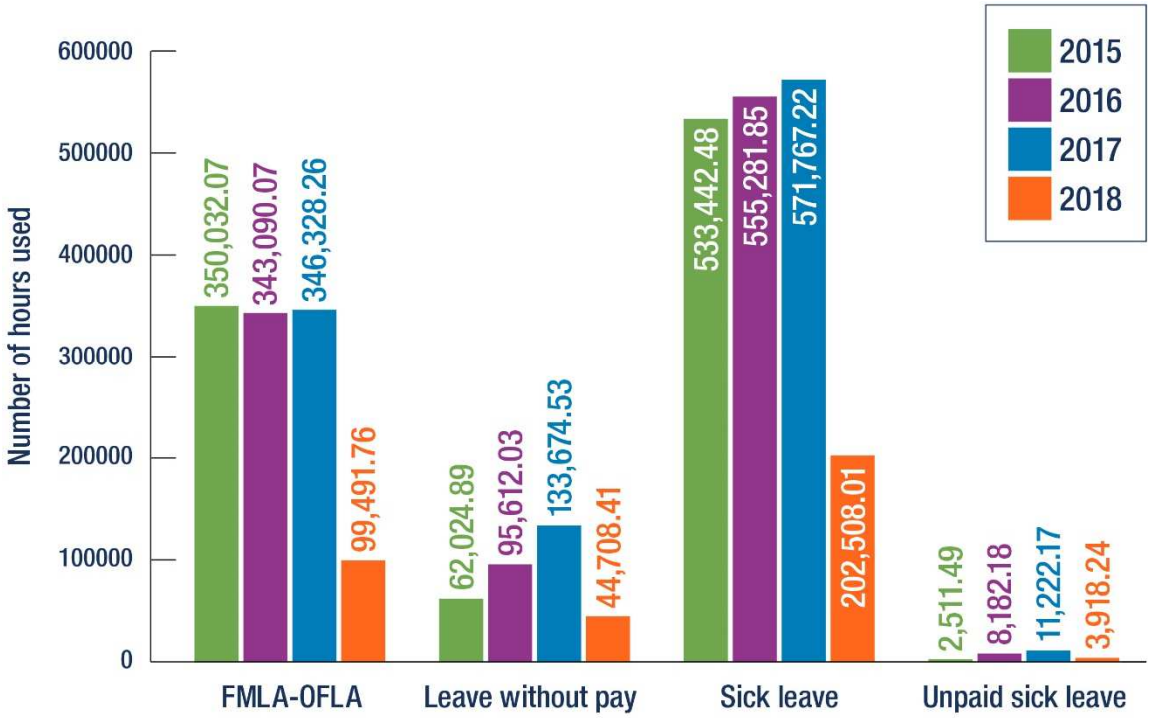
Figure 18. DHS staff overtime hours, 2015 through May 2018



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 relative to 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.

Figure 19. DHS staff sick leave totals, by type, 2015 through May 2018



When looking at the current data for sick leave totals, there is an increasing trend in leave without pay, sick leave and unpaid sick leave.

Equity, diversity and inclusion

As DHS experiences a high level of retirements and changes in population demographics, there becomes a generational opportunity to diversify the DHS staff to ensure the development of a culturally and linguistically competent workforce for generations to come.

Recruiting for a diverse workforce ensures that DHS provides quality and dignified services for all communities served. Based on focus groups responses and internal experts, DHS hasn't historically invested in diversity, equity and inclusion. As a result, programs have not had the

resources to meaningfully address disparities in service provision. Also, 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 toward providing culturally and linguistically appropriate services to clients across the full spectrum of care, including but not limited to 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.

Stereotypes, perceptions and media

There are hundreds of success stories that happen each day through the programs of DHS and partnering agencies, yet the image of the organization is defined by one-off stories that are not representative of the success that happens each day. When DHS employees were asked why they stay in a high-pressure and challenging environment, their answer always centers on the difference they are making every day. The spirit of this was captured in one of the hundreds of positive comments received through the state assessment engagement opportunity. This quote provides a great representation of the passion DHS employees have for the clients who are 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.”

Despite all the positive impact made daily in the last two years, multiple stories highlighting the poor outcomes and issues at DHS have been published through media outlets. Most focus group participants mentioned that internal and external perceptions of the agency are usually developed by the negative press received from the media outlets. As negative perceptions mount, political pressure is placed on the agency to rapidly change the narrative. This pressure can be externally forced, such as legislation requiring new accountability measures or a change in practice. This can significantly undermine the past progress made concerning established organizational strategies and investments. This can also trigger leadership changes that lead to new strategic directions that reduce organizational momentum and long-term sustainable results.

The negative perceptions, stereotypes and media impact can also be felt internally through various agency-led reactions or inactions, such as finger-pointing, departments placing blame on other departments or on 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 discussed that they were afraid to wear their employee badges in public because they felt the community had a negative view of them and DHS services in general. Taken together, 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 the most vulnerable 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 — enterprise frameworks and recommendations

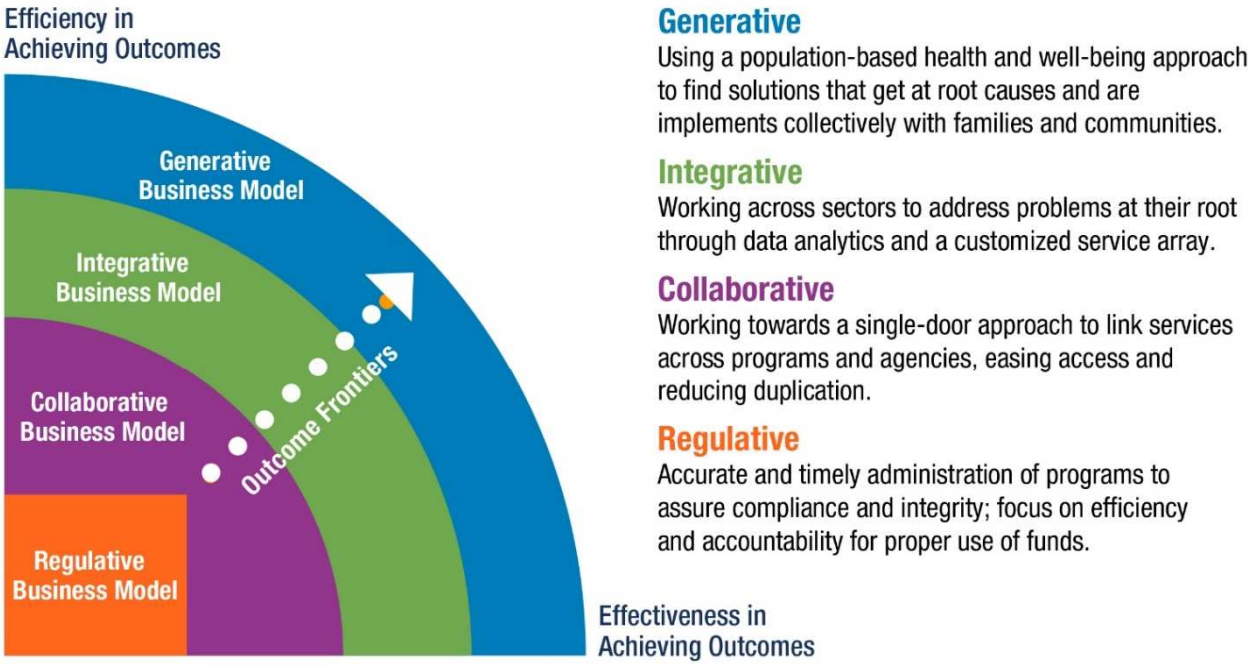
Clear themes have emerged from the analysis of the data acquired from the engagement tools used with the state assessment. Adopting a comprehensive framework that includes an organizational development and cultural lens establishes an enterprise level platform for DHS to take consistent and intentional action across the entire organization. Developing a 12- to 18-month plan within the comprehensive framework to address the six priority areas will provide DHS with the capacity to move in an intentional strategic direction toward enhancing the impact for the Oregonians served daily; progress toward a thriving culture that is based on a work, life and health balance; and even more effective achievement of long-term sustainable results. The recommendations are centered around the Human Services Value Curve framework and cultural developmental framework. Below is a culmination of DHS employees input, feedback and departmental suggestions blended with a few best practices from the public and private sector.

Figure 20. DHS six priority areas

Human Services Value Curve framework and recommendations

The Human Services Value Curve is a framework to help DHS improve operations through 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 and success for local communities. The value curve is based on moving through four distinct levels as an organization ultimately becomes more effective as it progresses through the curve. DHS currently has best practices in each of the following four models with a consistency of practices like most health and human services across the nation in the regulative business model.

Figure 21. Human Services Value Curve levels



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The American Public Human Services Association has helped health and human services agencies across the nation move through the value curve. The association and the agencies have collaboratively developed "pathway guideposts" that help chart the progress through the curve.

Pathway guideposts are focused 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
- Widespread testing to spark innovations and prompt implementation of what works

Strategic direction

Collectively agreeing upon a strategic direction by the service delivery staff, agency leadership, legislature and executive branch will be key toward staying the course and achieving consistent results. Stakeholders across the state all have the same common goal of assuring that all Oregonians, despite where they live and their individual circumstances, have the opportunity to live to their full potential. That goal is the thread that connects everyone. Moving collectively in the same direction guarantees success. Using an organizational and cultural framework helps focus decision-making and investments that have the greatest potential to advance agency and community goals. The consistency in resourcing key objectives and efforts over time will guarantee reaching the agreed-upon results for Oregonians who need DHS's critical services. Continuous progression toward mission-based goals becomes 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 fostering competencies and capabilities for the Oregonians served each year.

Recommendation

Short-term focus with a long-term view

Use the collective work of the most recent organizational and departmental assessments as a starting point 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, yet may be challenging in the short term to grasp due to the magnitude of the goal. Building short-term goal statements that support the established enterprise long-term vision will provide a greater engagement with measurable benchmarks toward gauging progress and success. Breaking down the organizational vision into shorter and midterm goals that are in reach allows DHS to start creating balance between solving problems and scaling solutions.

Priority action: Short-term action statement
Develop an enterprise level 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. Based on the findings of this report, a short-term goal statement should consider the following and be based on a 24–36-month timeline: • Integrated internal and external approach to capacity building • Employee and stakeholder engagement • Fiscal effectiveness and results orientation

Priority action: Agency-wide priorities

Establish agency-wide priorities that align all DHS departments toward achieving success relative to the short-term goal statement. Below are a few suggestions concerning agency-wide priorities that might be considered:
• Use the organizational development and cultural framework to guide major initiatives, objectives and investments throughout DHS.
• Assess departmental program service models for effectiveness, intended impact and long-term results. Consider using author Mark Friedman's six questions based around results accountability:
  o Who are our customers?
  o How can we measure if our customer is better off?
  o How can we measure if we are delivering services well?
  o How are we doing on the most important measures?
  o Who are the partners that have a role to play in helping the strategy move forward?
  o What will help us move forward?
• Focus on the six organizational development priority areas addressed in the state assessment listed below:
  o Investing in culture
  o Talent development
  o Organizational image
  o Strategic direction
  o Strategic development
  o 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. Consider the following in the plan to allow for a more fluid adoption and increased chances of achieving the intended impact: • Involve internal and external stakeholders in the decision-making process. • Discuss potential impacts and compare to other such policies that have been implemented in other organizations. • Take time to vet the policies and test to see any unidentified unintended consequences before they are scaled organization-wide. • Once a decision has been made on a policy recommendation, recognize the people who offered their advice both internally and externally and let them know what was decided on and why. • Give ample lead time before it goes into effect as well as time for employees to fully familiarize with all aspects of the change. • Set metrics in place before, during and after to ensure everyone understands the desired effect of the change and that you can prove achieving the desired effect. • 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

Enterprise platform implementation

Develop a multipath roadmap that encompasses an organizational and cultural framework to guide DHS toward increasing its overall effectiveness as an agency and its impact on clients served every day.

Priority action: Organizational developmental framework
Consult with the American Public Human Services Association (APHSA) to provide support and direction toward using the Human Services Value Curve framework as the guiding strategy to enhance the fundamentals of organizational development and capacity building across the entire organization. • Review and align the intersections and synergies of the Human Services Value Curve rollout with the implementation of the cultural framework. Involve internal and external stakeholders in the decision-making process.

Priority action: Cultural developmental framework
Using the cultural developmental framework and lessons learned from Oregon Youth Authority, adjust and implement a framework that creates a culture where employees are valued, empowered, accountable and supported toward achieving their full potential that already exists across DHS. • Review and align the intersections and synergies of 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 in each department. Use the organizational and cultural developmental frameworks to develop key impact strategies then align with DHS's short-term goal statement and agency priority areas.

Priority action: Strategic plan
Departmental strategic plans should be a simplified living document using SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and timely) goals and an inclusive process with key stakeholders during the strategy development phase. • Provide leadership an opportunity to present their departmental strategic plan to the DHS Cabinet members. Cabinet members can provide feedback concerning overall objectives, alignment with the organizational and cultural frameworks including the previously mentioned six organizational development priorities. • In reference to DHS's five program service areas, align the 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 toward accelerating some of DHS's top priorities. Maintaining active participation of local and statewide partners to support DHS will be vital toward deepening the agency's positive impact for vulnerable Oregonians and creating sustainable results in every community.

Priority action: Establish an Enterprise 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 • Discuss state-level challenges and opportunities, develop actionable strategies, share best practices and use strengths of cabinet participants toward creating sustainable results • Strategically provide cross-sector and community-based opportunities for partners to build relationships • Exchange information and provide community-based opportunities for participants to collaborate to strengthen local communities. The roles and responsibilities for the cabinet members can be focused around the following objectives listed below: • Support the development of a targeted response to one of DHS's priority objectives. • Contribute to the recruitment and the connection of resources to take formal action. • Assist in the removal of any barriers. • Assure initial progress is made toward reaching the agreed-upon outcome. The term for cabinet members could be as short as 12 months, meeting quarterly with group sessions in between.

Rotating think tank

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: Innovative strategy sessions
Pull together 50 different DHS employees and partners who are eager innovators and strategic thinkers every quarter across the different regions to re-imagine current services, tackle organizational challenges and envision innovative practices that help achieve efficient long-term results.

Process improvement

Priority action: Identify agency top initiatives for improvement

Identify the top agency priorities that have implications across the entire organization and focus a significant portion of the Office of Continuous Improvement resources on these objectives. Some of the objectives for consideration based on the findings of this report could be:
• Reassess the current recruitment, hiring and retention process
• Relaunch the Lean Daily Management System (LDMS) across DHS with a focus on building site-based and departmental competencies such as:
  o Require LDMS training for all newly hired employees and biannual online refresher training for all staff.
  o Create consistency through communications within DHS to emphasize that employee-driven ideas to improve processes and outcomes for clients is a vital part of a healthy and high-performing organization.
• Develop a consistent change management process across the entire organization to be used from a two-tier approach referenced below.
  o Use change management strategies for large agency initiatives to prepare staff well in advance of any major change.
  o For smaller but still important initiatives, develop internal skill sets around Prosci change management components to use at the program level.
• 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. The success for the most vulnerable 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 — enterprise 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 opportunity for legislative and executive branch leadership to add value and perspective on the overall master plan.
- Develop a fundamental agreement with DHS leadership, legislative stakeholders and executive branch leaders toward supporting the continuity of the master plan and decisions that would affect the momentum.
- Develop an onboarding plan for all key leaders who have ownership and responsibility for the plan during any transitions.
- Provide quarterly updates and semiannual strategy sessions to discuss the results and effectiveness of the priority areas against return on effort and investment.

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: • Two-person cross-training opportunities • Transition teams: Once an employee's intention to leave has been announced, an interim person or team should be designated to make the transition between the outgoing person and the incoming person. • Develop succession planning and ask certain persons to remain in their jobs during the transition to ensure continuity during the initial period of staffing.

Cultural framework and recommendations

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.

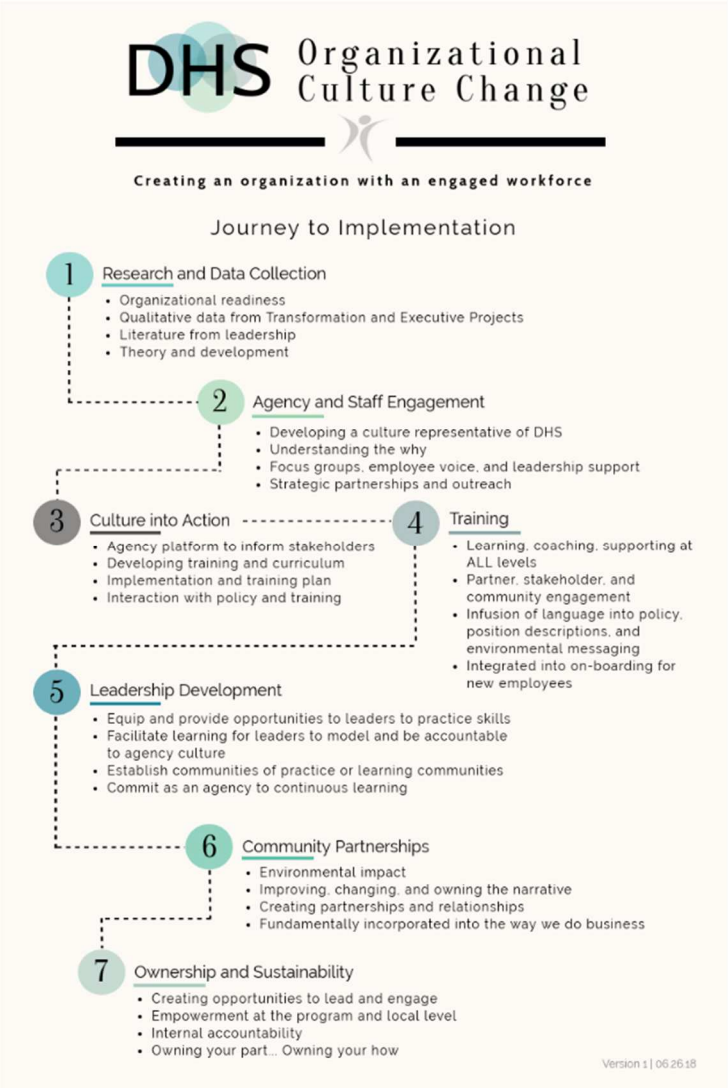
Through the guidance and support of the DHS Leadership team, the Office of Reporting, Research, Analytics and Implementation team is engaged in an intentional organizational culture shift to create environments of engagement for all employees, clients, consumers and stakeholders interacting with the 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.

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:

Figure 22. DHS organizational culture change



Investing in culture

Continuing to take steps toward creating a thriving culture where all state employees are valued, empowered, accountable and supported toward fulfilling their full potential ultimately puts the client first, creates fiscal effectiveness and achieves sustainable results.

Recommendations

Leadership development

Leadership instability, competency and capacity are three concepts that affect the entire organization. Successful leaders transform organizations even in the most challenging circumstances. Investing in leaders today and developing DHS's frontline staff who will lead tomorrow provide a talent bench that is deep and wide.

Priority action: Leadership training consolidation
Consider consolidating leadership development for DHS into one unit under the Organization and Employee Development Unit (OED). Currently, OED is responsible for developing a baseline of leadership capabilities with the flexibility to work from a customized approach with each of the program areas and individual departments.

Priority action: Agency leadership development training
OED currently has developed a comprehensive leadership development training curriculum called NAVIGATE that should be reviewed against the findings that have been identified in this assessment. • Once any gaps are exposed and addressed, the NAVIGATE curriculum should be considered mandatory for all managers. • Developing a practical plan that accommodates leadership's time constraints will need to be considered. • Linking trainings to established monthly or quarterly meetings throughout the field will help leaders meet the requirements and curriculum components of NAVIGATE. • Reinforce and expand on the current leadership model of lead from any chair. • Also consider developing a three-day leadership basics training for all leaders who support teams within their first 90 days of taking on a new leadership role. Develop a plan to roll out and provide brief training on the 13 leadership stabilization techniques developed during the state assessment in response to the trending leadership challenges. OED is currently integrating the leadership stabilization techniques into their current leadership trainings.

Priority action: Leadership assessment tools
Through OED, consider developing self-administered and independent oversight assessment tools that can provide leaders with a better understanding of climate, culture and daily operational realities. • Tools should have the ability to reveal issues related to the balance of work-, life- and health-related key findings. • Use efficient audit techniques such as keep/stop/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 best practices in leadership and team development across the entire organization. • Develop ongoing 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 the 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 on how to daily engage, support and challenge their team members to achieve agreed-upon objectives and goals.
- 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 that can assemble across the state to help targeted operations get up to speed.
- Provide leaders with recognition opportunities that support the team as a group through celebration opportunities.

Equity, diversity and inclusion

Strengthening equity, diversity and inclusion efforts will be an imperative toward meeting the greatest challenges and leveraging potential opportunities that face the workforce and program services today and in the future for DHS. Leadership across DHS will need to invest the sufficient time, appropriate resources and consistent ongoing efforts to fully realize the potential of an inclusive environment where success is based on the potential of people.

Priority action: Strategic plan

Consider developing a strategic plan that provides tools to support efforts across DHS that increases the competency and effectiveness of the enterprise relative to equity, diversity and inclusion.

- Provide support and guidance to develop equity, diversity and inclusion plans including dashboards for all departments including Central Services and Shared Services.
- Require all programs to use dashboards as accountability mechanisms to ensure equity, diversity and inclusion across DHS.
- Develop supportive resources, trainings and strategies that can cascade across the entire organization.

Talent development

Strengthening the current support systems through DHS's Human Resources Department will be vital toward stabilizing and leveraging the potential of DHS's current and future workforce. Focusing on all the related hiring and onboarding processes, the professional development of current DHS employees and using a recruitment lens that prioritizes equity, diversity and inclusion will allow DHS to retain and recruit top talent. 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 process

The recruitment, hiring and onboarding process has been one of the greatest challenges for DHS. Attracting the top talent to DHS can be very challenging with 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:
  o Recruitment techniques, data trends on position demand and dashboards
  o Application process, user friendliness and barriers
  o Hiring panels, scoring techniques, decision points
  o Removing favoritism and retaliation in the hiring process
  o Onboarding practices
  o Time to hire assessment
  o 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

Investing in employees and valuing their contribution to the organization is the foundation of retention efforts. Focus many times in DHS can be pointed at the recruitment and hiring process instead of retaining and developing the current workforce. The employee turnover rate at DHS

has caused a cascading effect of repeating 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 the entire organization.

Priority action: Retention assessment and strategy development
Through the Office of Continuous Improvement, conduct an assessment that includes suggested recommendations on the current retention rates and efforts already in action across DHS. Use the recommendations to develop a formal employee retention strategy plan adopted as a consistent strategy across the organization. Assessment review points and recommendations for consideration should include the following: **Review points:** • Tracking of turnover and oversight practices • Exit survey: available, effective, consistent process and utilization rates • Current practices of initial onboarding and beyond • Current retention strategies — recognition, mentorship programs, cross-training • Participation rates in professional development opportunities by employees • Employee compensation rates • Staff engagement surveys: Why do staff stay?

Succession planning

Developing a formalized succession plan will address the transition continuity of all positions across the organization.

Priority action: Departmental succession planning
Develop a simplified succession planning structure with a diversity lens that incorporates all positions with a minimum of one designee for each type of position classification. • Require succession planning for each department as an annual goal • Identify key leadership positions that require targeted candidates for preparation to maintain business continuity during transitions. • Incorporate succession planning based cross-training goals as part of all annual employee development plans.

Career pathways

Develop a plan to create more accessible career pathways and opportunities for employees who are searching to grow within (internally) or outside (externally) 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:
  o Hiring managers host booths with potential openings and types of positions within their department.
  o Available jobs are posted ahead of time to increase awareness.
  o Potential prospects will have the opportunity to interact with hiring managers.

Training

Providing relevant accessible training for all employees is critical in delivering 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
Using the audit results, develop a strategic training plan that supports the next steps of DHS. • Embed future organizational approaches, practices and expectations in all trainings • Identify future foundational skills and current competencies and incorporate into training opportunities. • 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

Increasing and managing the organizational image that addresses perceptions and enhances awareness of the important work done each day will be critical to fulfilling DHS's mission.

Priority action: Develop a communications plan that strengthens DHS's organizational image from a local and statewide approach.
Develop a communications plan that considers the following: • Use different messaging formats and platforms to create awareness • Encourage local engagement opportunities with key stakeholders • Develop opportunities to speak at local civic organizations • Engage key community leaders to give out local staff recognition awards

Community engagement event

Developing an annual awareness and engagement opportunity to recognize key employees, stakeholders and partners will create a positive internal and external experience. It will also deepen relationships and awareness of DHS's impact relative to the local community.

Priority action: Host a community engagement event
The event framework could possibly be developed as follows: • Recruit local sponsors to underwrite it. • Recruit table captains to bring local stakeholders. • Present 60-minute program with videos, information, speakers and client testimonies. • Center topics around core program service areas offered. • Use as a call to action for volunteers, external committee members.

Support structure

The perspective toward enhancing the current organizational structure is based on the key findings and recommendations provided in this report. There are five main concepts that need to be considered concerning the current organizational structure and any associated future changes. These concepts are listed below:

- Developing a more integrated internal approach at all levels
- Aligning related areas for both program and Central Services and Shared Services
- Engaging stakeholders and partners in a more integrated external approach
- Increasing focus on organizational developmental fundamentals across DHS
- Creating a consistent culture based on DHS's mission, vision and values

Developing a more integrated internal approach at all levels

The state 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 be focused on the following:
    - Program service area to program service area
    - Central Services/Shared Services to program service areas
    - District level program areas
    - District to neighboring districts and statewide districts
    - Region to region

Alignment of related areas for both program and 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

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.

Engaging 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.

Increased focus on organizational developmental fundamentals across DHS

The key findings of the state assessment provided insight for the need to focus on many of the foundational organizational development priorities that support the current DHS service model. Developing opportunities within the current support structure to focus on the organizational development fundamentals will be vital toward achieving the mission based outcomes for DHS.

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

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

Using the results of the state assessment with leaders and team members across DHS in upcoming strategy sessions will help confirm additional key elements that will need to be considered concerning any potential future structural changes.

Summary

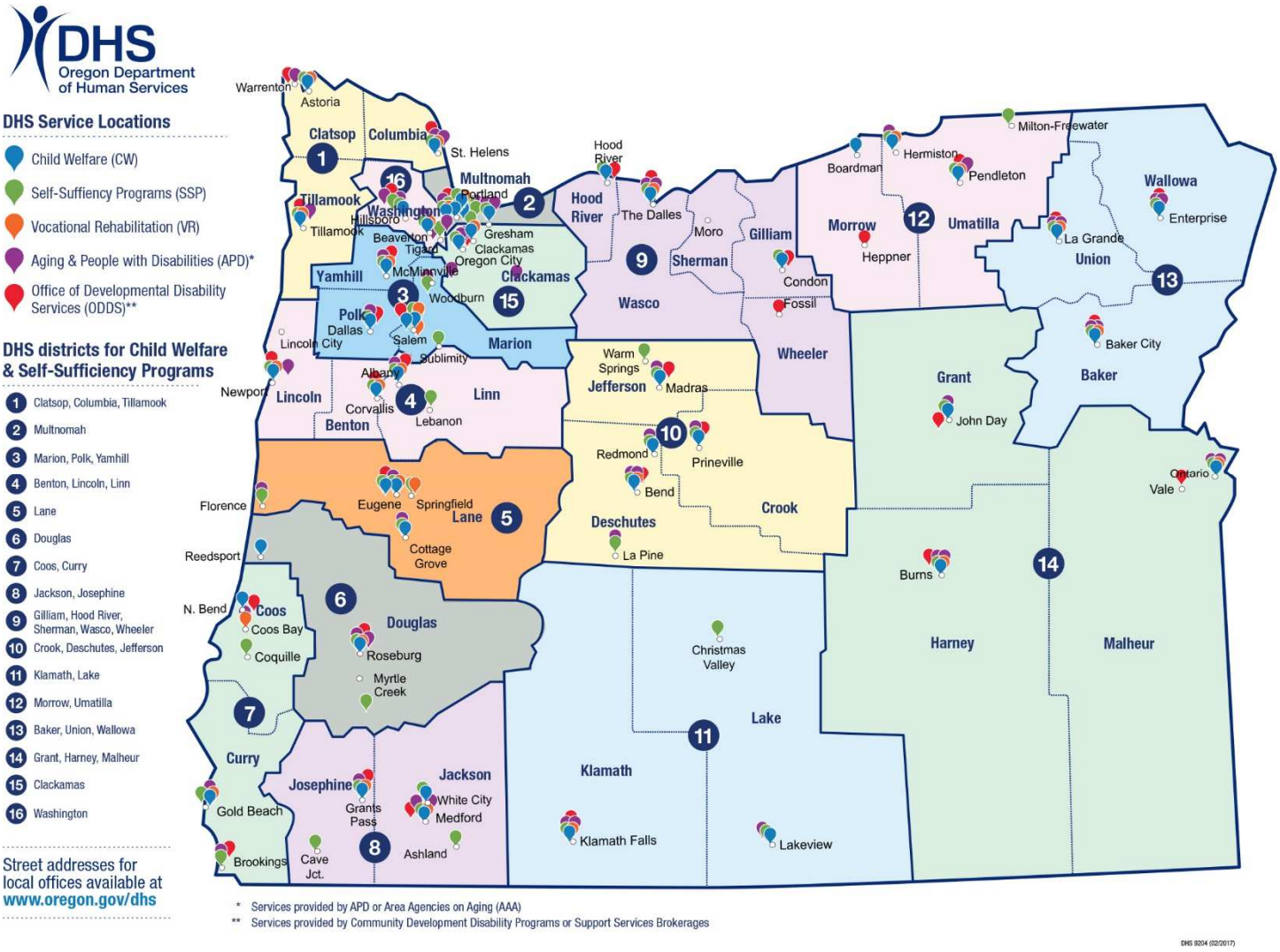
The state assessment started out with the question, “How do DHS employees recommend we become our best for the Oregonians who need us most and the communities where they reside?” In the quest by the Department of Human Services to provide the greatest public value across the state and local communities, two things stand true:

- DHS team members across the state are ready to move forward toward success and
- Change is inevitable but progress is optional and doesn’t have to be.

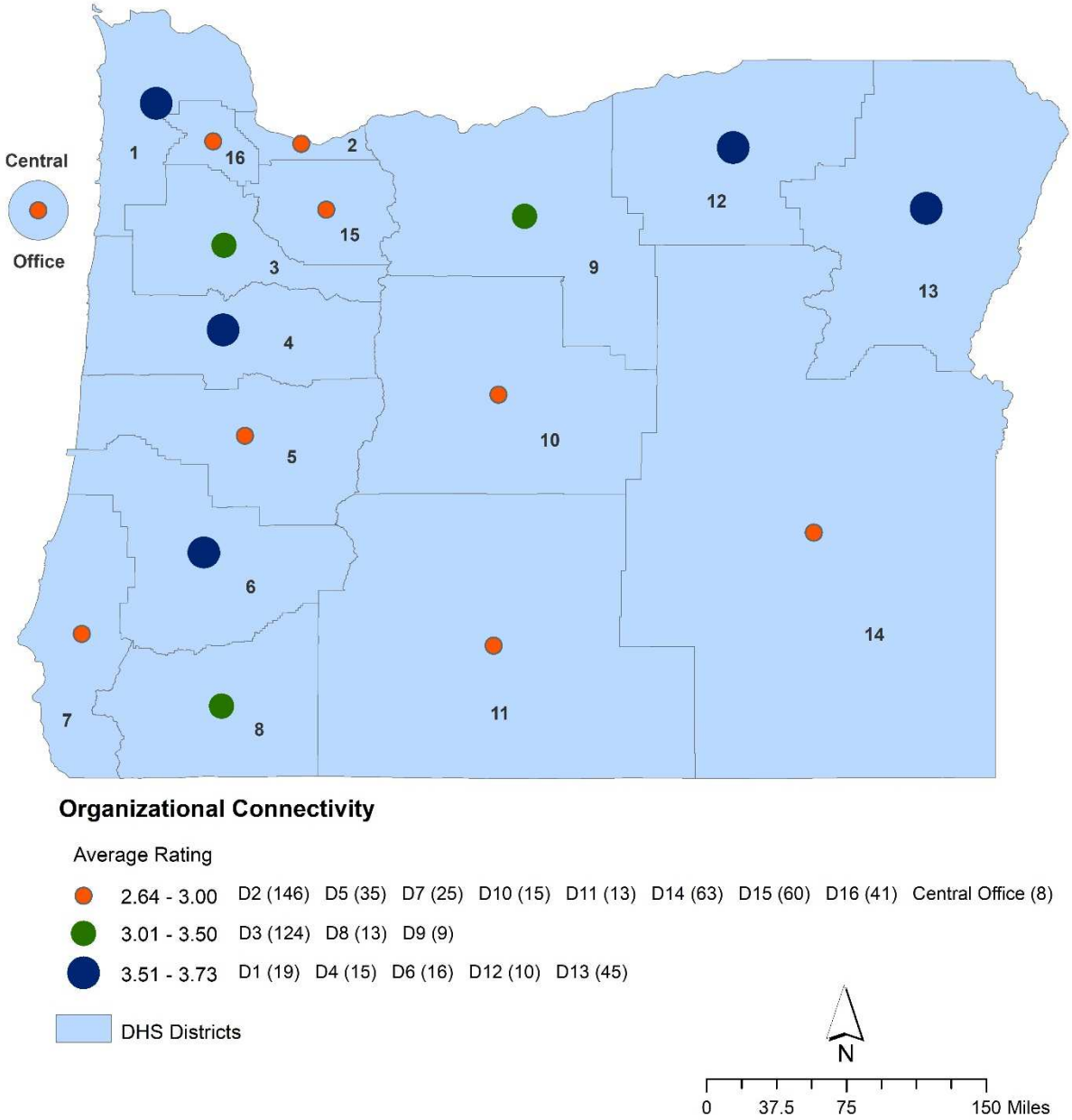
Most of the capacity needed to deliver broader, more effective and sustainable outcomes lies within our organization today. Success doesn’t always require frame breaking changes. If everyone takes part in the effort to move forward, success is within reach. Through a collective commitment to a unified vision, intentionality in making short-term decisions with a long-term view, and focusing on a people first perspective will position DHS to make sure progress that is already within our current potential is no longer optional. Addressing the key findings and recommendations in this report will position DHS, its partners, stakeholders and staff to provide pathways for the individuals, families and communities we serve toward being their very best, including the staff who support them.

Appendix

Appendix A. Department of Human Services service locations



Appendix B. Organizational strengths maps



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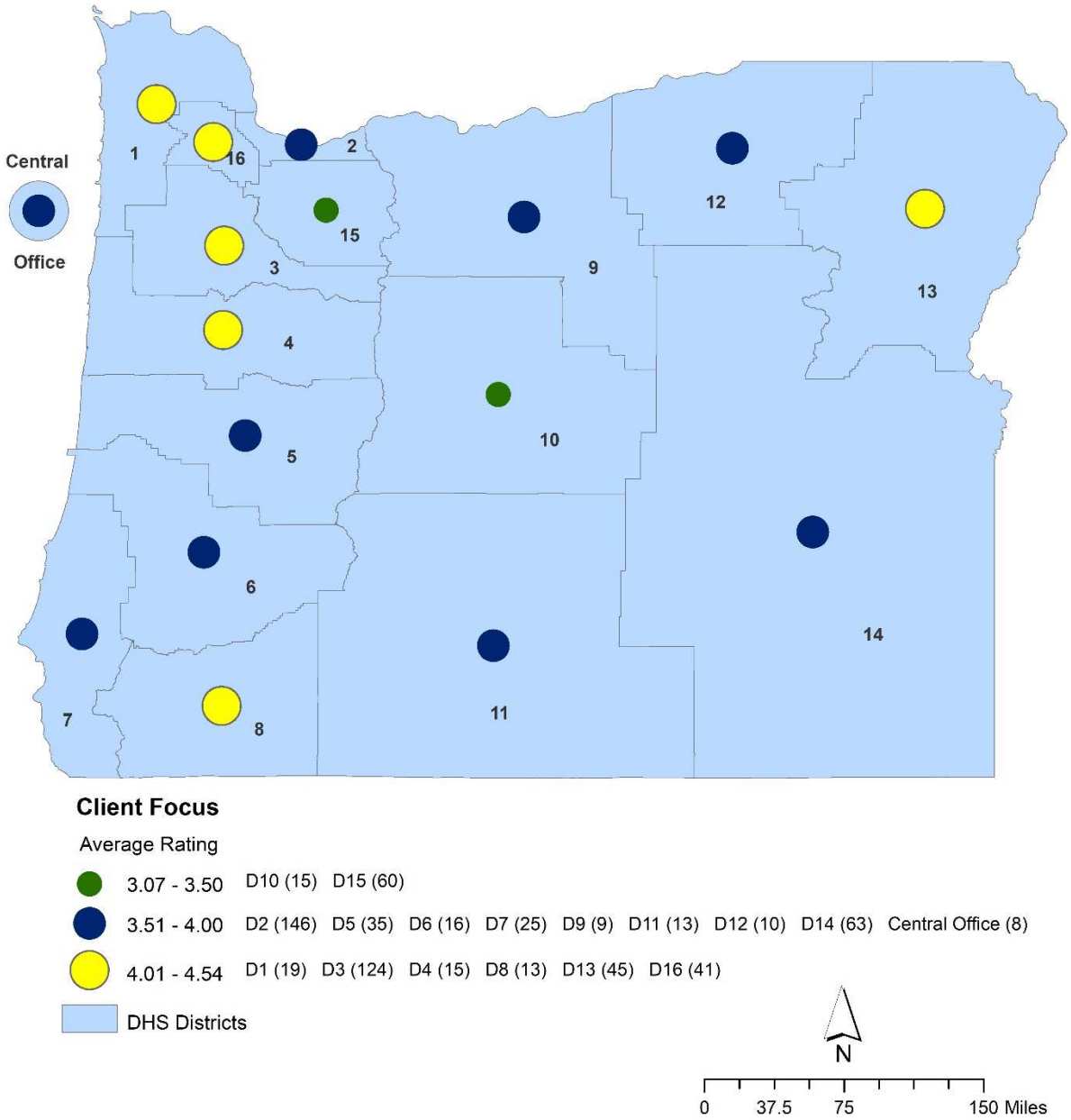

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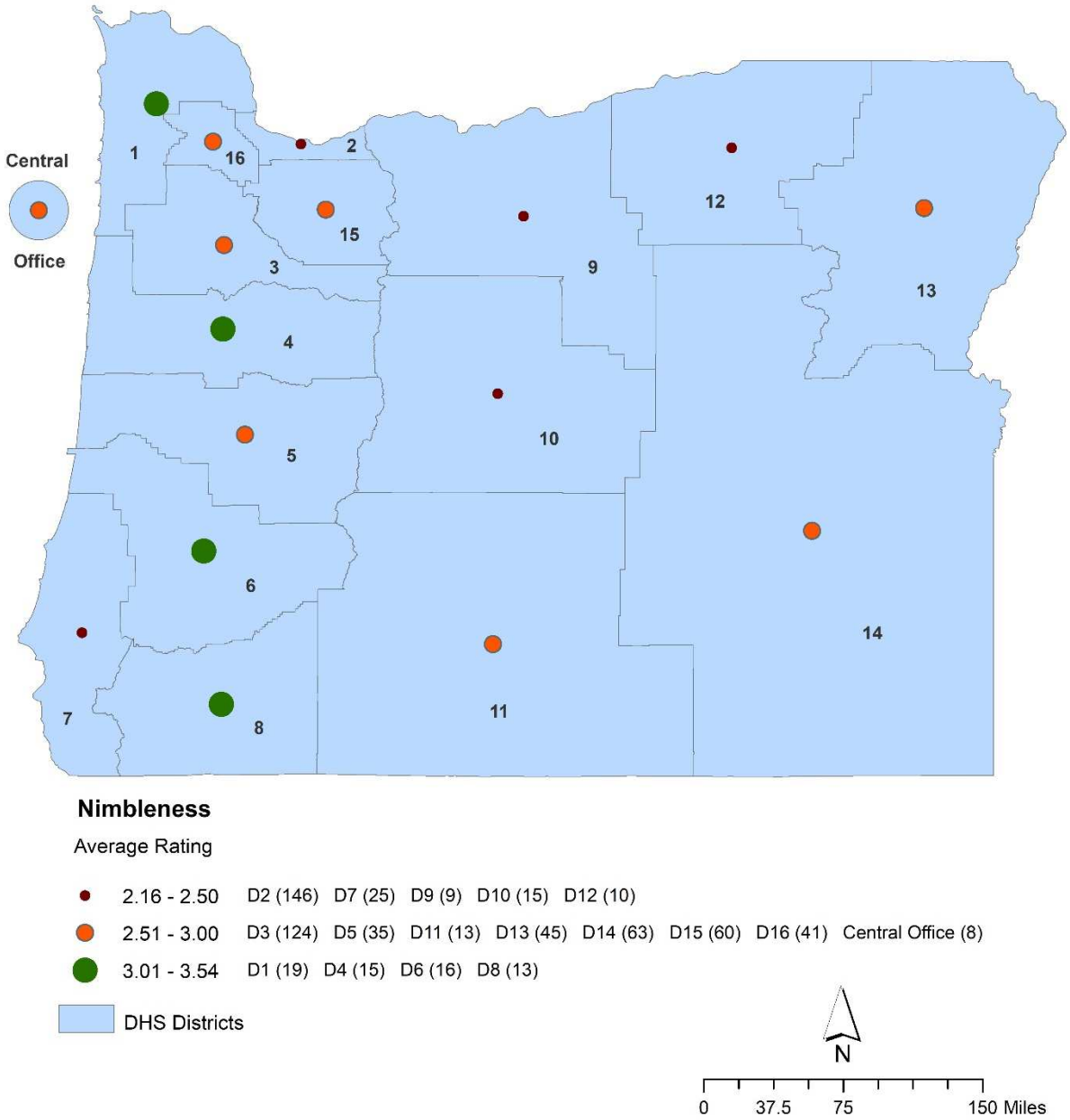

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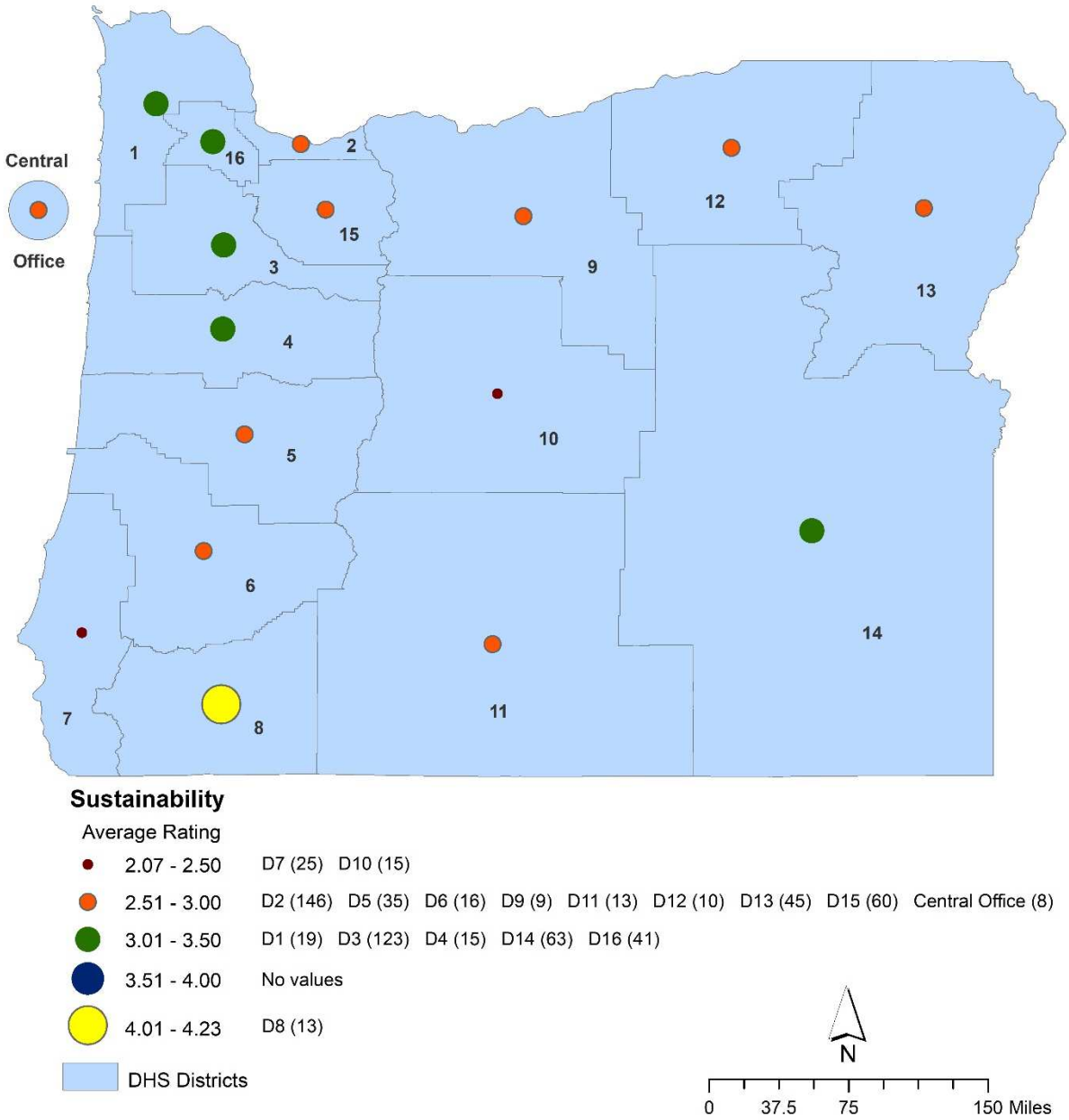

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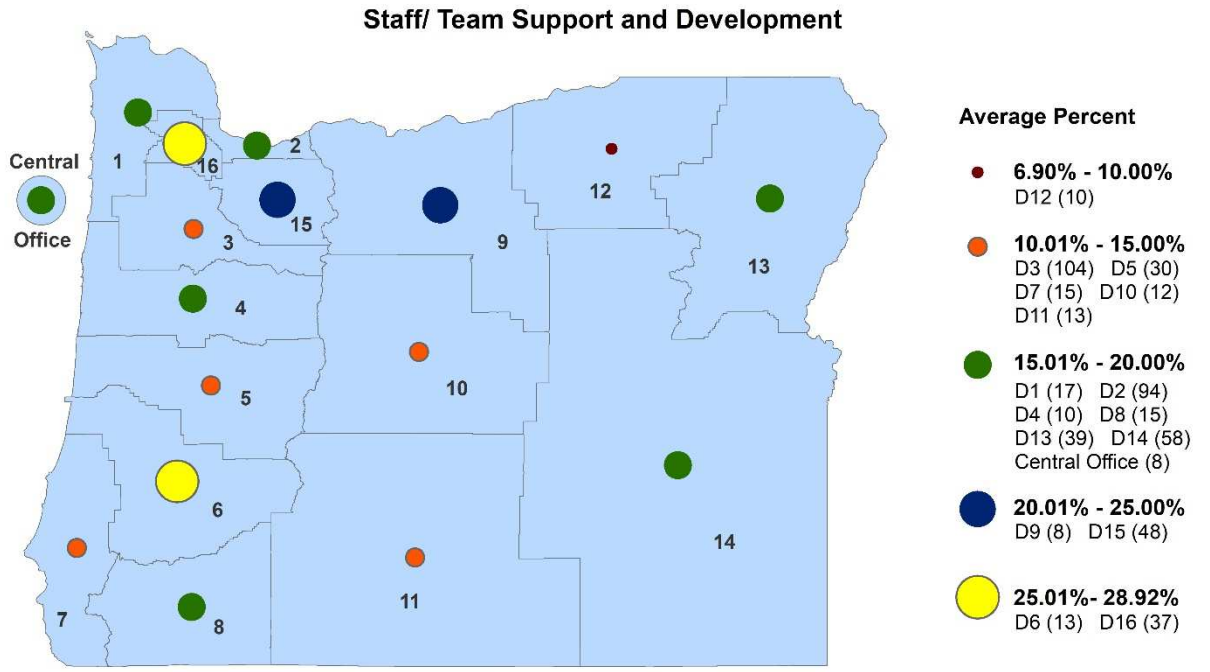
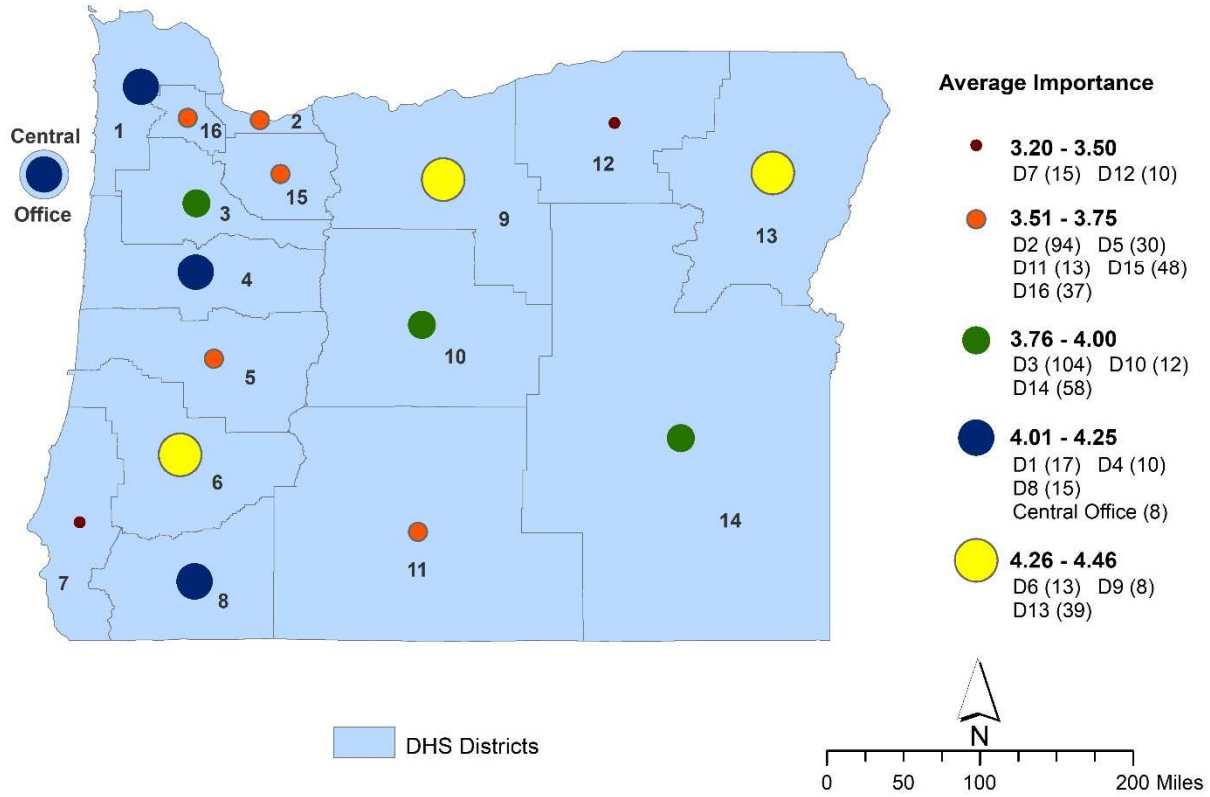
Appendix C. Allocation of time maps





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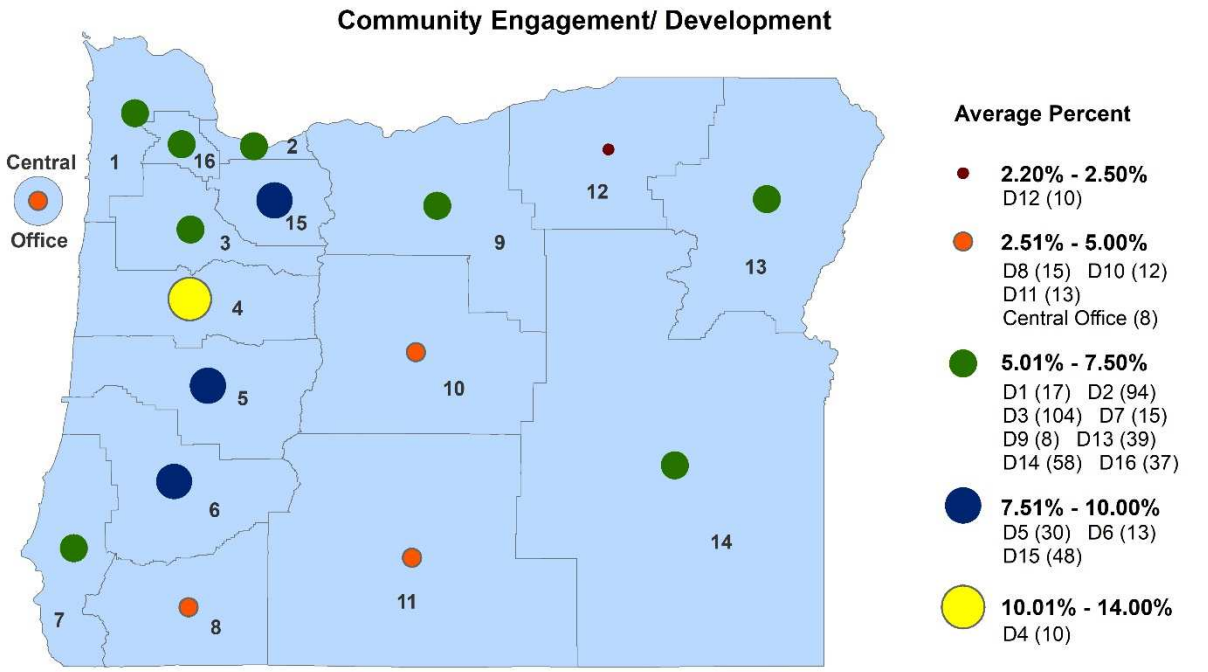

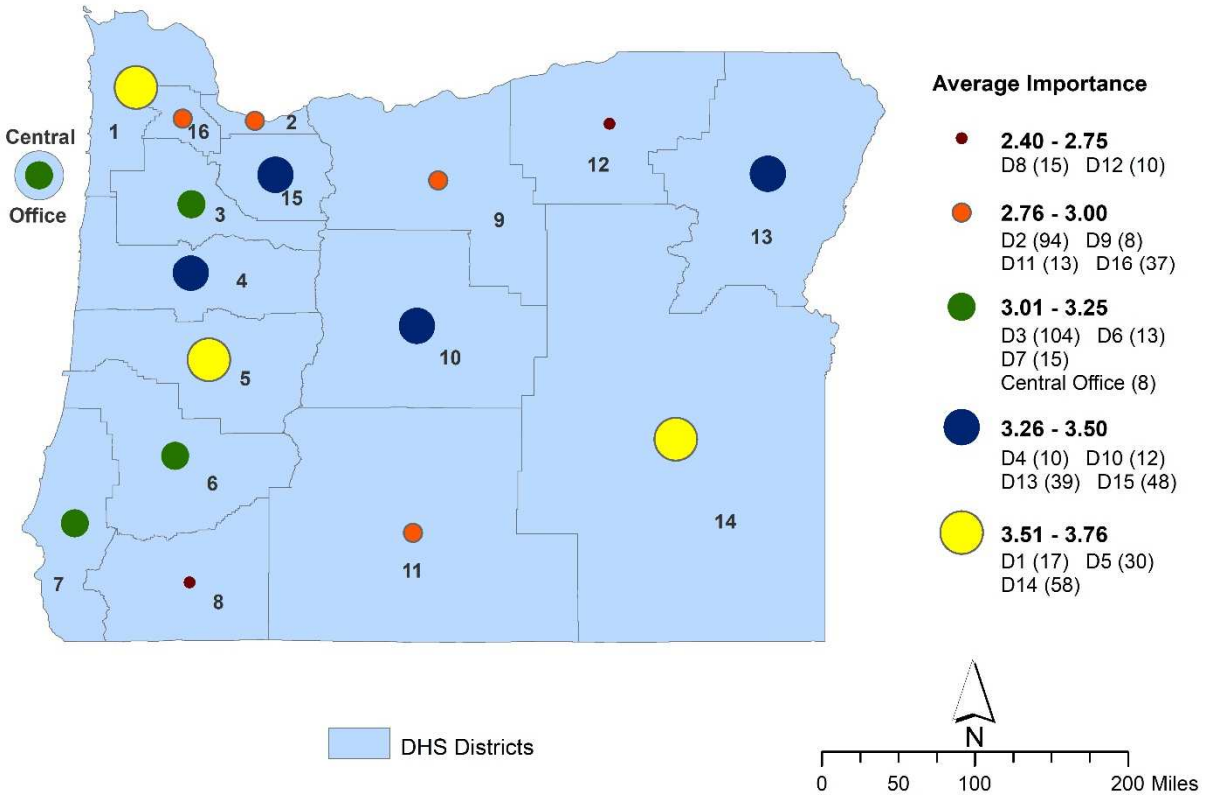

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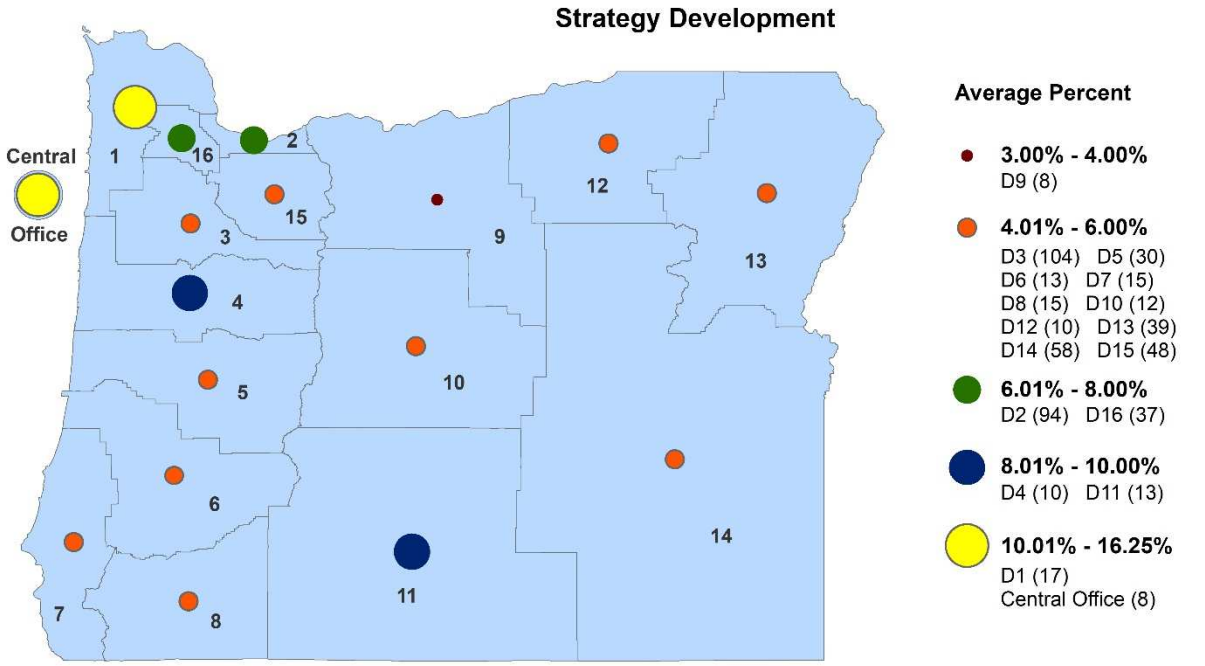

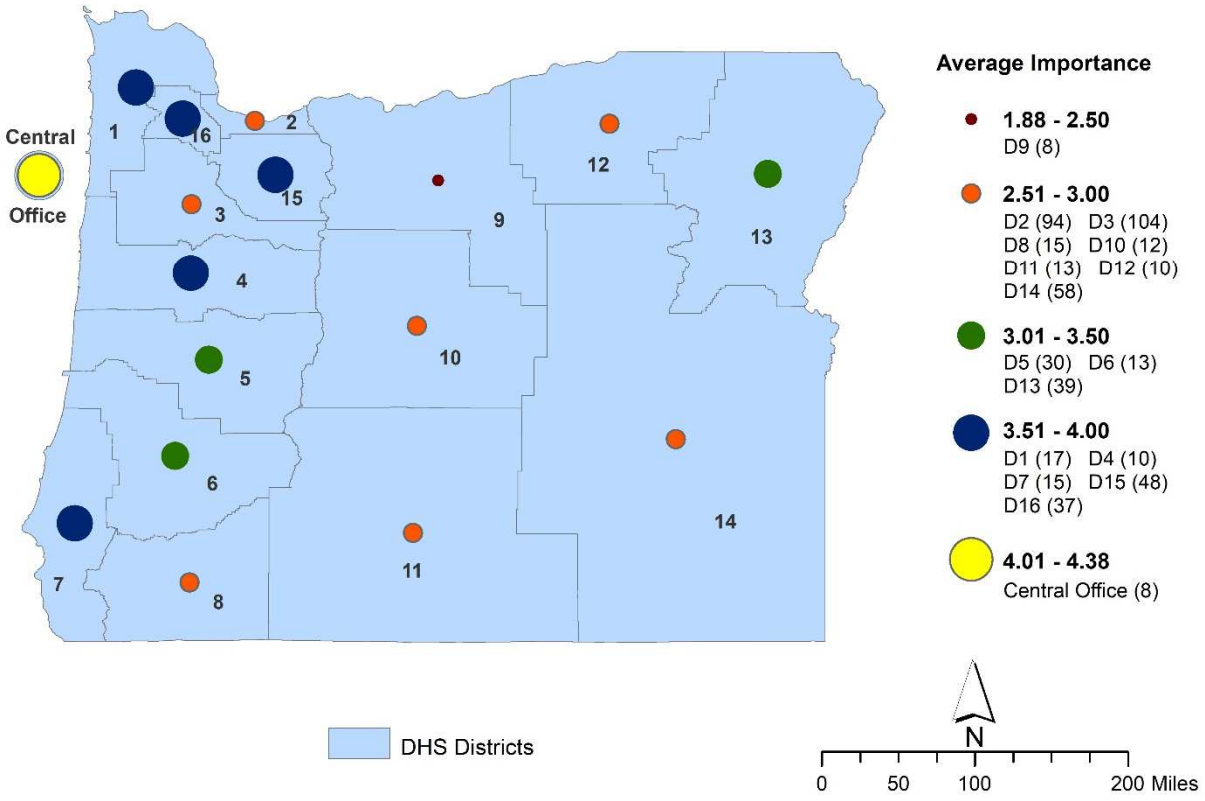

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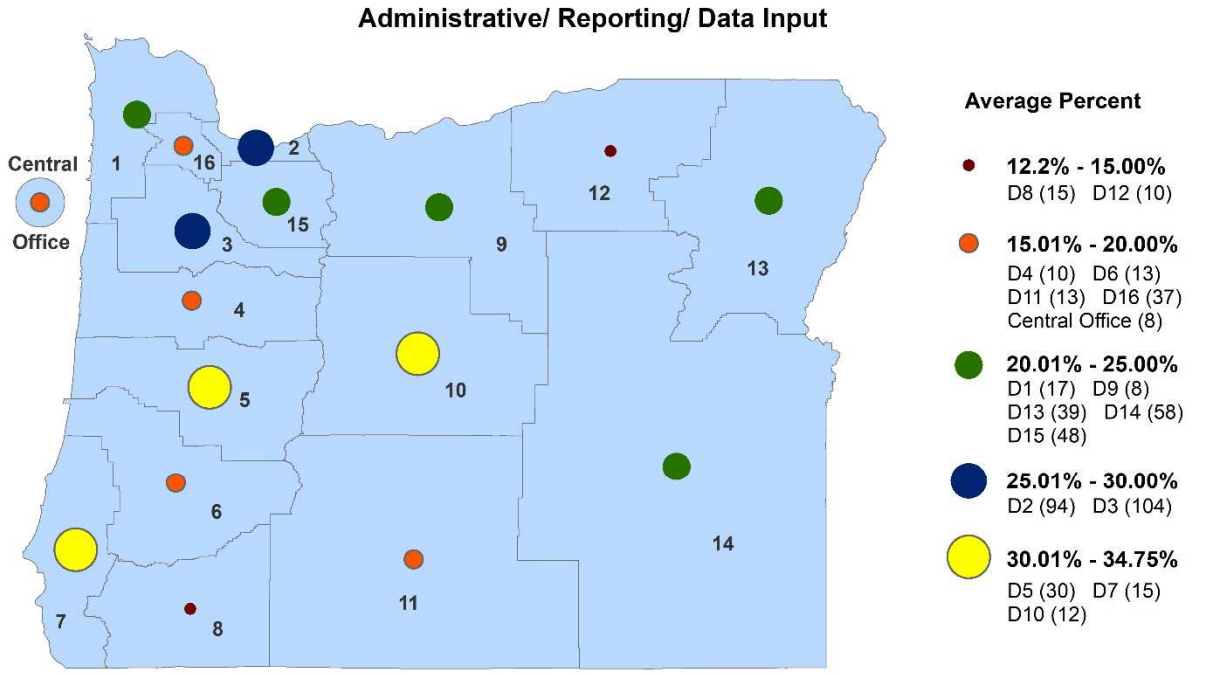

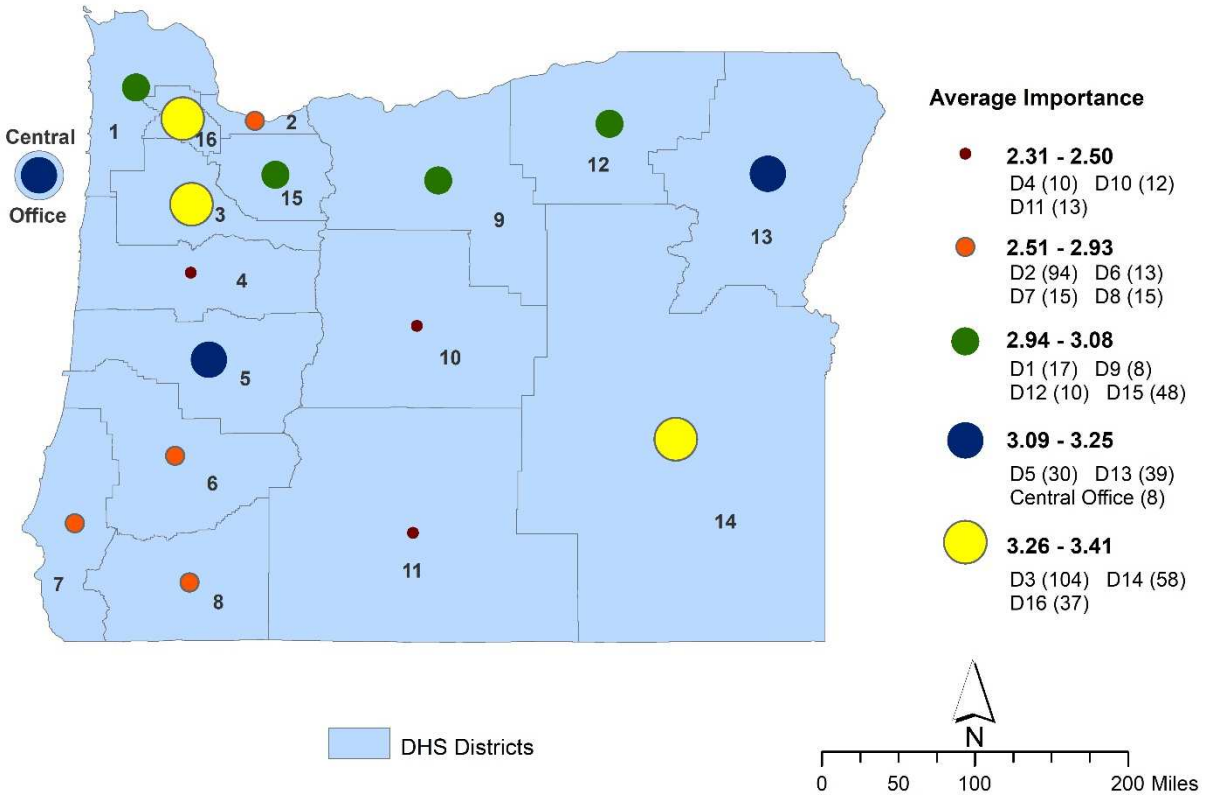

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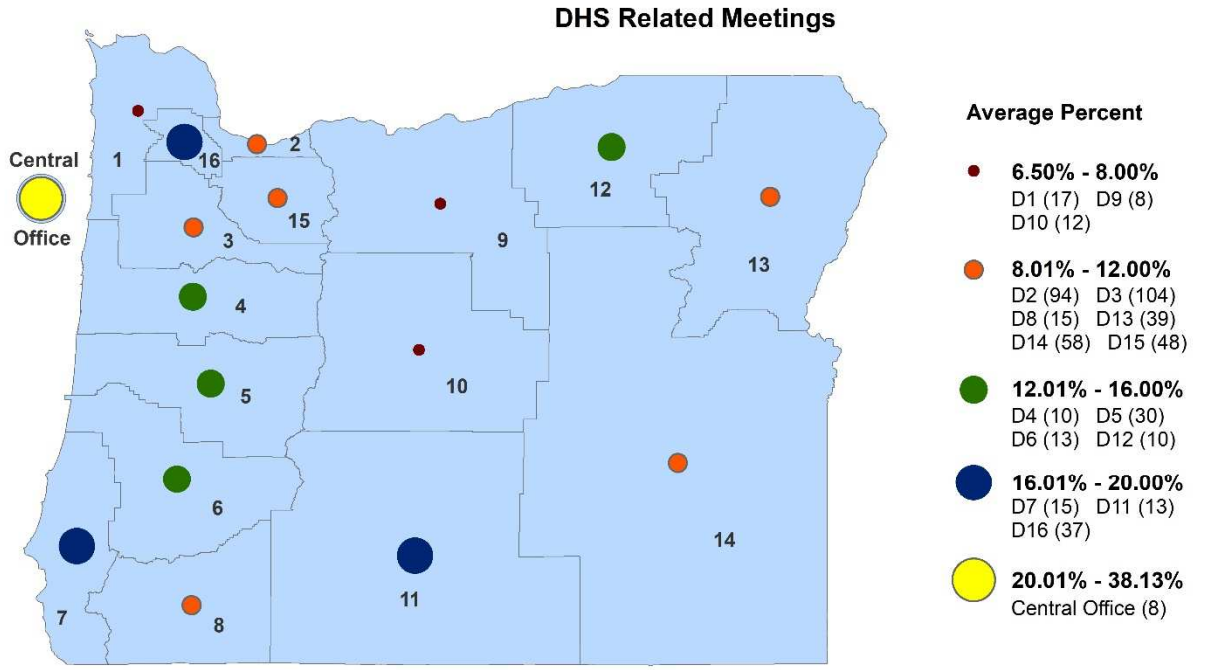

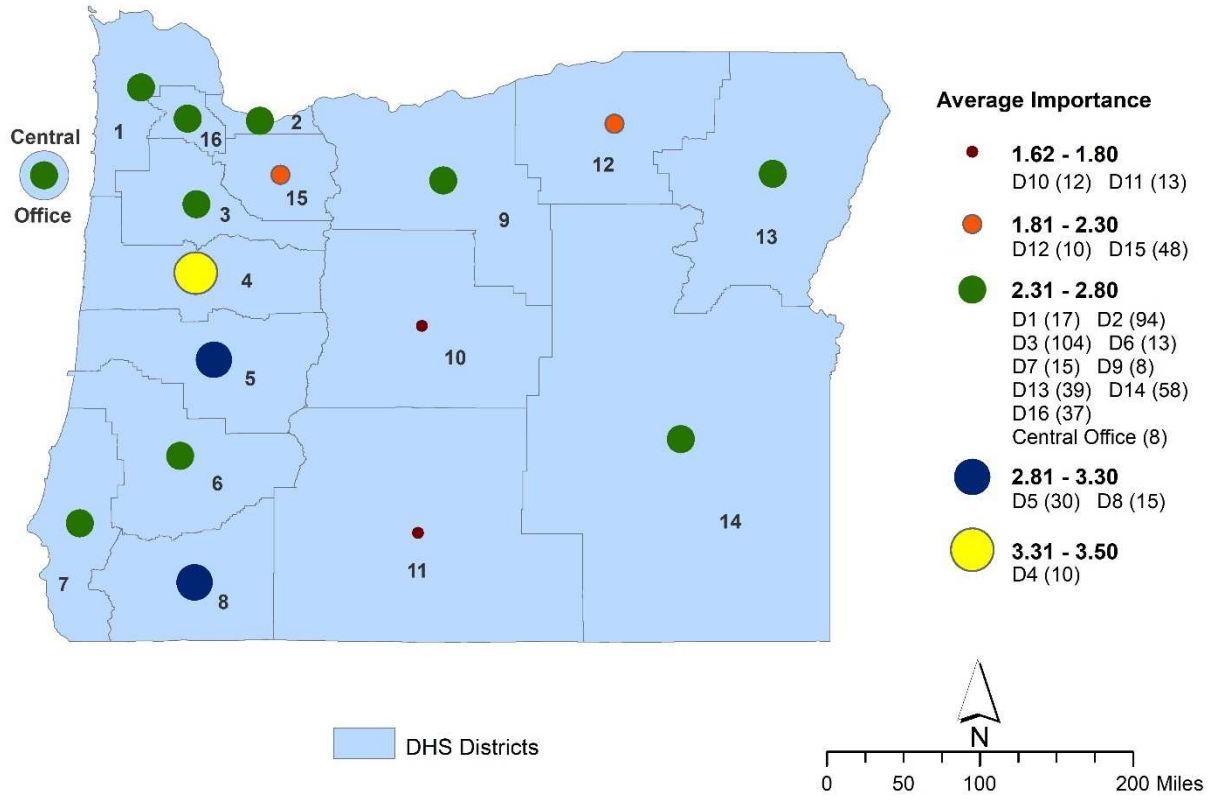

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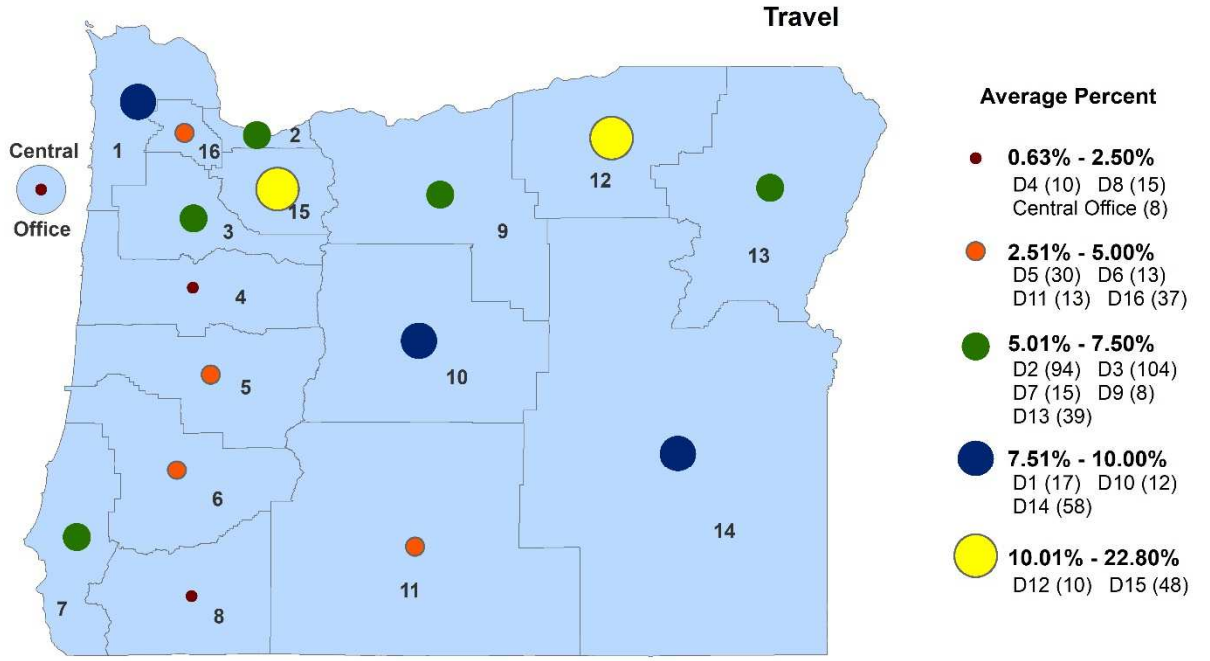

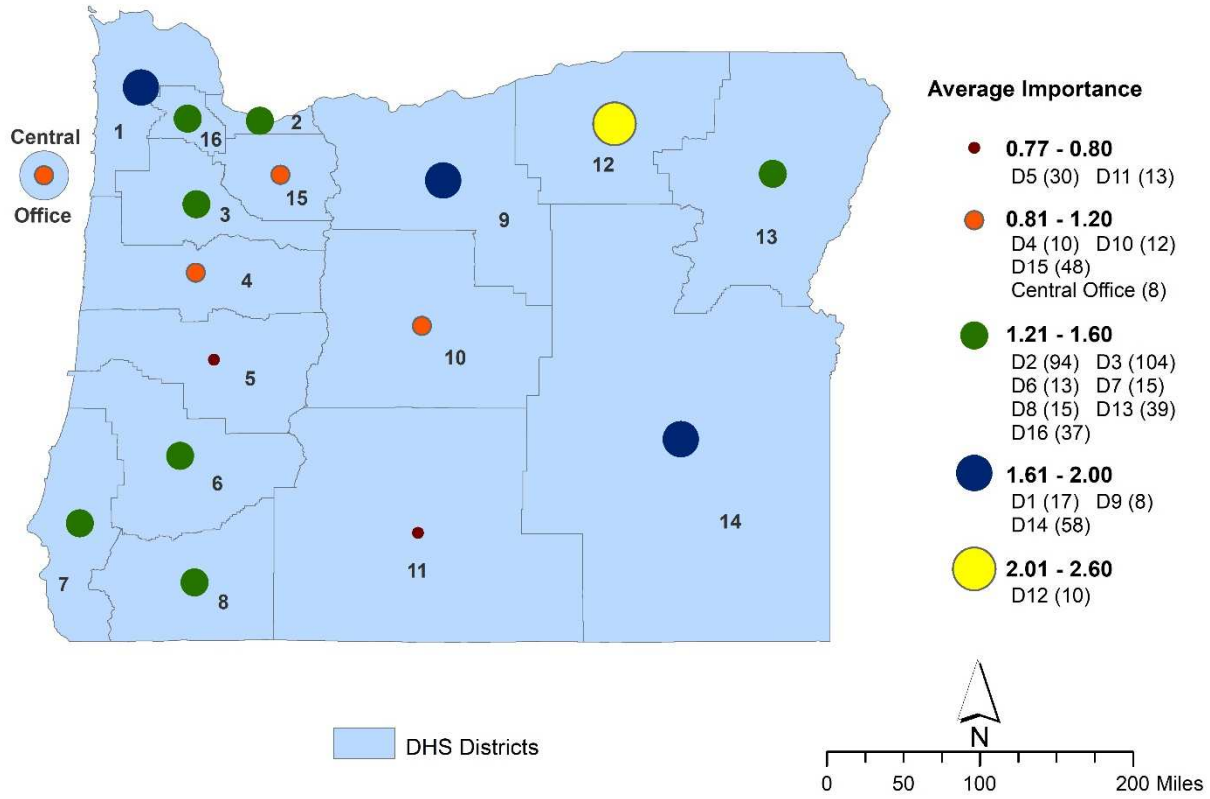

Programs in descending frequency of responses: CW, SSP, VR, APD.

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