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Customer Service Survey

OREGON DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

Statewide Customer Service Survey Results

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By
Research and Evaluation



Governor Theodore Kulongoski

Director Max Williams

Deputy Director Mitch Morrow

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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 Evaluation 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 the customer populations differ among agencies, interpretation differences could exist. To ensure DOC fully benefited from the survey, additional questions were asked of respondents. For each mandated question, other pertinent questions were developed to better understand and interpret responses. Some of Oregon’s best parole officers 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 2008. These randomly selected inmates were matched to POs assigned to each transition case 30 days after release. Matching 30 days after release 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 08-June 08) to POs selected randomly to participate. If surveys were not completed and returned to DOC, follow-up letters were sent to Community Corrections offices. If these follow-up letters did not generate a response, a second letter was forwarded to the PO and to their supervisor. Two follow-up letters were sent during and after the data collection process. The first follow-up letter was disseminated in early June 2008 and the second was disseminated in August 2008. Copies of each follow-up letter are located in Appendix B.

Procedure

Data collection for this DAS mandated initiative began in March 2008 and concluded in June 2008. Each mandated question required 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 2008

There were 800 surveys sent to POs in each Community Corrections office throughout Oregon, and 635 surveys were completed and returned to DOC. The overall response rate for 2008 was 79%; this is slightly lower than the 82% response rate in 2006. For both the 2006 and 2008 surveys, 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. Some parole officers were not involved with transitioning the inmate and some were out of the office, or 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 2008 are listed below. Questions with estimates not totaling 100% may be attributed to the proportion of those not responding to the question. Change between 2006 and 2008 may be found on page 10.

Timeliness

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

- 86% answered excellent or good

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

- 87% answered yes

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

- 82% answered yes

Was transportation established before the offender was released?

- 94% answered yes

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

- 75% answered yes

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

- Nearly 68% answered yes

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

- 76% answered yes

Accuracy

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

- 86% answered excellent or good

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

- 77% answered yes

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

- 89% answered yes

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

- 21% answered yes
- 79% said no changes were made

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

- 84% answered yes

Helpfulness

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

- 83% answered excellent or good

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

- 77% answered excellent or good

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

- 79% answered yes

If yes, how did you make that contact?

- 61% made contact by phone
- 27% made face-to-face contact
- 12% made written contact

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

- 89% answered yes

Expertise

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

- 80% 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?

- 89% answered excellent or good

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

- 93% answered yes

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

- 65% answered excellent or good
- 35% answered fair or poor

Availability of Information

How do you rate the availability of information at DOC?

- 78% answered excellent or good

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

- 83% answered yes

If yes, did you only utilize Chrono information?

- 72% answered yes

Overall Service

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

- 87% 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?

- 97% answered getting better or about the same

Summary

Most of the responses associated with the survey for 2008 were again positive. When examining the six mandated questions, 78-87% responded excellent or good. The responses associated with the additional 24 questions were also positive. Approximately 61% of the participants said the transition process from prison to parole is getting better and 36% said the transition process is about the same.

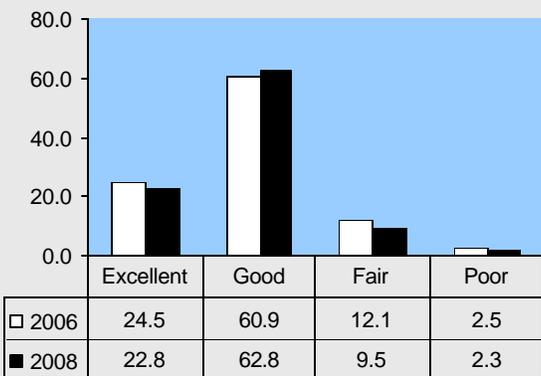
A significant number of POs responded “Not Applicable” to three (non-mandated) questions. The questions were related to inmates with mental health or drug/alcohol related issues. Respondents were asked if they were treated in a professional manner when visiting institutions. Sixty-eight percent of the POs serving inmates with mental health needs stated mental health needs and/or programs were documented in the inmate’s release plan. Seventy-six percent of the POs serving inmates with alcohol/drug needs stated alcohol/drug issues were discussed in the release plan; this estimate increased from 72% in 2006. Lastly, the POs who entered a DOC institution (93%) said they were treated in a professional manner during the 2008 collection.

Comparisons of 2006 and 2008

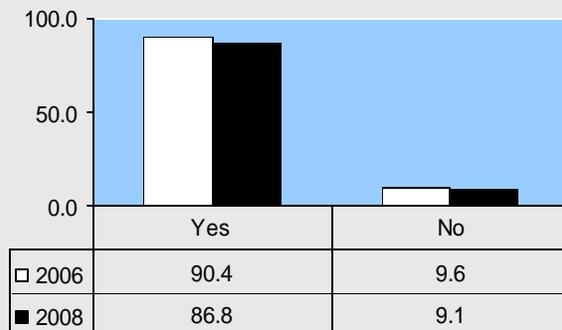
The Customer Service Satisfaction survey questions and tables representing change between 2006 and 2008 are represented below. DAS mandated questions are represented in bold and are listed first within each category (i.e. Timeliness, Accuracy, Helpfulness, Expertise, etc.). The additional non-bolded questions follow within each main category. The tables below recognize changes between 2006 and 2008 for those responding to the question; tables noting significant change between studies will be summarized at the end of this section.

Timeliness

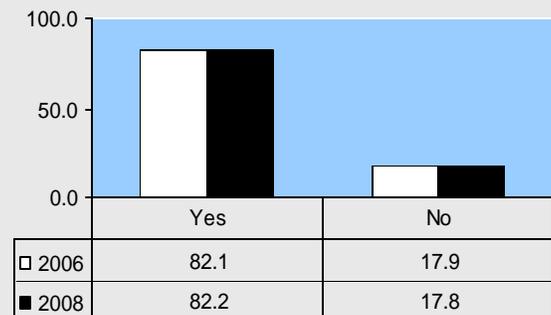
A) How would you rate the timeliness of the services provided by DOC?



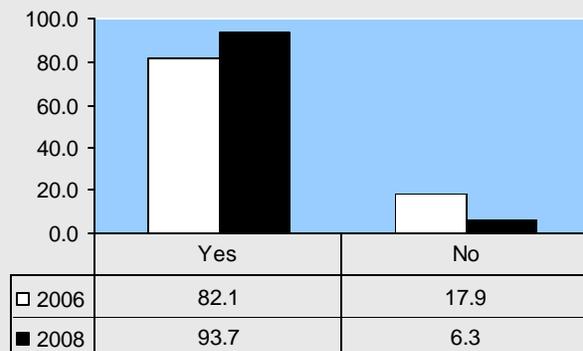
1) As the acting parole officer, were you given enough information to prioritize the needs of supervision for parole?



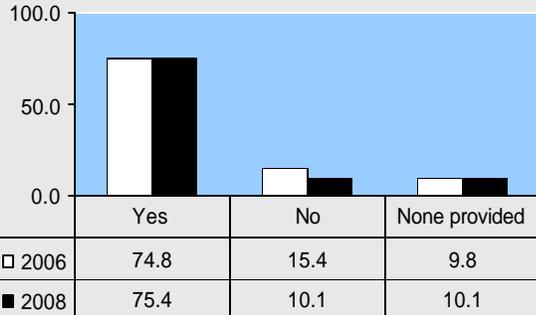
2) If the release date was changed for this offender, were you notified within 30 days of the offender's release?



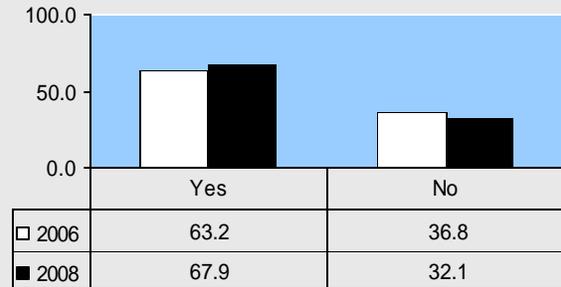
3) Was transportation established before the offender was released?



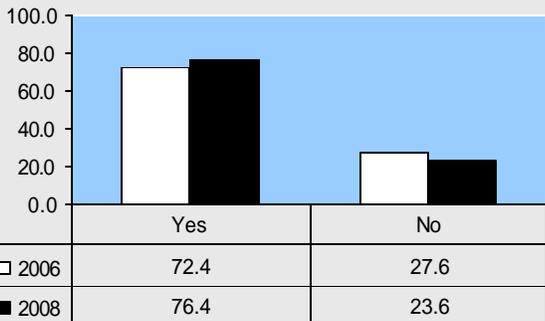
4) Were all possible options for housing provided in the release plan for this offender?



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



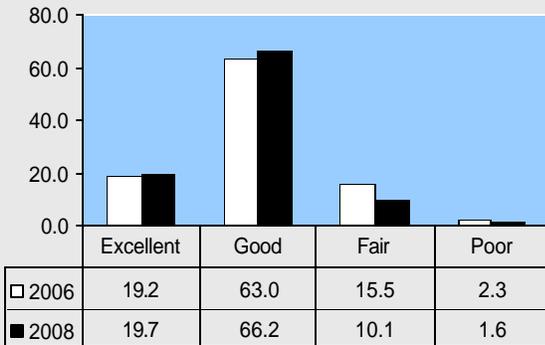
6) If the offender had drug/alcohol needs were programs and/or services discussed in the release plan?



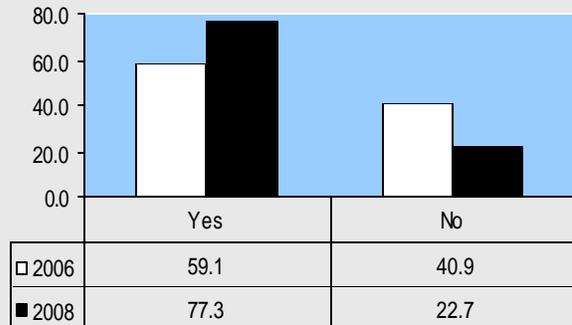
Note: Question 2, under timeliness, represents those where date changes did or did not occur. Also, all estimates represent applicable responses.

Accuracy

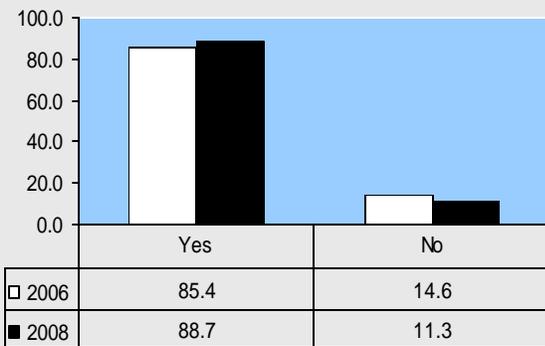
B) How would you rate the ability of the DOC to provide services correctly the first time?



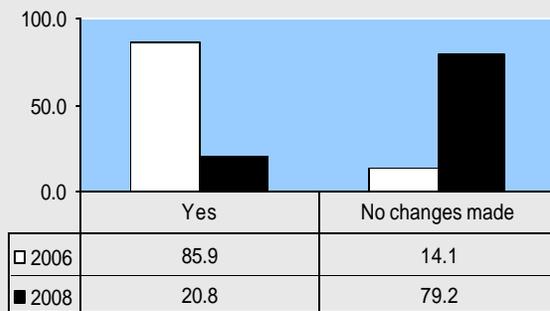
1) Were you provided with information regarding the type of treatment programs this offender participated in while incarcerated?



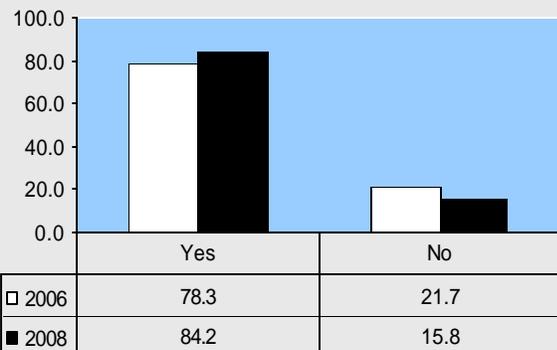
2) Did you receive a field investigation for the offender 60 to 90 days prior to release?



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

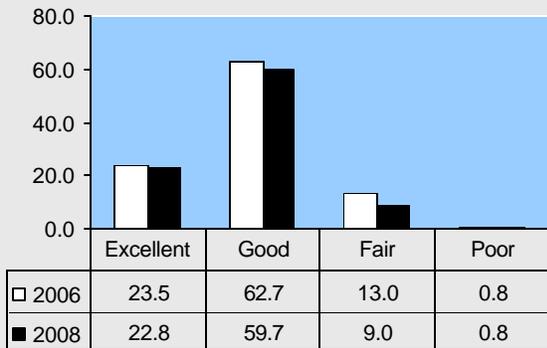


4) Did you receive all the necessary information in the offender's release packet?

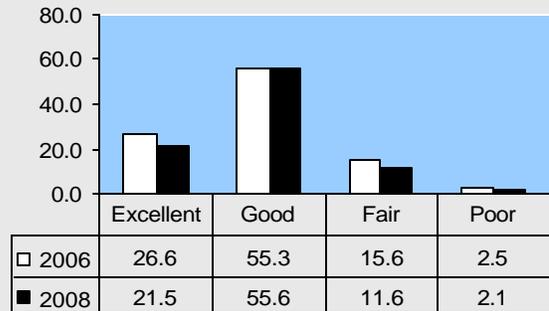


Helpfulness

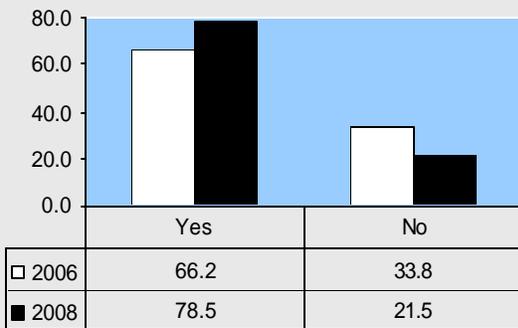
C) How would you rate the helpfulness of DOC employees in general?



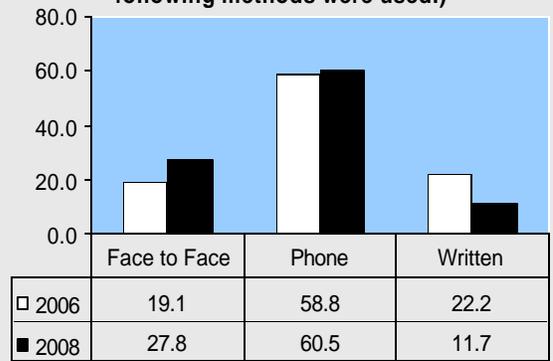
1) How would you rate the helpfulness of the release counselor or other institutional staff regarding this case?



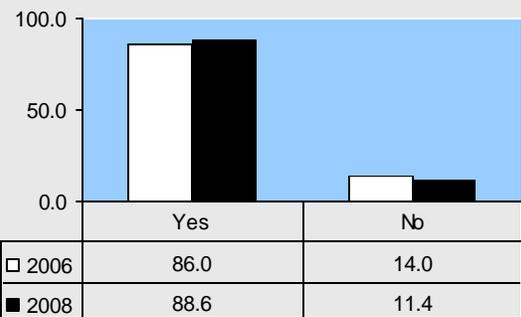
2) Was DOC staff helpful in meeting your needs in order to make contact with this offender prior to release?



If yes, (question 2) how did you make contact?
(Of those who made contact (54%), the following methods were used.)

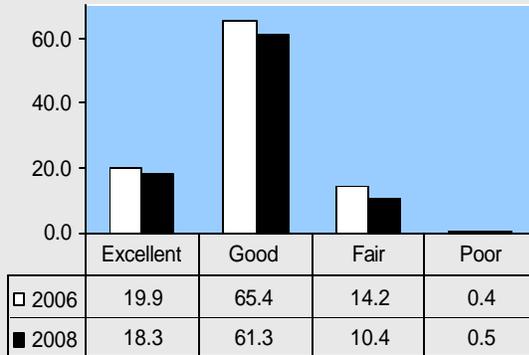


3) If you made contact, was the information provided helpful for case planning purposes?
(Estimates are associated with those making contact.)



Expertise

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



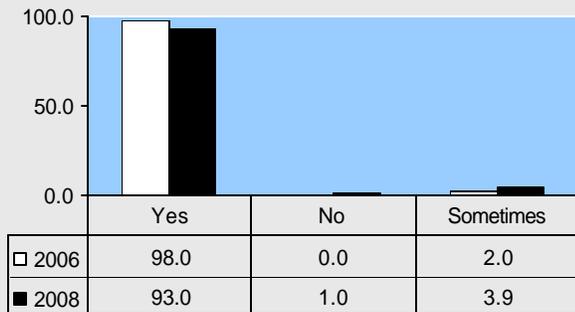
1) If you communicated with DOC staff during the release process, how would you rate that communication?

(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.)

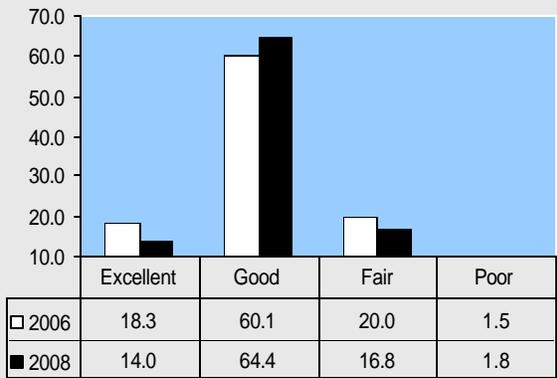


3) When working with prison staff, how would you rate their understanding of your responsibilities as a parole officer?

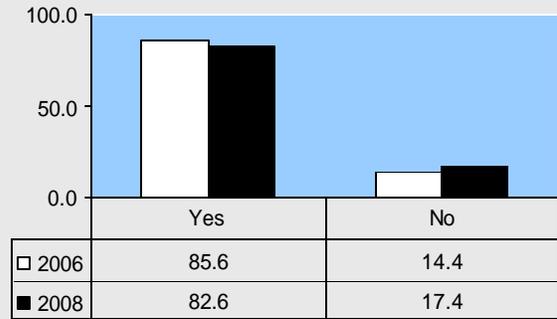


Availability of Information

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)?

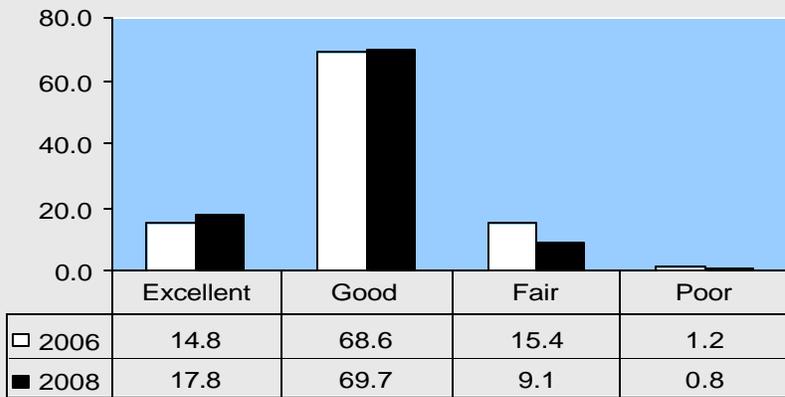


If yes, did you only utilize Chrono information?

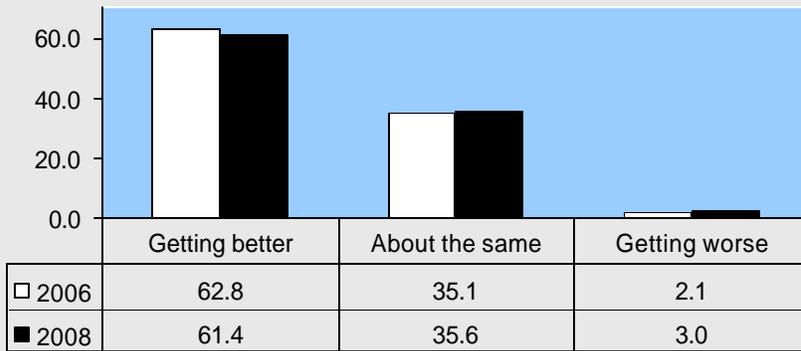


Overall Service

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



1) Thinking about the ODOC 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?
 (Estimates reflect responses from those with an opinion)



Summary

When assessing the six mandated questions (questions in bold type) there were no significant changes between 2006 and 2008 (Timeliness, Accuracy, Helpfulness, Expertise, Availability of Information, and Overall Service); responses were generally very positive. The responses associated with the questions added within each main category were also positive. There were only a few minor differences worth noting within the categories of Timeliness, Accuracy, and Helpfulness.

There were two changes worth noting under *Timeliness*. The question, “*Was transportation established before the offender was released,*” increased from 82% in 2006 to 94% in 2008. Also, the estimates associated with the question, “*If the offender had mental health needs, were programs and/or services discussed,*” slightly increased from 63% in 2006 to 68% in 2008. Estimates associated with all other questions under *Timeliness* did not change between 2006 and 2008.

When measuring DOC’s *Accuracy*, some changes were noted between studies. When comparing 2006 to 2008, more POs in 2008 were provided with information regarding the type of treatment programs their offender’s participated in while being incarcerated, (59% and 77% respectively). POs responded differently between studies when asked if they made changes or modified conditions in the release plan. For instance, in 2008, 79% of the respondents said they did not make changes to the release plan, whereas in 2006, 86% of the respondents said they did make changes and those changes were implemented.

Question number 2 under the category *Helpfulness* asked if DOC staff was helpful in meeting your needs in order to make contact with the offender prior to release. The estimate associated with this question increased slightly between 2006 and 2008 (66% versus 79%). This question was followed with “*If you answered “yes” to question 2, how did you make contact?*” Estimates for those POs making contact did not change drastically; however, there was more “face-to-face” contact in 2008 (29% versus 19%), but more written contact in 2006 (22% versus 12%). Nonetheless, about 54% of the POs are continuing to make contact with offenders prior to release.

There were no significant changes worth noting under *Availability of Information*; however, there was one interesting trend worth noting between 2006 and 2008. Most POs (about 86% in 2006 and 83% in 2008) said they utilized the Correctional Information System (CIS). Interestingly, more than two-thirds accessed only Chrono information.

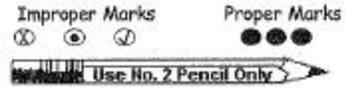
Communication between DOC and parole officers, and understanding the roles and responsibilities of POs has not drastically changed between studies; however, each are important in making the release process successful. Establishing housing prior to release, determining mental health needs, providing adequate 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

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**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

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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!

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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. **We are also required to send a follow up letter to the participant (the PO), as well as their acting manager or director if we did not receive the survey(s) back.** This is not an e-mail meant to get anyone into trouble but rather a gentle reminder, and our final attempt to receive 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!

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