

LANE COUNTY COMMISSION ON CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

“LANE COUNTY AGENCY SURVEY”

SUMMER 2000

METHODOLOGY AND RESULTS

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INTRODUCTION

This report is the second of a pair conducted by the Oregon Survey Research Laboratory (OSRL) for the Lane County Commission on Children and Families (LCCF). The first examined the results of the “Lane County Community Survey on Children and Families,” a random-sample telephone survey of 403 households. This companion report examines the methodology and results of a survey of 114 agencies that provide services to children, youth, and families. Together, the agency survey and the community survey provide a detailed picture of services needed and services provided in June 2000.¹

SURVEY METHODOLOGY

This section describes OSRL’s procedures for developing and implementing the telephone survey instrument and sample to conduct this representative countywide survey. OSRL’s quality control procedures were thoroughly presented in the inter-agency agreement and are not repeated.

SURVEY INSTRUMENT

The survey’s broad goal was to obtain valid and reliable information from Lane County agencies that provide family and child services. In order to meet this broad goal, OSRL developed and pretested survey questions in close consultation with LCCF representatives Pamela Strimling, Patricia Rogers, and Kathleen Hynes. We designed the survey instrument primarily with original questions to meet LCCF’s, the State’s, and the community’s needs. We also modified questions from the community survey, conducted the week before this one, in order to have direct parallels between service receivers and providers.

¹ Note: Although this survey comprised representatives of both agencies and programs within agencies, we refer to it consistently as an “agency” survey henceforth for convenience.

OSRL pre-tested individual questions and the entire survey instrument with members of the survey population, professionals, survey experts, and potential users of the data from LCCF. After pretesting, OSRL debriefed with LCCF representatives, revised the survey, and pretested again. OSRL obtained human subjects approval from the University of Oregon Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects, as required by federal law.

The agency telephone survey instrument comprised the following specific topics:

1. Characteristics of agencies, including:
 - a. whether the respondent represented an agency or a program within an agency;
 - b. private nonprofit or public;
 - c. if public – city, county, state, federal, or a combination;
 - d. whether services are delivered to clients or clients come to the service;
 - e. and whether agencies have vacancies and could serve more clients within their current budgets and, if not, whether they have a waiting list.
2. Agency funding, including grants, fees for service, sliding scale fees, and funding stability.
3. Agency mission and types of clients served, including
 - a. non-English speakers, who translates for them, and availability of materials in other languages;
 - b. mission or primary service to serve families, the disabled, a religion, one sex, or a certain race/ethnicity; and
 - c. capability to serve physically disabled clients, developmentally, cognitively or emotionally disabled clients, and clients of certain ages;
4. Agency services provided, including:
 - a. temporary or permanent housing,
 - b. food, clothing, or help paying utility bills, including school lunches and free food boxes,
 - c. transportation services, including van service, or bus tokens,
 - d. helping people find jobs,
 - e. adult education, job skills, or job training,
 - f. child development or childcare, such as therapeutic settings for the children of disabled adults,
 - g. child, youth or teen services, such as mentoring, tutoring, positive role models, support groups, and drug and alcohol abuse prevention,
 - h. child out-of-home placement, such as foster care or help for runaways,
 - i. help for children and youth who have learning disabilities, are delayed learners, or who need school enrichment,
 - j. help for children and youth who have permanent physical, developmental, cognitive, or emotional disabilities,
 - k. mental health care, counseling, or crisis intervention for children, youth, and families, including problems with teenagers and marriages,
 - l. higher levels of mental health care, counseling, or crisis intervention for children, youth, and families, for things such as violence, arson, guns at school, and other inappropriate behavior,
 - m. health or medical treatment for children and youth, including dental, vision, alcohol and drug treatment, or teen pregnancy,

- n. health or medical wellness and preventative services, including immunizations or sex education,
 - o. parenting education or support,
 - p. legal services or referrals,
 - q. community recreation, culture, or art programs for children and families,
 - r. domestic violence, child abuse, or child neglect,
 - s. a set procedure for helping a person or family get AFS help (Adult and Family Services).
5. Barriers to receiving help for children and families, including
- a. barriers associated with persons and families (such as illiteracy, fear of law, lack of transportation, shame) and
 - b. barriers associated with agencies (such as location, hours of service, fees).

The survey instrument was programmed into OSRL's computer-aided telephone interviewing (CATI) system and further pretested. A facsimile of the survey instrument is provided in Section 2 of this documentation, with embedded number and percentage frequency results.

SAMPLE

LCCF provided OSRL with a list of 135 agency names, telephone numbers, and contact persons within agencies for this survey. It is OSRL's understanding that this list represents the entire population of non-childcare organizations providing family and child services in Lane County. Because of these list characteristics, this study did not use a strictly random sample and, thus, sampling errors cannot be calculated or reported. That is, researchers cannot say that any given result from this survey is true within a certain plus or minus confidence interval. Given the survey's high response rate, however, it is likely that the survey's results are reliable.

OSRL research assistant, Emery Smith, pre-programmed the list LCCF provided into the CATI system. CATI randomly distributed the cases to interviewers, and they appeared automatically on interviewers' workstation computer screens. Interviewers dialed the telephone numbers with a keystroke, effectively preventing dialing errors.

Of the 135 telephone numbers provided, 11 (48%) were wrong numbers, disconnected, non-working, nonresidential, or fax/modem lines. For another 10 telephone numbers (7%), the status could not be determined; that is, 3 numbers were never answered and 7 were answered only by answering machines). One agency had closed and was removed from the study sample. Nine named respondents were out of town for the study dates and substitutions were made. Interviews were completed with all the remaining 114 telephone numbers. Altogether, 782 dial attempts were made for this survey, i.e., about 7 calls per completed interview. Up to 35 calls were made to each telephone number.

The net CASRO response rate was 87% and the refusal rate was 0%.² A complete sample and response rate report is provided in Section 4 of this final report.

² CASRO = Council of American Survey Research Organizations. CASRO response rates, the most rigorous industry standard, are calculated in following manner. Completed interview / (Eligible sample + ((Eligible sample / (Eligible sample + Ineligible sample)) * Sample with unknown status)). Source: Robert M. Groves, *Survey Errors and Survey Costs*, 1989.

PRECONTACT LETTER

On Friday June 23, 2000, three days before data collection began, LCCF, faxed a precontact letter to each survey respondent in the name of its Director, Patricia Rogers (see Appendix A). The precontact letter was modeled, in part, on one developed by OSRL for a previous survey. It explained the study's purpose, explained OSRL's role, guaranteed confidentiality, urged participation, and said where to call with questions.

OSRL interviewers began each survey by verifying respondents' receipt of the precontact letter. If respondents had not received it, the interviewers offered to read it aloud. An uncounted number of those on the list claimed to have never received the fax.

DATA COLLECTION

Interviewer training was conducted on June 23, 2000. See Section 3 for interviewer instructions. The data collection had to be completed in an exceptionally short period of 5 days. Interviewing was conducted during work hours, 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. from Monday, June 24th through Friday, June 26th, until the target sample size of 110-115 completed interviews was achieved. The telephone interviews' average length was 15 minutes. All interviews were conducted in English, and all were completely confidential.

The survey was conducted with the use of OSRL's CATI system, in which sampling, interviewing, and data entry is accomplished interactively and seamlessly. The programmed survey instrument contains all survey questions, interviewer probes for consistency, and pre-coded answer categories. Skip logic is programmed into the system, preventing inappropriate or incorrect questions from being asked.

In administering the survey, trained interviewers use telephone headsets in sound-reduced carrels at computer workstations connected by an NT network. As respondents answer questions, interviewers enter the data into the CATI data file. Telephone numbers, agency names, and respondent names were automatically stripped from the interview data to ensure anonymity. The CATI system eliminates out-of-range responses and wild codes by validating each response interactively and not allowing inappropriate responses to be entered. Thus, the CATI system eliminates many routine and error-prone coding and data entry tasks and enables OSRL to maintain the highest standards of quality control.

OSRL completed 31 interviews on Monday, June 26th and 33 more on Tuesday, June 27th (total n=64). By midday Wednesday June 28th, halfway through the data collection period, only 7 more interviews were completed, just 71 of the target 110-115 interviews. The remaining respondents appeared difficult to reach. Some were reluctant because they were too busy with their daily work tasks. Others could only be reached through a gauntlet of gatekeeping telephone receptionists. Yet others seemed to never answer their telephones.

To encourage response, an OSRL interviewer supervisor and OSRL's Director scripted a message which interviewers read into respondents' voicemail. This resulted in a flurry of additional completed interviews. Still, by the end of Wednesday, interviewers had been completed only 80 interviews. On Thursday morning June 29th, OSRL provided a list of nonrespondents to LCCF's Pamela Strimling, and she called them on OSRL's behalf to urge

survey participation. This approach was very effective, resulting in 24 more completed interviews Thursday (total n=104), and a final total of 114 good quality interviews by midday Friday, June 30th.

SURVEY RESULTS

The results section of this report is organized into 5 parts. Part 1 summarizes the agencies' characteristics, to provide context for the substantive results. Part 2 summarizes agencies' funding. Part 3 presents the types of clients served by agencies, including their practices with non-English speakers. Part 4 covers the specific family and child services agencies provide. Part 5 summarizes agency respondents' perceptions of clients' barriers to receiving help.

All parts of the analysis rely primarily on graphic, rather than narrative, presentation of univariate survey results. The Banner Tables in Section 6 provide details on points of variation in the results presented below, but this report does not discuss bivariate results in detail.

1. AGENCY CHARACTERISTICS

To provide a context for the substantive survey results, we begin with an outline of agencies' characteristics.

The telephone interview commenced with interviewer verifying the agency or program name. In 7 of 114 cases, respondents corrected the name provided in the list. These answers are provided in Section 7 of this final report ("Answers to Open-ended Questions"). The survey continued only when both interviewer and respondent were satisfied that OSRL had connected with the appropriate agency or program.

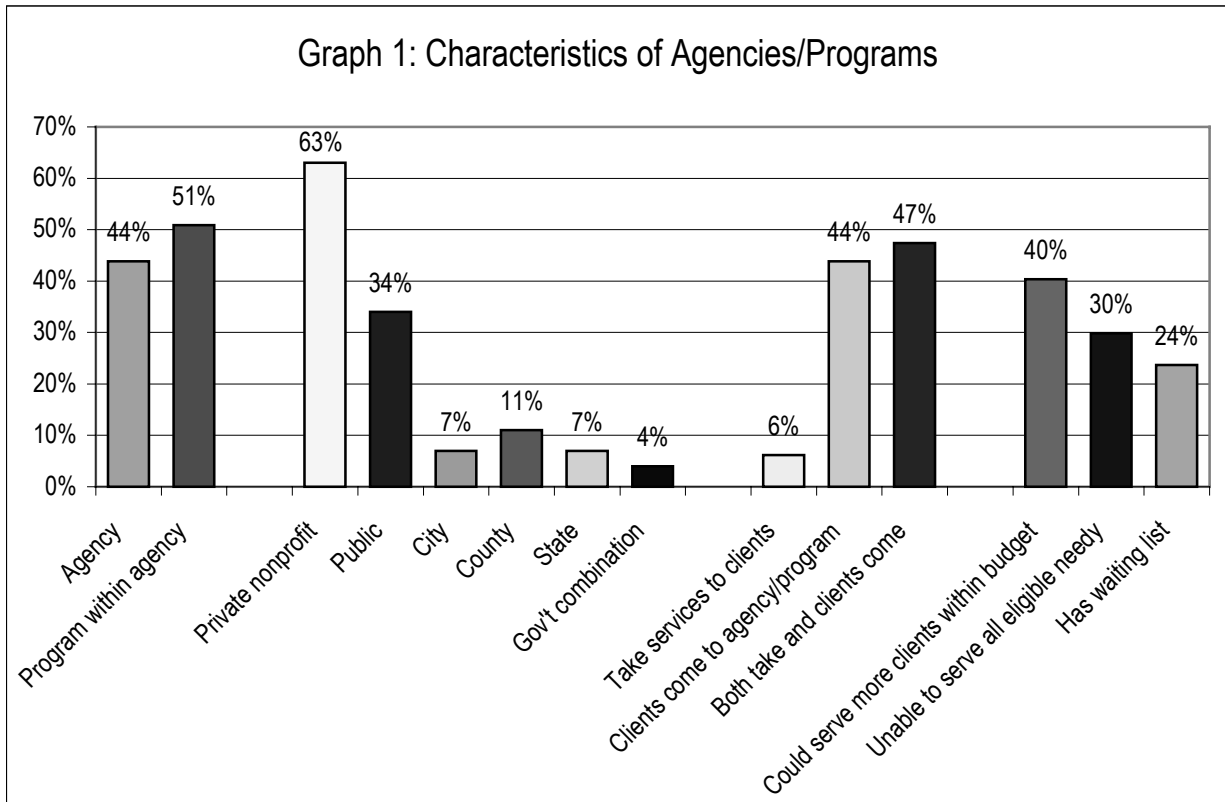
Next, interviewers asked if the respondent would be speaking of a program within an agency, or an agency itself. Agencies accounted for 44% of the cases, programs for 51%, 2 respondents said it was both an agency and a program, one said "other" ("a program on its own"), and one did not know (see Graph 1). For respondents who would be speaking of programs within agencies, OSRL interviewers read the following probe: "When I ask you these survey questions, please think only about **this program** within your agency, not about the agency as a whole." At various points in the survey, interviewers used scripted probes to remind respondents to speak only of the program.

Sixty-three percent of the agencies studied were private nonprofits, 34% were public, and 3 respondents did not know. The public agencies were further subdivided into 7% city government, 11% county government, 7% state government, 1% federal government, 4% a combination of government levels, and 5% "other." Percentaging among the 39 public agencies, for a different perspective, 19% of the public agencies were city level, 31% county, 19%state, 2% federal, 12% "other," and 14% a combination.

Asked for their agency's service delivery setting, 6% of agencies take their services to clients, for 44% clients come to the agency, 47% do both, and 1 said "other."

Forty percent of respondents believe their agencies could "serve more eligible clients than [they] do now, given [their] current budget" (i.e., the agency has vacancies). However, 50% said they

could not, and 6% volunteered that “maybe” they could. Those who said “no” and “maybe” were asked if their agency is “able to serve all eligible clients who want or need your help?” Half said “yes” and half said “no” (i.e., 30% each of all agencies studied). Those who said “no” were further asked if their agency “now has a waiting list for people you are unable to serve right away?” Fully 79% of those without vacancies have a waiting list (24% of all agencies interviewed). Another 6% (2 agencies) volunteered a partial yes to the waiting list question, and just 5% said “no” (15% of all agencies).



2. AGENCY FUNDING

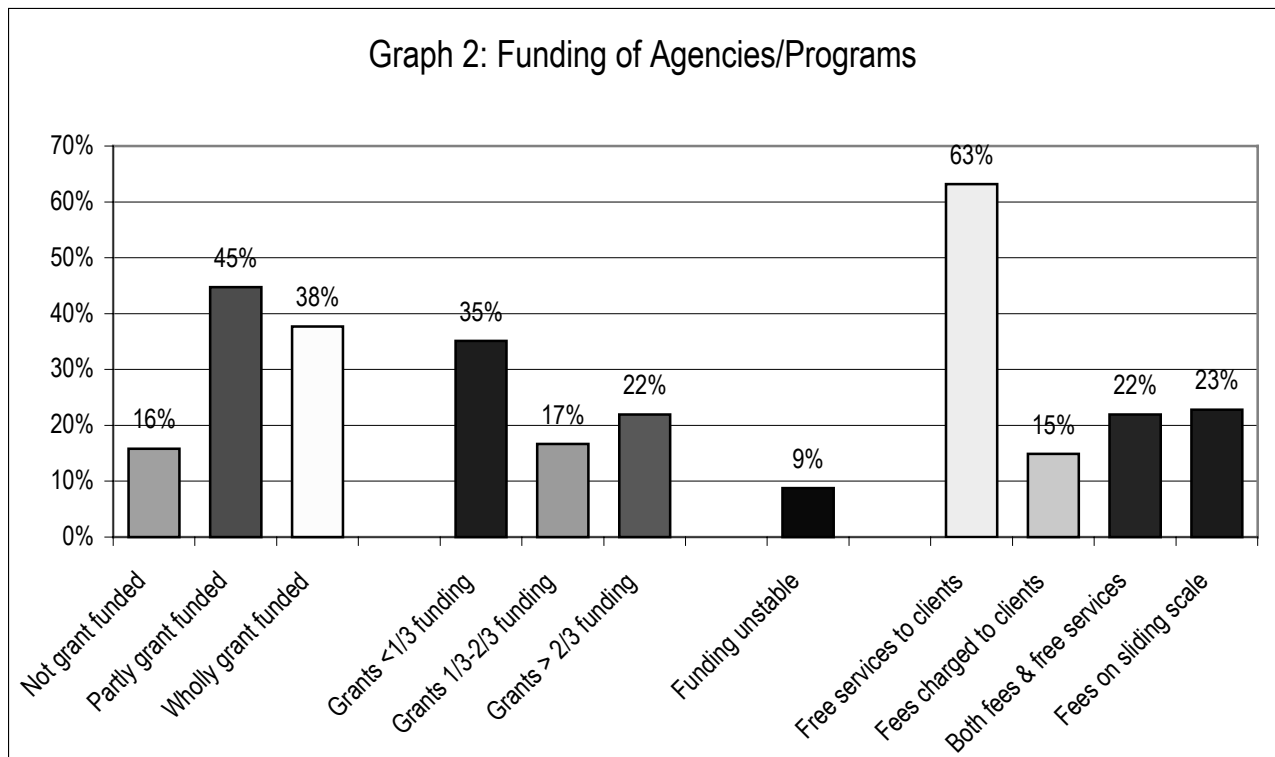
All agency representatives were asked if grant monies fund their agencies wholly or partly. Thirty-eight percent answered that grant monies wholly fund them, 45% said partly, and just 16% said not at all; and additional 2% did not know (see Graph 2). Those funded wholly or partly by grants were asked how much of their agency’s funding comes from grants.

Of those grant-funded, 42% get less than one-third of their money from grants, 20% get between one-third and two-thirds of their money from grants, 26% get more than two-thirds of their money from grants, and 12% do not know. Examining grant funding from the basis of the entire sample, 22% are 2/3 or more grant funded, 17% are 1/3 to 2/3 grant funded, 35% are less than 1/3 grant funded, 16% are not at all grant funded, and 10% do not know.

Whether grant funded or not, all agencies were asked if their agency’s “funding [is] stable for the next 6 to 12 months.” Fully 85% answered “yes.” Another 3% volunteered that their agency’s funding was partially stable, 6% said it is not stable, and 6% did not know.

One way that some agencies fund themselves is by a fee for service. Only 15% of agencies in this study levy fees from their clients and fully 63% provide their services free. Another 22% volunteered that whether clients are assessed a fee “depends” or “varies” on the services provided and ability to pay. Of those agencies that assess client fees, 62% have a sliding fee scale, 21% do not, and 14% sometimes do and sometimes do not.

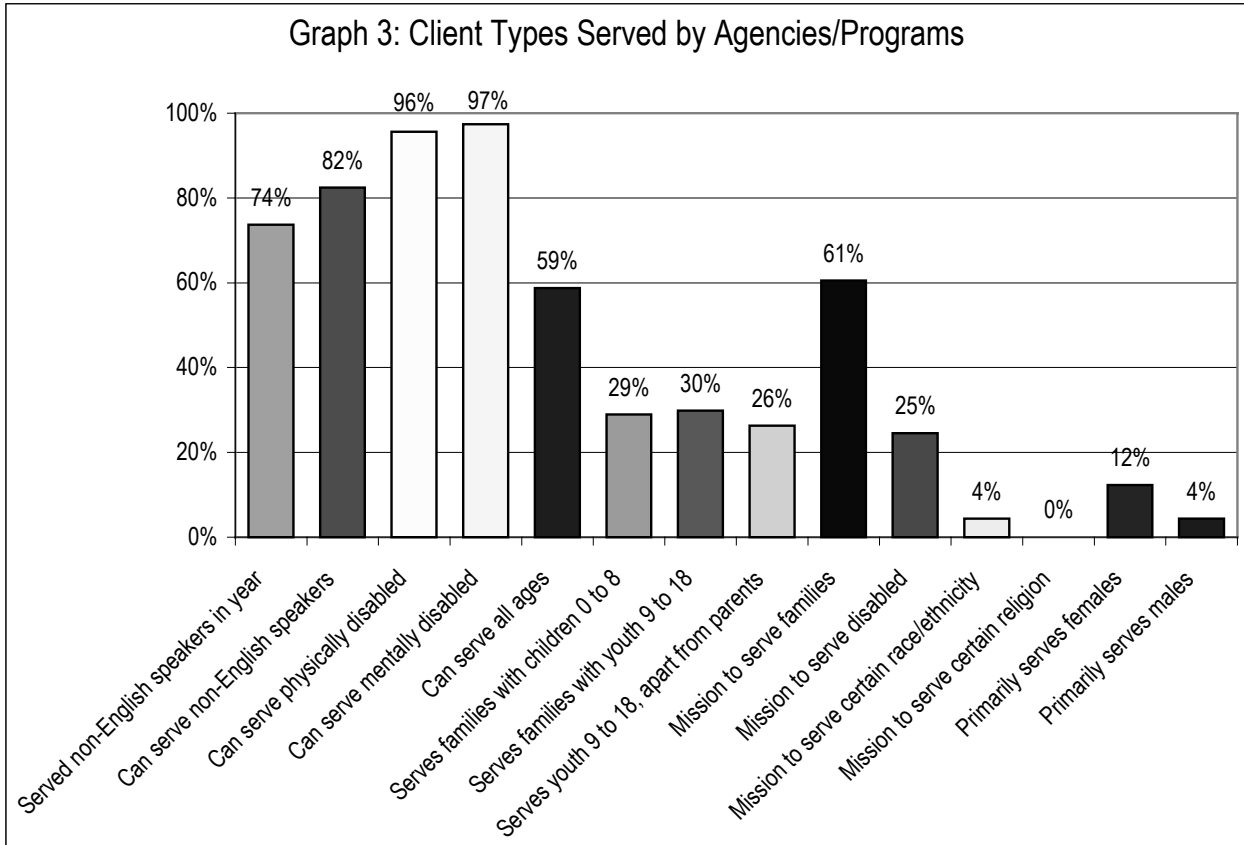
Thus, across all agencies, 23% levy fees on a sliding scale basis, 8% levy fees without a sliding scale, 5% sometimes use a sliding scale, 63% do not charge fees at all, and one respondent did not know.



3. CLIENT CHARACTERISTICS

What types of clients do the 114 agencies in the study serve? Graph 3 provides a profile of the types of clients agencies serve, or can serve, and have a mission to serve.

Seventy-four percent of the agencies interviewed had had non-English speakers seek help or services in the previous year. Fully 82% have informational materials available in languages other than English (see Graph 4). Twelve percent said that “some” materials are available in other languages, 22% said “most,” and 48% “some.”



When non-English speakers seek services, 49% of the agencies have a staff member who can translate. In 16% of the cases the client’s family members or friends translate, in 4% another agency’s staff member translates, and in 7% “someone else” translates. No respondent volunteered that there is no translation at all; note, however, the 25 agencies that had no non-English speakers in the past year were skipped past this question.

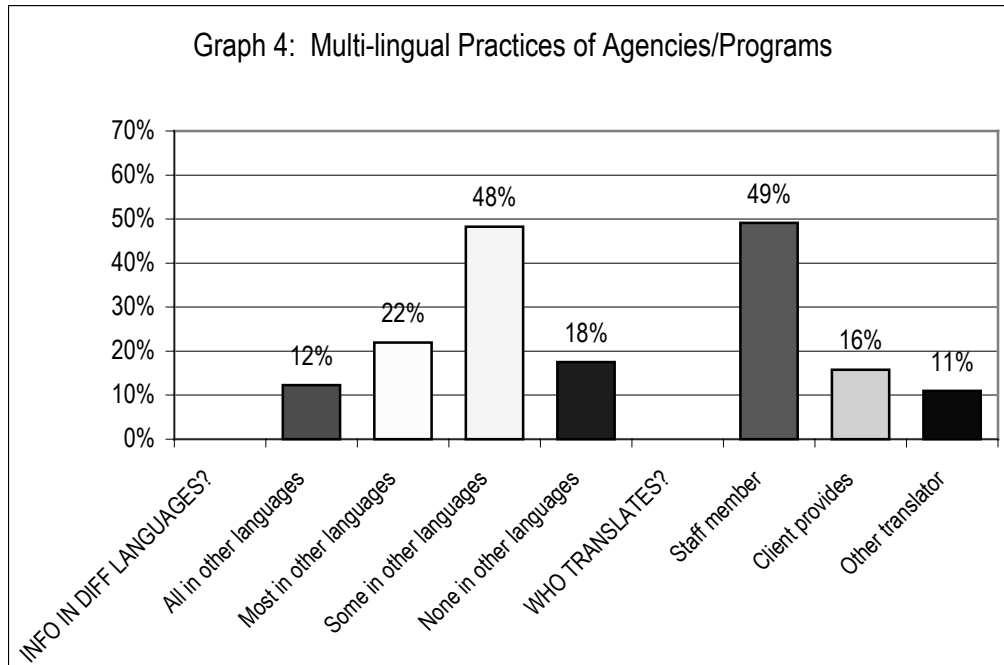
Clients who have physical disabilities can get into 96% of the agencies’ offices, but an additional 3 respondents volunteered that the physically disabled could only do so with difficulty. Just 2 respondents said their agencies were inaccessible to physically disabled clients. Fully 97% of the agencies studied said that they can “serve clients who have developmental, cognitive or emotional disabilities.”

Fifty-nine percent of the agencies studied are designed to serve clients of all ages, and 41% target clients of certain ages. Of the latter, 70% “serve families with children ages zero to 8,” and 72% “serve families with children age 9 to 18.” Another 64% “serve youth age 9 to 18, apart from their parents.” Note that these age groups and services are not necessarily mutually exclusive. From the perspective of all agencies, rather than age-specific agencies, 29% serve families with young children (age 0-8), 30% serve families with youth (age 9-18), 26% serve youth apart from their parents, and 59% make no age delineation.

Some agencies are designed with certain missions or target population of clients in mind. Sixty-one percent of respondents reported that their agency has a “mission primarily to serve families,

that is, parents and their children.” Four percent reported a “mission primarily to serve clients of certain race or ethnic groups.” Twenty-five percent said their agency has a “mission primarily to serve clients with certain disabilities, such as, physical, developmental, cognitive, emotional, social, or learning disabilities.” However, no agency in this study has a “mission primarily to serve clients of a certain religion.”

Just 16% of the agencies studied “primarily serve members of one sex only.” Four percent primarily serve males and 12% primarily serve females. 95 agencies are not sex-specific.



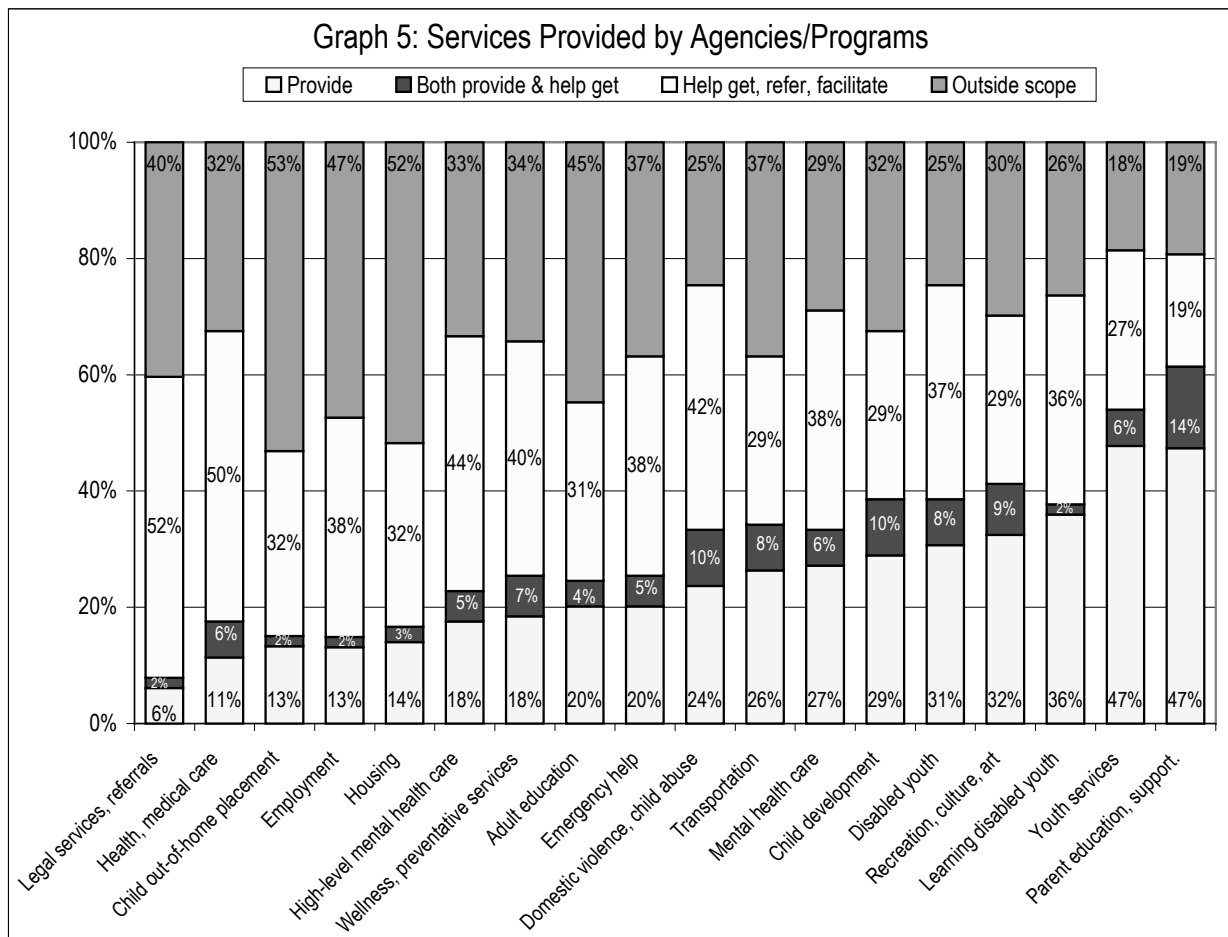
4. SPECIFIC FAMILY AND CHILD SERVICES THAT AGENCIES PROVIDE

The next group of survey questions concerned the services agencies provide. Interviewers read respondents the following introduction: “Now I need to ask you about specific services your agency provides. For each one, please tell me if your agency provides this service directly, if you help people to get this service but you don’t provide it directly, or if this service is outside your mission and scope.” The 50 respondents who spoke of programs within agencies were reminded by interviewers to “Please remember to think only about **this program** within your agency, not about the agency as a whole.” In place of the answer category words “help people to get,” many respondents volunteered that they “refer” clients to services or “facilitate” clients getting services

Graph 5 summarizes this part of the analysis’s results, and we will not belabor readers by repeating it entirely. Rather, this section draws attention to the larger themes in these results.

Nearly half of the agencies provided parent education and support (47%) and youth services, specifically, “child, youth or teen services, such as mentoring, tutoring, positive role models, support groups, and drug and alcohol abuse prevention” (47%). Roughly one third provided “help for children and youth who have learning disabilities, are delayed learners, or who need

school enrichment” (36%), “community recreation, culture, or art programs for children and families” (32%), and “help for children and youth who have permanent physical, developmental, cognitive, or emotional disabilities” (31%). Roughly one quarter provided “child development or childcare, such as therapeutic settings for the children of disabled adults” (29%), “mental health care, counseling, or crisis intervention for children, youth, and families” (27%), “transportation services including vans and bus tokens” (26%), and “domestic violence, child abuse, or child neglect services” (24%).



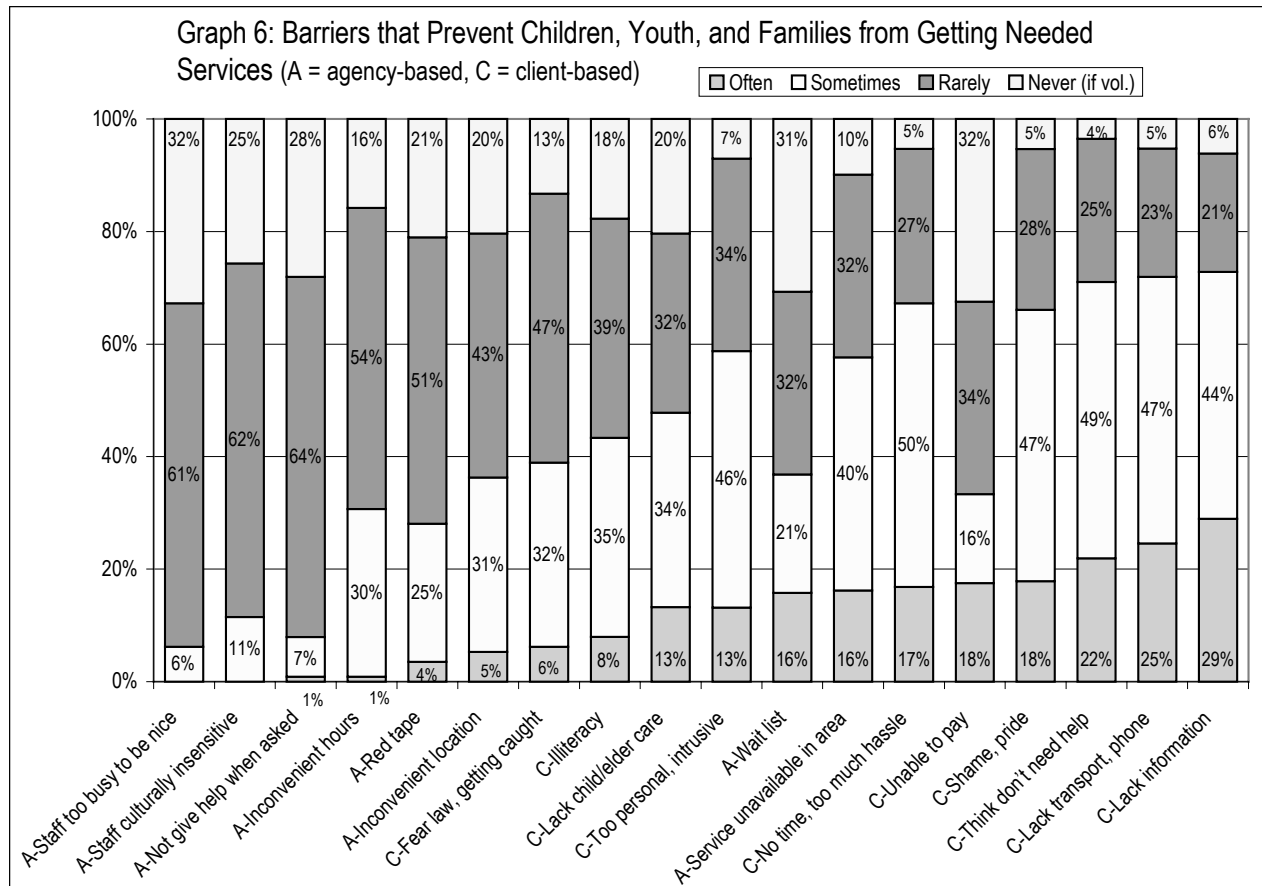
Four services were most frequently reported by respondents as “outside the mission and scope” of agencies. These are “child out-of-home placement, such as foster care or help for runaways” (53% offer no service or referral), “temporary or permanent housing” (52% offer no service or referral), employment assistance, specifically “helping people find jobs” (47% offer no service or referral), and “adult education, job skills, or job training” (45% offer no service or referral),

This section concluded with a question concerning whether agencies have a set procedure for helping a person or family who needs help from Adult and Family Services, “such as the name of an AFS staff member who will assist them, or does an AFS staff member come to your agency certain days of the week.” Over half, 56%, of agency representatives answered “yes.”

5. BARRIERS TO CLIENTS RECEIVING SERVICES

The survey concluded with respondents’ impressions of “what barriers may prevent children, youth, and families from getting the services they need in your agency.” Respondents answered with the frequency they believe each barrier occurs “for the people you see in your agency” – often, sometimes, or rarely. Interviewers also coded “never” if respondents volunteered it.

Graph 6 condenses the data from 18 barrier questions into visual form. In addition, we have added labels indicating whether a barrier was agency-based, such as inconvenient hours or location, or client based, such as illiteracy or childcare problems.



Agency respondents reported the following 5 barriers as largest, with 65%-73% “often” or “sometimes” a barrier:

1. lack of information – “clients not knowing what services are available or where to look” (29% often, 44% sometimes),
2. “lack of transportation or lack of telephone” (25% often, 47% sometimes),
3. “people thinking they don’t need the help when they actually do need it” (22% often, 49% sometimes),
4. “shame, embarrassment or pride” (18% often, 47% sometimes), and
5. “people not having enough time, or they think it will be too much hassle” (17% often, 50% sometimes).

Agency respondents reported the following 6 barriers as smallest, as all have 0-5% “often” and 6-31% “sometimes:”

1. “staff members being too busy to be nice to clients, such as being distracted, rude, not answering questions, or ignoring people” (0% often, 6% sometimes),
2. “staff members being culturally insensitive, such as acting in a racist manner, not knowing traditional holidays, or speaking only English” (0% often, 11% sometimes),
3. “not giving information or help when people ask for it” (1% often, 7% sometimes),
4. “inconvenient hours of operation” (1% often, 30% sometimes),
5. “too much red tape, too many rules, or confusing eligibility requirements to get your agency’s help” (4% often, 25% sometimes), and
6. “your agency’s services not being available in some parts of Lane County” (5% often, 31% sometimes).

By examining the “C” codes for client in Graph 6, it becomes apparent that agency respondents see the 5 greatest service barriers as client based, i.e., problems of transportation, lack of information, lack of time, or ego (shame, not believing they need help). By examining the “A” codes for agency, it is clear that respondents view agency-based service barriers as smallest, i.e., staff behavior, inconvenient hours or location, and red tape.

The survey ended with the following question: “Is there anything else you would like to add about the quality or delivery of services to families and their children in your agency?” Three single-spaced pages of respondents’ answers to this open-ended question are provided in Section 7 of this final report.

SURVEY CONCLUSIONS

This survey provides detailed data on 114 agencies and programs that provide services to families and children in Lane County, Oregon, as expressed by agency respondents. This report analyzing the survey results has examined univariate results for agencies’ characteristics and funding, the types of clients agencies serve, the services agencies provide, and the barriers to service that informants perceive.

We have not examined variations in the answers, for example, whether programs have different characteristics than agencies, or whether agency informants see different barriers to service than program informants. Nor have we compared the results of this survey to the parallel survey conducted the same month among community members about their perceptions of services needed by families and children in their communities and barriers to services they perceive. Fully analyzed, these data can provide a great deal more information of importance for planning to meet children’s and families’ needs.