



# Customer Service Survey

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OREGON DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

## Statewide Customer Service Survey Results

2012

By  
Research and Projects



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## Introduction

The Oregon Department of Administration Services (DAS) instructed state agencies to conduct a “Customer Service Satisfaction” survey at the beginning of the 06-08 Biennium. This survey is administered once every biennium. Administrators from the Oregon Department of Corrections (ODOC) selected parole officers (POs) as their primary customer. POs are considered *consumers* of DOC since they use counselor information to develop programming and services for inmates being released from DOC institutions.

The survey, developed by Research and Projects at the ODOC, includes six mandated questions measuring *Timeliness, Accuracy, Helpfulness, Expertise, Availability of Information and Overall Service*. The six mandated questions were essential for comparisons among participating agencies. Since customer populations differ among agencies, interpretation differences could exist. To ensure DOC fully benefited from the survey, additional questions were asked of respondents to better understand and interpret responses. Some of Oregon’s best parole officers, as identified by Community Corrections administrators, were interviewed during the development of the survey. These POs helped identify questions that best differentiate well formulated transition plans from poor transition plans.

The series of questions differentiating good and poor transitional plans were further refined with Community Corrections staff and DOC administrators. The six mandated questions were complemented with 24 additional questions which addressed the following:

- Adequacy of information provided
- Sufficient planning for mental health, housing, transportation, and programming needs of offenders prior to release
- Timely completion of services
- Courtesy, communication, and professionalism of DOC staff

Appendix A contains the survey that includes the six mandated questions and the 24 additional questions included by DOC.

## Method

### *Participants*

DOC randomly sampled inmates being released between March and June 2012. These randomly selected inmates were matched to POs assigned to each transition case 30 days after release. Utilizing a 30-day after release period insured the selected inmates were properly matched with the appropriate PO. POs were surveyed about a particular inmate's transition. Due to the randomization process, some POs completed up to two surveys per month while other POs were not sampled.

### *Materials*

An optically scanned survey was used to collect data (Appendix A). Surveys were mailed monthly (March, 2012-June, 2012) to randomly selected parole officers. If surveys were not completed and returned to DOC, a follow-up letter was sent to Community Corrections offices. The follow-up letter was sent during the data collection process. A copy of the follow-up letter is located in Appendix B.

### *Procedure*

Data collection for this DAS mandated initiative began in March 2012 and concluded in June 2012. Each mandated question was assigned a four point scale: *Excellent, Good, Fair or Poor*. Twenty-four additional questions were added to the survey; some of these questions were open-ended, some were answered Yes/No and others used the same four point scale mentioned above.

## Results for 2012

There were 769 surveys sent to POs in each Community Corrections office throughout Oregon and 630 surveys were completed and returned to DOC. The overall response rate for 2012 was 82%; this is slightly higher than the 80% response rate for 2010 and the 79% response rate in 2008. During the 2012 collection some POs completed more than one survey during the four month collection period; however, POs were not sent more than two surveys in any month.

Most POs responded to the initial request to complete the survey. Although some POs failed to comply with the initial and subsequent requests, most of the non-participants had legitimate reasons for not completing their surveys. For example, some parole officers were not involved with transitioning the inmate, some were out of the office during the data collections phase of the study, and some were no longer employed by Community Corrections. There were also occasions where the inmate had been transferred to another state, to federal authorities, or to another county.

The six mandated questions (in bold), the 24 additional questions, and the associated responses for 2012 are listed below. Questions with estimates not totaling 100% may be attributed to the proportion of those not responding to the question. Estimates between 2008, 2010, and 2012 are located on page 9.

### ***Timeliness***

#### **How would you rate the timeliness of the services provided by DOC?**

- 91% answered excellent or good

As the acting parole officer, were you given enough information to prioritize the needs of supervision for parole?

- 95% answered yes

If the release date was changed for this offender, were you notified within 30 days of the offender's release?

- 16% answered yes
- 81% said the release date did not change

Was transportation established before the offender was released?

- 96% answered yes

Were all possible options for housing provided in the release plan for this offender?

- 84% answered yes

If the offender had mental health needs (including medications), were programs and/or services discussed in the release plan?

- 77% answered yes (percent reflects those POs who work with offenders who have mental health needs)

If the offender had drug/alcohol needs, were programs and/or services discussed in the release plan?

- 83% answered yes (percent reflects those POs who work with offenders who have drug/alcohol needs)

### ***Accuracy***

**How would you rate the ability of the DOC to provide services correctly the first time?**

- 92% answered excellent or good

Were you provided with information regarding the type of treatment programs this offender participated in while incarcerated?

- 73% answered yes

Did you receive a field investigation for the offender 60 to 90 days prior to release?

- 86% answered yes

If you made changes or modified conditions in the release plan were those changes implemented?

- 10% answered yes
- 52% said no changes were made

Did you receive all the necessary information in the offender's release packet?

- 90% answered yes

### ***Helpfulness***

**How would you rate the helpfulness of DOC employees in general?**

- 93% answered excellent or good

How would you rate the helpfulness of the release counselor or other institutional staff regarding this case?

- 89% answered excellent or good

Were DOC staff helpful in meeting your needs in order to make contact with this offender prior to release?

- 85% answered yes

If yes, how did you make that contact?

- 30% made contact by phone
- 18% made face-to-face contact
- 7% made written contact
- 45% did not make contact

If you made that contact, was the information provided helpful for case planning purposes?

- 46% answered yes
- 48% answered not applicable, parole officer did not make contact

### ***Expertise***

**How would you rate the knowledge and expertise of DOC employees?**

- 91% answered excellent or good

If you communicated with DOC staff (release counselors, institutional counselors, correctional officers, administrators, etc.) during the release process, how would you rate that communication?

- 59% answered excellent or good
- 37% answered not applicable

During the release process, if you entered an institution for release planning purposes, were you treated in a professional manner?

- 99% answered yes (percent reflects those POs who entered an institution)

When working with prison staff, how would you rate their understanding of your responsibilities as a parole officer?

- 55% answered excellent or good
- 30% answered not applicable

### ***Availability of Information***

#### **How do you rate the availability of information at DOC?**

- 86% answered excellent or good

In the release planning process, did you utilize any institutional information in the Correctional Information System (CIS) database (including Chronos)?

- 88% answered yes

If yes, did you only utilize Chrono information?

- 81% answered yes

### ***Overall Service***

#### **How do you rate the overall quality of service provided by DOC?**

- 93% answered excellent or good

Thinking about the Oregon DOC as a whole, would you say the transition process from prison to parole in the last few years is getting better, about the same or getting worse?

- 91% answered getting better or about the same

### ***Summary***

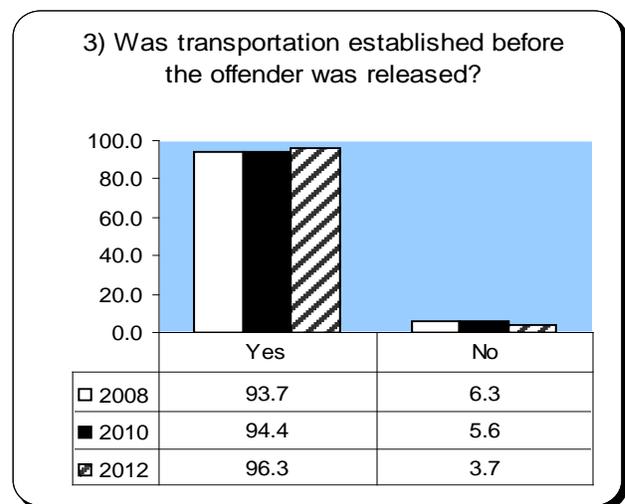
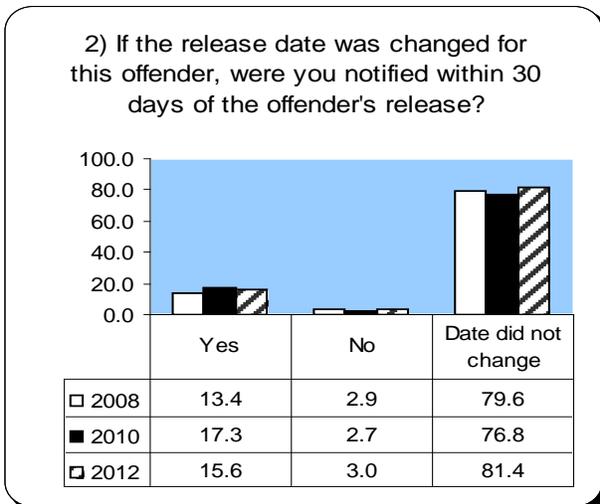
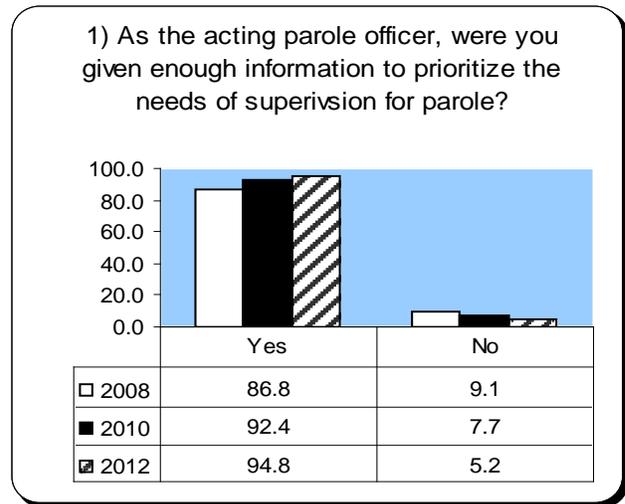
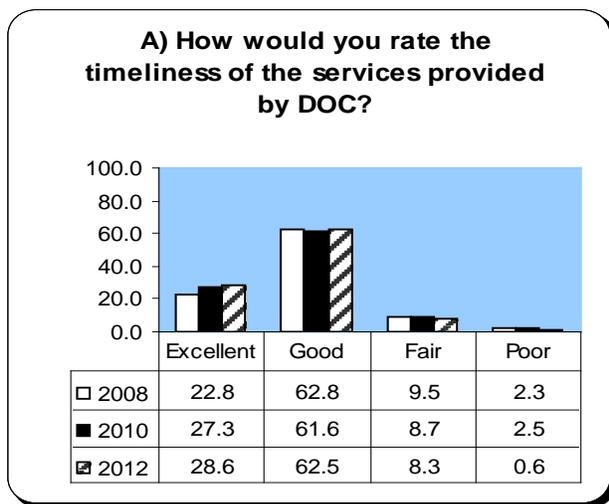
Most of the responses associated with the survey for 2012 were again positive. When examining the six mandated questions, 86-93% responded excellent or good. The responses associated with the additional 24 questions were also positive. However, during the 2012 collection, 53% of participants said the transition process from prison to parole is getting better. This estimate has decreased compared to previous studies (64% in 2010 and 61% in 2008). A significant number of POs responded "Not Applicable" to three non-mandated questions. The questions were related to inmates with mental health issues, drug/alcohol related issues, and whether POs who entered an institution for release planning purposes were treated in a professional manner. Of those respondents who dealt with inmates who had mental health or drug/alcohol related needs, 77% indicated that these needs and/or programs were documented in the inmate's release plan. This estimate increased significantly from 2008 (68%) and slightly increased from 2010 (76%).

Eighty-three percent of the POs serving inmates with alcohol/drug needs stated that these special issues were discussed in the release plan; this estimate has increased significantly over past years (i.e. 2008 (76%) and 2010 (74%). Lastly, 99% of the POs who entered a DOC institution said they were treated in a professional manner during the 2012 collection. This estimate slightly increased from 2010 (98%) and significantly increased from 2008 (93%).

## Comparisons of 2008, 2010, and 2012

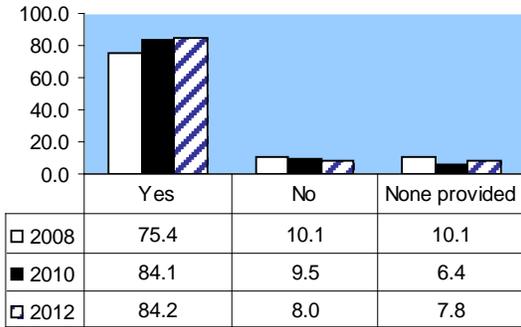
The Customer Service Satisfaction survey questions representing change between 2008, 2010, and 2012 are displayed below. The DAS mandated questions are represented in bold and are listed first within each category (i.e. Timeliness, Accuracy, Helpfulness, Expertise, etc.). The additional non-bolded questions follow within each main category. The tables below recognize changes between 2008, 2010 and 2012 for those responding to the question; tables noting significant change between studies will be summarized at the end of this section.

### Timeliness

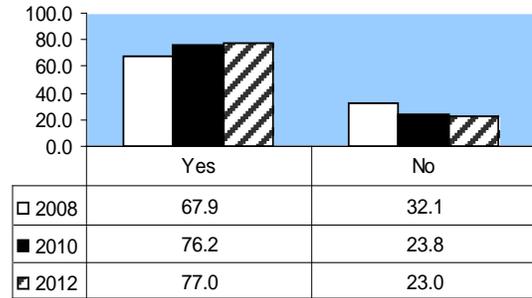


Note: Question 2, under Timeliness, represents those where date changes did or did not occur. Also, all estimates represent applicable responses.

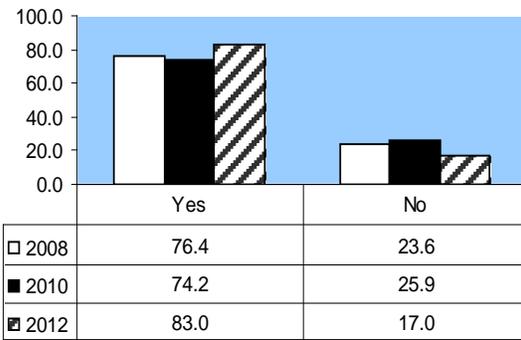
4) Were all possible options for housing provided in the release plan for this offender?



5) If the offender had mental health needs (e.g., medications) were programs and/or services discussed in the release plan?



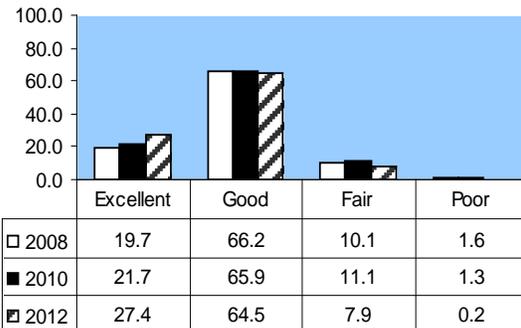
6) If the offender had drug/alcohol needs were programs and/or services discussed in the release plan?



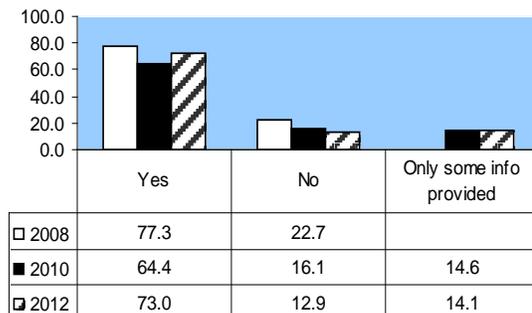
## Accuracy

Note: Data for questions 1 and 3 were not collected in 2008 for some options.

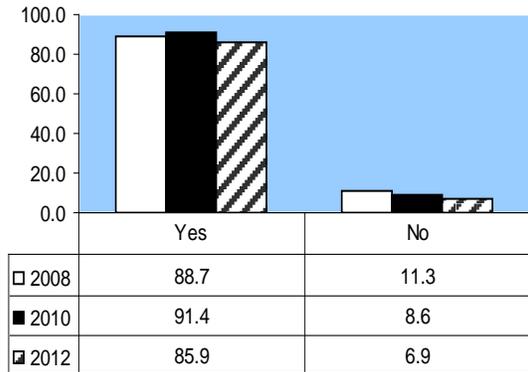
**B) How would you rate the ability of the DOC to provide services correctly the first time?**



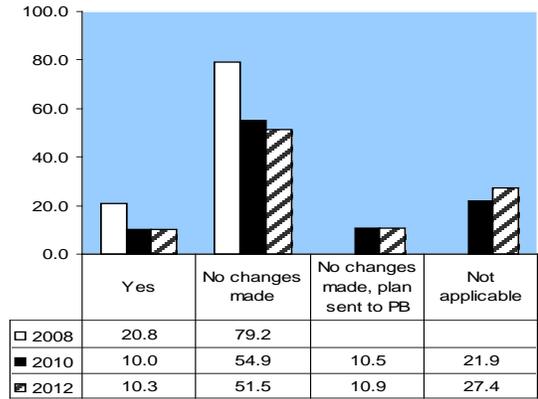
1) Were you provided with information regarding the type of treatment programs this offender participated in while incarcerated?



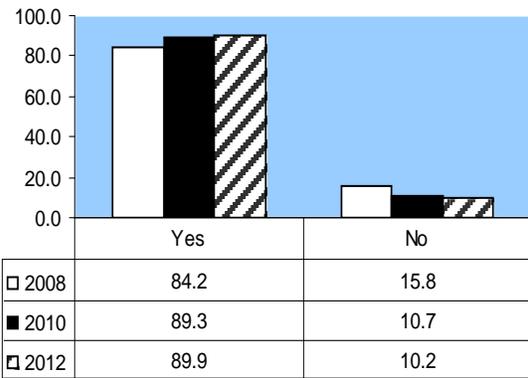
2) Did you receive a field investigation for the offender 60 to 90 days prior to release?



3) If you made changes or modified conditions in the release plan were those changes implemented?



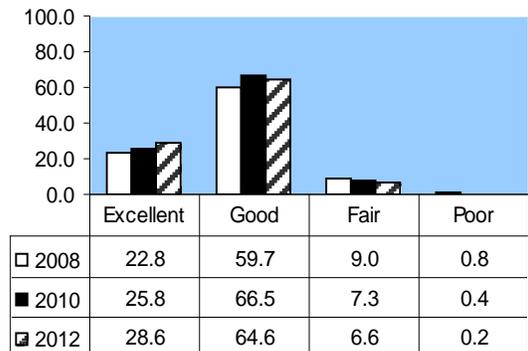
4) Did you receive all the necessary information in the offender's release packet?



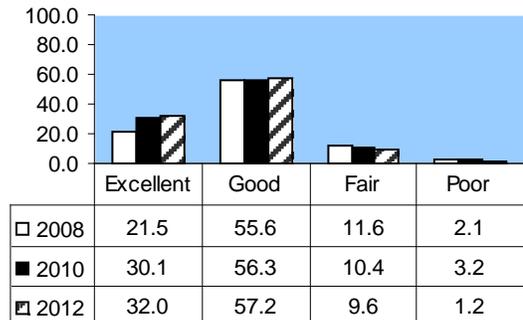
## Helpfulness

Note: Data for 2008 were not collected in the second segment of question 2 as well as in question 3.

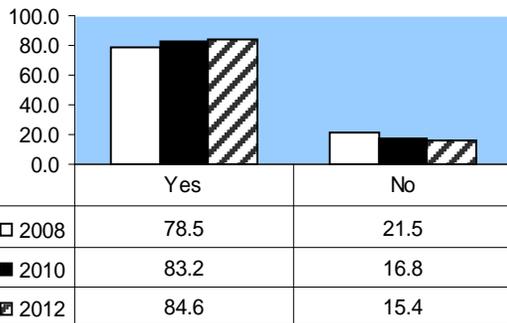
C) How would you rate the helpfulness of DOC employees in general?



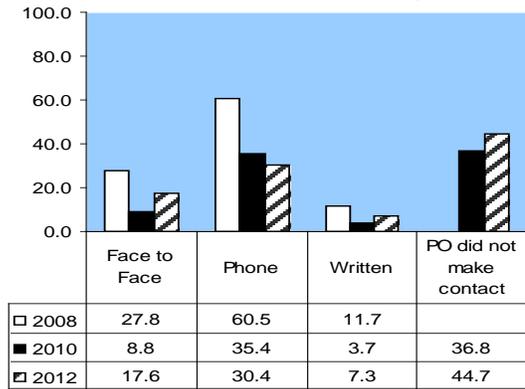
1) How would you rate the helpfulness of the release counselor or other institutional staff regarding release?



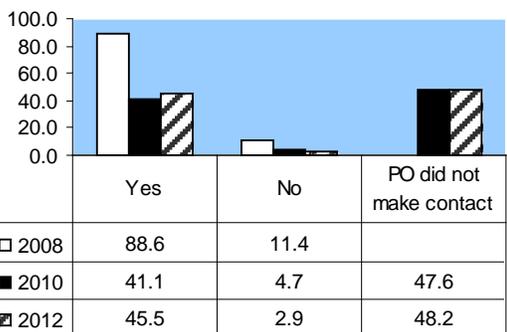
2) Were DOC staff helpful in meeting your needs in order to make contact with this offender prior to release?



If yes, (question 2) how did you make contact?  
(Of those who made contact the following methods were used.)



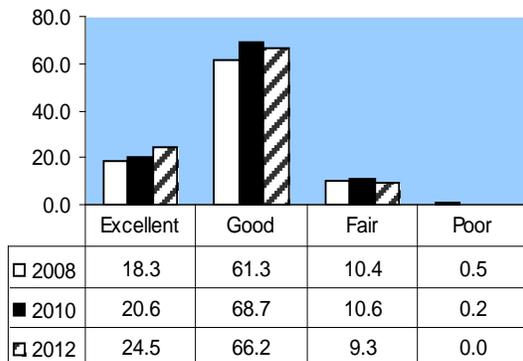
3) If you made contact, was the information provided helpful for case planning purposes?  
(Estimates are associated with those making contact.)



## Expertise

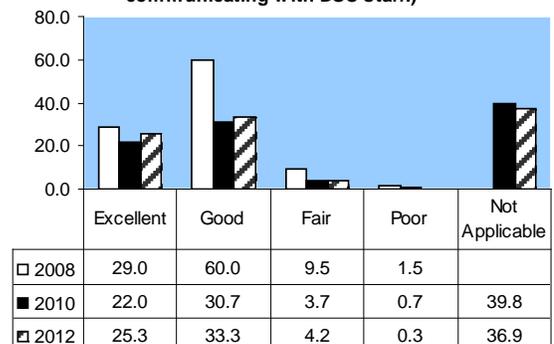
Note: During the 2008 collection, "Not Applicable" was not an option for questions 1 and 3.

D) How would you rate the knowledge and expertise of DOC employees?

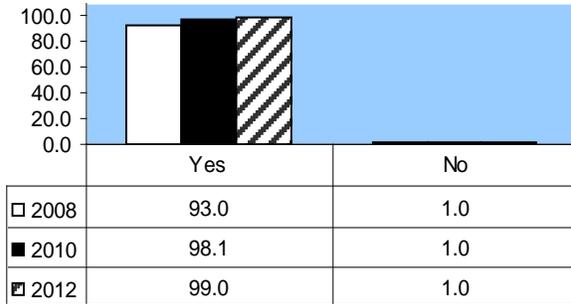


1) If you communicated with DOC staff during the release process, how would you rate that communication?

(Estimates reflect responses from those communicating with DOC staff.)



2) During the release process, if you entered an institution for release planning purposes, were you treated in a professional manner?  
(Estimates reflect responses from those entering an institution.)

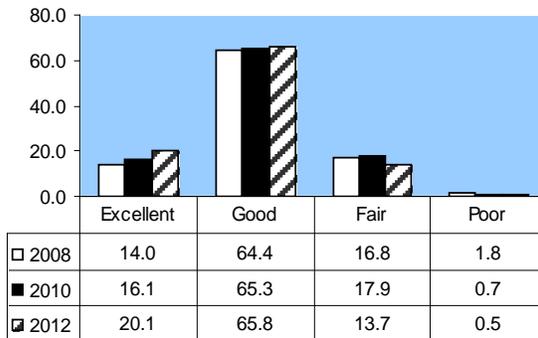


3) When working with prison staff, how would you rate their understanding of your responsibilities as a parole officer?

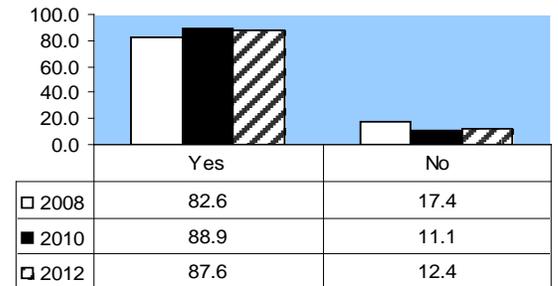


### Availability of Information

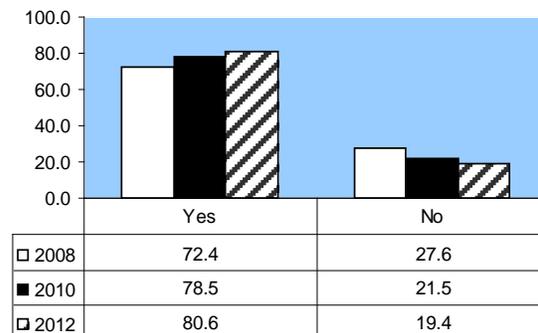
E) How would you rate the availability of information at DOC?



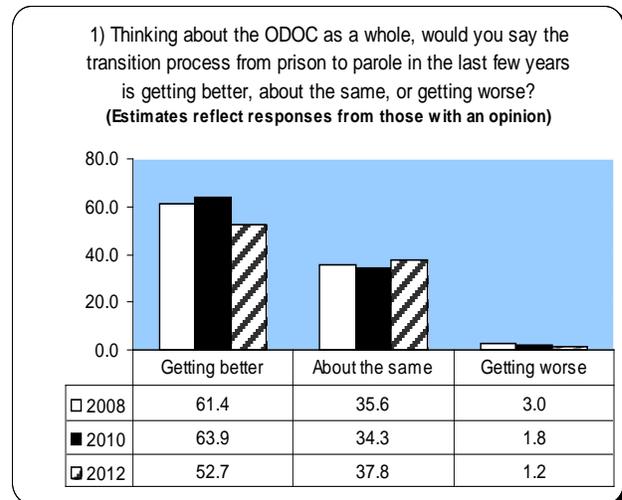
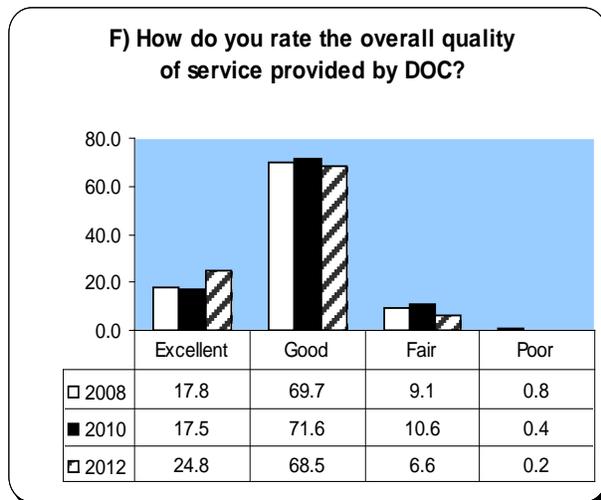
1) In the release planning process, did you utilize any institutional information in the Correctional Information System (CIS) database (including Chronos)?



If yes, did you only utilize Chrono information?



## Overall Service



Note: Not all percentages total 100% because of missing data.

### Summary

When assessing the six mandated questions (questions in bold type), DOC has improved in all categories when compared to the previous studies (Timeliness, Accuracy, Helpfulness, Expertise, Availability of Information, and Overall Service); responses were generally very positive. Of interest was the response to the *Accuracy* mandated question. During the 2012 collection, 92% of respondents indicated that they felt DOC's ability to provide services correctly the first time was excellent or good. This estimate is up from 88% in 2010 and 86% in 2008. DOC's service continues to improve over time in this area. DOC employee helpfulness also continues to grow; in 2008, 83% of respondents rated DOC's helpfulness as either excellent or good. In 2010 this figure increased to 92% and increased again to 93% in 2012. Furthermore, POs are increasingly satisfied with the availability of information provided by DOC. For example, in 2008, 78% of survey participants indicated they felt information accessibility was excellent or good; this estimate increased to 81% in 2010 and to 86% in 2012 (an 8% increase since 2008).

The responses associated with the questions added within each main category were mostly positive. There were only a few differences worth noting within the categories of Timeliness, Accuracy, Helpfulness and Expertise in 2012. These differences are as follows:

### Timeliness

Estimates related to the question "As the acting parole officer, were you given enough information to prioritize the needs of supervision for parole?" continue to increase for each collection (i.e. 87%

of respondents answered “yes” in 2008, 92% in 2010 and 95% in 2012). In addition, the question “*Was transportation established before the offender was released?*” increased from 94% in 2010 to 96% in 2012. Eighty-one percent of the respondents in 2012 indicated that the release date did not change for the question “*If the release date was changed for this offender, were you notified within 30 days of the offender’s release?*” This estimate increased from 77% in 2010 and 80% in 2008.

As noted above, many POs did not serve offenders who had mental health or alcohol/drug issues; therefore they answered “not applicable” to these questions. Estimates reported reflect the responses from POs who worked with offenders with these special needs. Consequently, estimates associated with the question “*If the offender had mental health needs (including medications), were programs and/or services discussed?*” increased from 68% in 2008 to 76% in 2010. This estimate slightly increased again in 2012 to 77%. The estimate for the question “*If the offender had drug/alcohol needs, were programs and/or services discussed in the release plan?*” increased considerably between 2010 (74%) and 2012 (83%). Estimates associated with all other questions under *Timeliness* either did not change or changed minimally between 2008, 2010 and 2012.

### **Accuracy**

When measuring DOC’s *Accuracy*, some points are worth noting between studies. For example, the estimate for the question “*Were you provided with information regarding the type of treatment programs this offender participated in while incarcerated?*” decreased from 77% in 2008 to 64% in 2010 but increased to 73% in 2012. In addition, during 2012, 86% of respondents indicated that they had received a field investigation for the offender 60 to 90 days prior to release. This estimate decreased from 89% in 2008 and 91% in 2010. With regard as to whether changes were made or conditions were modified in the release plan, two additional options were added to the 2012 survey. While 10% of POs indicated that their changes were implemented, 62% conveyed they made no changes or the release plan was sent to the Parole Board. Other questions related to the *Accuracy* segment had minor changes or did not change at all.

### **Helpfulness**

Question number 1 under the *Helpfulness* category asked POs to rate the helpfulness of the DOC release counselor or other institutional staff regarding the release of the offender. The estimate associated with this question has continued to improve between studies. See table 1) on page 11.

The estimates associated with question number 2 in this section (*“Were DOC staff helpful in meeting your needs in order to make contact with this offender prior to release?”*) continues to increase over time (79% in 2008, 83% in 2010 and 85% in 2012).

Although the results of the survey indicate that a considerable number of POs (45%) are not making contact with offenders, it should be noted that many counties have designated individuals such as a counselor or a member of a transition team who makes contact with the offender rather than a parole officer. For parole officers, Face-to-Face contact with offenders increased to 18% in 2012 from 9% in 2010. Contacting offenders by phone has decreased over time; (61% in 2008, 35% in 2010 and 30% in 2012) and while phone contact has declined, it is still the most common form of contact. An additional question regarding contact (question number 3) asked whether the information provided was helpful for planning purposes. This estimate increased from 41% in 2010 to 46% in 2012. However, as with question number 2, numerous POs indicated they did not make contact with the offender (48%).

### **Expertise**

Overall, POs rated the knowledge, expertise and professionalism of DOC employees favorably. For example, during 2012, of those POs entering an institution for release planning purposes, 99% indicated that they were treated in a professional manner by DOC employees. This estimate has increased over previous studies (93% in 2008 and 98% in 2010). Fifty-nine percent of respondents in 2012 felt the communication with DOC staff was excellent or good (up from 53% in 2010); however, 37% denoted this question as not applicable signifying that fewer POs are making contact with prison staff over time. Also, in 2012, 55% of respondents felt DOC staff had an excellent or a good understanding of POs responsibilities. This estimate has increased from 43% in 2010. Thirty percent said this question did not apply to them.

### **Availability of Information**

Most POs (about 83% in 2008, 89% in 2010 and 88% in 2012) said they utilized the Correctional Information System (CIS). Interestingly, an increasing amount of POs continue to access only Chrono information; 72% in 2008, 79% in 2010 and 81% in 2012.

### **Overall Service**

POs continue to respond favorably to the overall quality of service provided by DOC. During 2008, 88% rated DOC's quality of service as excellent or good; in 2010 this estimate increased to 89%

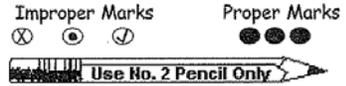
and increased again to 93% in 2012. When asked whether the transition process from prison to parole (in thinking about the DOC as a whole) was improving, 53% said that the process is getting better (down from 64% in 2010), and 38% felt the overall service was about the same (34% in 2010).

Communication between DOC and parole officers, and understanding the roles and responsibilities of POs has not drastically changed between studies; however, each are important in making the release process successful. Establishing housing prior to release, determining mental health needs, providing adequate treatment programs, scheduling more face-to-face contacts between POs and inmates, and developing a better understanding of a PO's job are areas DOC must continue to improve to strengthen the bond between DOC and Community Corrections.

When releasing inmates have mental health medications or disabilities requiring specialized assistance or equipment, DOC has the responsibility to convey this information to parole officers. Conversely, DOC may not be aware of housing options in all Oregon communities and some responsibility would rest with the PO. Delineating responsibilities associated with good transitional planning benefits both DOC and Community Corrections. These changes coupled with more frequent communication can improve on the sound transition system now used in Oregon.

# **Appendix A: Survey**

**Statewide Customer Service  
Performance Measure Survey**



*Note: Questions that refer to "DOC" include institutional staff and central office staff only.*

**Timeliness**

1) As the acting parole officer, were you given enough information to prioritize the needs of supervision for parole?

- Yes
- No

2) If the release date was changed for this offender, were you notified within 30 days of the offender's release?

- Yes
- No
- Date did not change

3) Was transportation established before the offender was released?

- Yes
- No

4) Were all possible options for housing provided in the release plan for this offender?

- Yes
- No
- None provided

5) If the offender had mental health needs (including medications), were programs and/or services discussed in the release plan?

- Yes
- No
- Not applicable

6) If the offender had drug/alcohol needs were programs and/or services discussed in the release plan?

- Yes
- No
- Not applicable

A) How would you rate the timeliness of the services provided by DOC?

- Excellent
- Good
- Fair
- Poor

**Accuracy**

1) Were you provided with information regarding the type of treatment programs this offender participated in while incarcerated?

- Yes
- No
- Only some information was provided

2) Did you receive a field investigation for the offender 60 to 90 days prior to release?

- Yes
- No
- Not Applicable

3) If you made changes or modified conditions in the release plan, were those changes implemented?

- Yes
- No changes made
- No changes made, release plan was sent to the parole board
- Not Applicable

4) Did you receive all the necessary information in the offender's release packet?

- Yes
- No *If no, what additional information would have been useful/helpful?*

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

B) How would you rate the ability of the DOC to provide services correctly the first time?

- Excellent
- Good
- Fair
- Poor

## Helpfulness

1) How would you rate the helpfulness of the release counselor or other institutional staff regarding this case?

- Excellent
- Good
- Fair
- Poor

2) Were DOC staff helpful in meeting your needs in order to make contact with this offender prior to release?

- Yes **→** *If yes, how did you make contact?*
- No
  - Face-to-Face
  - Phone
  - Written
  - Parole officer did not make contact

3) If you made contact, was the information provided helpful for case planning purposes?

- Yes
- No
- Not Applicable, parole officer did not make contact
- Unknown

*If yes, what was helpful?*

C) How would you rate the helpfulness of DOC employees in general?

- Excellent
- Good
- Fair
- Poor

## Expertise

1) If you communicated with DOC staff (release counselors, institutional counselors, correctional officers, administrators, etc.) during the release process, how would you rate that communication?

- Excellent
- Good
- Fair
- Poor
- Not Applicable

2) During the release process, if you entered an institution for release planning purposes, were you treated in a professional manner?

- Yes
- No
- Sometimes
- Not Applicable

*If no, what difficulties did you encounter?*

3) When working with prison staff, how would you rate their understanding of your responsibilities as a parole officer?

- Excellent
- Good
- Fair
- Poor
- Not Applicable

D) How would you rate the knowledge and expertise of DOC employees?

- Excellent
- Good
- Fair
- Poor

## Availability of Information

1) In the release planning process, did you utilize any institutional information in the Correctional Information System (CIS) database (including Chronos)?

- Yes **→** *If yes, did you only utilize Chrono information?*
- No
  - Yes
  - No

E) How do you rate the availability of information at DOC?

- Excellent
- Good
- Fair
- Poor

## Overall Service

1) Thinking about the Oregon Department of Corrections as a whole, would you say the transition process from prison to parole in the last few years is...

- Getting better
- About the same
- Getting worse
- No Opinion

F) How do you rate the overall quality of service provided by DOC?

- Excellent
- Good
- Fair
- Poor

## **Appendix B: Follow-up Letters**

## **First follow-up letter**

### **Customer Service Satisfaction Survey—follow-up letter:**

Several parole officers from the (enter County here) County Community Corrections Office were sent Customer Service Satisfaction Surveys from DOC, Research & Evaluation. This survey is a mandated survey that DOC and other state agencies are required to distribute. We are also required to send a follow up letter to the participant (the PO), as well as their acting manager if we do not receive the survey back. To date we haven't received a completed survey from the POs listed in the attachment below. If you have not completed the survey, please complete and return it as quickly as possible. The attached list includes the PO's name and the offender's name in which the PO assisted during the \*\*\* release period.

Surveys regarding the (insert release period date) releases were also sent out; reminder letters for these release months will follow at a later date.

We ask that POs please complete all surveys that were sent to them as soon as possible. These responses are very important in our efforts to improving the relationships between DOC and Community Corrections.

If you have any questions please contact me at the number or e-mail below.

Thank you for your time and participation!

## Second follow-up letter

### Customer Service Satisfaction Survey—final follow-up letter:

Several parole officers from the (enter County here) County Community Corrections Office were sent Customer Service Satisfaction Surveys from DOC, Research & Evaluation. This survey is a mandated survey that DOC and other state agencies are required to distribute. **DOC is also required to send a follow up letter to the participant (the PO), as well as their acting manager if the survey(s) did not get returned.** This e-mail is a gentle reminder and our final attempt to collect more surveys.

To date we haven't received a completed survey from the POs listed in the attachment above. Some POs are listed more than once. If you have not completed these surveys, please complete all that are listed and return them as quickly as possible (preferably within the next two weeks). If your name is on the list and you have misplaced your survey, or for some reason you did not receive a survey, please e-mail (enter contact person here) at (enter e-mail address here) and he/she will send you a new survey. If you have already re-sent the survey(s) listed, please disregard this message.

The attached list includes the PO's name and the name of the released inmate. A random selection was done to select inmates being released in (enter release period here). The POs who were assigned to the randomly selected released inmates were sent one or more surveys depending on how many cases they were assigned. Your responses are very important in our efforts to improving the relationships between DOC and Community Corrections.

If you have any questions please contact (enter contact information here).

Thank you for your time and participation!

**NOTE:** For record only – this follow-up letter was not utilized during the 2012 collection.