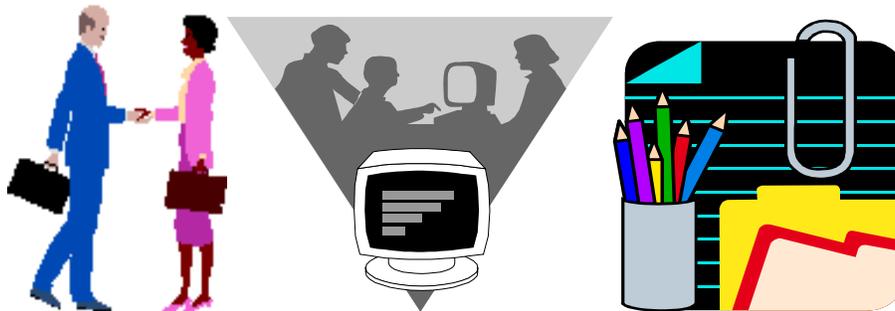


Multnomah County Department of Support Services

Oregon Quality Assessment 1998



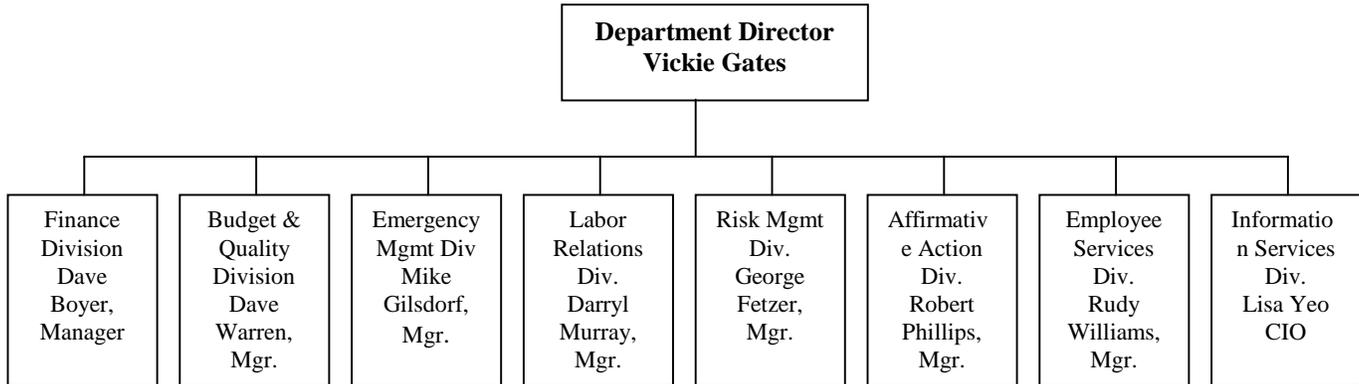
November 1, 1998

1A: Leadership System

A. Description

The executive leadership system includes the Department Director and eight Division Managers. Key stakeholders including DSS staff at a variety of levels and other County employees are involved in leadership decision making as appropriate.

The Department Director and Division Managers set the departmental tone based on County values. The Director also conducts strategic planning and coordinates department services and projects. Each division has a management team led by the Division Manager. Division management teams meet formally or informally depending on the size of the division and the division leadership style. Teams and Committees are formed as needed and the Departmental RESULTS and Diversity Committees work across divisions to provide leadership in the two key areas of diversity and quality.



B. Strengths

1a.1

DSS communicates its values through the use of brown-bag lunches conducted by the Department Director. This is done to obtain input and clarify issues with employees at all levels. Attendance at lunches is voluntary. The Department Director communicates goals to participants and collects ideas by recording them on flipcharts. Department Director uses ideas collected to make plans for action and to better inform her direct report managers.

- The Department Director sets expectations for involvement and collaboration at all levels. The DSS employee survey was conducted and follow-up work is underway to identify actions needed to improve training, employee recognition and trust between managers and employees and to encourage the use of performance and organizational review information.
- 360 evaluations are used at upper levels of the organization to get feedback on management performance.
- Division managers are encouraged to use process improvement teams and other appropriate methods to improve quality of services.
- Employees have been informed that DSS expects respect and collaboration.

The leadership team discusses values (including customer service, timeliness, accuracy, completeness, multicultural awareness, diversity, and employee involvement) and communicates the value of employee involvement through: team-based work structures, employee orientation, process improvement teams, stakeholders involvement in decisionmaking, social/lunch time gatherings, and an annual All-Staff meeting.

1a.2

DSS RESULTS and Diversity Committees attempt to represent all staff by including a variety of job classes from all divisions. Diversity of race, ethnicity, culture, length of County service, and other factors are also considered. The strengths in the DSS leadership system include:

- Department director and division managers meet every other week to coordinate department activities, align priorities, and share information. They discuss/share information on projects; share progress on efforts and initiatives; discuss Countywide issues and information.
- Some division managers and mid-level managers participate in the Diversity and RESULTS Committees.

Leadership and key stakeholders developed a strategic plan for information and human resource services. This plan is being published for all employees and being used to align division and team objectives with departmental objectives.

DSS leadership's approach to reengineering Human Resources involved several division managers and the Director working with customers and stakeholders. In this way, DSS leaders involved key stakeholders in setting organization direction. Future opportunities for Human Resources were established and communicated.

DSS has an annual all-staff meeting held each January to update staff about departmental issues, to get ideas and input from staff, and to allow staff to get to know each other and the work done in the department. This meeting is also for leadership to communicate and reinforce values, performance, and expectations.

DSS evaluates and improves the leadership system on an ongoing basis. One method used is the employee survey. In some areas where the employee survey results indicated problems between managers and employees, the Director is addressing those issues individually with senior managers. This is a strength in how we evaluate and improve our leadership system on an ongoing basis.

C. Opportunities for Improvement

1a.1

The DSS leadership system also has some opportunities for improvement. For example:

- Problems and issues from the front line are not always effectively communicated up to senior leadership so there may be some inaccuracies in the picture of problems and issues. There are some disconnects in the means of raising and addressing problems and issues through the leadership system.
- The leadership system operates informally and “ad hoc” so deployment is not yet thorough or consistent.

- In terms of communication about organizational direction, many employees outside of the inner management circle do not feel well informed, especially units outside the Portland Building.
- Leadership could make better use of PIT database and training records to monitor organizational progress.
- Though there are many efforts to discuss values and team spirit, specific actions that demonstrate commitment to values have not yet been defined and are not tracked.

Leaders communicate County and Department values and promote customer service, accountability, and employee well-being through newsletters (Health Promotion, Information Services, and Finance and Intranet/MINT pages). One way to improve this approach would be to arrange for more formal input from staff to guide the content and direction of these tools.

While the annual all-staff meeting is a strength, there are some areas for improvement such as of communicating values in general.

- Information about RESULTS and training could be better used and communicated.
- Upper-level managers can improve their feedback loops and better improve how they use ideas from line staff and middle managers.

1a.2

Even though an "open-door policy" exists at senior management levels, many employees are uncomfortable about whether or not their issues can be addressed without negative consequences.

Leaders support training and steering team activity in diversity and RESULTS. These efforts are tied to the goals of improving organizational customer service. Unfortunately, leaders have not been consistently evaluated on their response to diversity, RESULTS, and other County values (i.e., these values are only recently addressed in the performance evaluation process).

The Department Director is required to report on RESULTS efforts at regular meetings of all department directors and required to bring quality improvement reports to the Board of County Commissioners. There are some opportunities for improvement to this approach.

- Division managers are encouraged to work on improving quality of service but there are no specific expectations for involving employees in essential improvement of processes. No systematic plans and practice exist through which managers know what specific actions will demonstrate quality.
- Line managers are not yet consistently demonstrating practices that result in hiring and retention and support of diverse workforce. Manager and employee performance measures do not consistently include training and/or other activities that promote and support diversity.
- Currently there are no consistent expectations or coaching to ensure development and maintenance of effective collaborative relationships as a defined part of supervisory work. Supervisors are measured on productivity, but not on quality of communication in their relationships.

The DSS Strategic plan organized DSS services into information/financial services and human resources services. Goals were set to make DSS a proactive provider of services to other County departments. However, leaders do not have the resources to balance workload against the number of goals we have.

Further, Managers have not consistently involved line staff in providing input to decide issues regarding workload and goals.

Last, the Director evaluates and improves the leadership system by conducting exit interviews to determine problems and issues in the department. The deployment of this approach could be improved in there areas:

- There is no systemic gauge (barometer) to measure leadership effectiveness;
- At least five different sources of data on leadership exists and are not being used in an integrated way:
 - Exit interviews;
 - 360-degree employee surveys;
 - Process Improvement Team (PIT) database;
 - Affirmative Action Plan; and
 - Training Participation records.

D. Self-Assessment Points

80 X 50%=40 rating points

1B: Public Responsibility and Community Citizenship

A. Description

All services are designed to be responsible to the public and to promote good citizenship and good government. The public is the ultimate customer and direct customers of DSS are other departments that serve the public. The approaches and deployment strategies described in this subcategory are primarily limited to activities done outside of our "real work." However, activities such as affirmative action outreach and investment in community banks are mentioned here as examples of the ways that commitment to diversity and high-quality government service are part of the real work for DSS.

B. Strengths

1b.1

DSS demonstrates commitment to diversity and to community service as part of its regular work and in optional activities.

The Affirmative Action division reports to both the County and City of Portland, and provides one vehicle for cooperative community service across entities. They also take a very active role in the community supporting enhancements in education, hiring, and infrastructure.

Through grass roots community involvement, DSS employees become aware of societal issues and how DSS may play a role in those issues. DSS hires professionals who understand their fields and can maintain good practices and avoid risks to society. On the front end we also operate in legal frameworks that make sure our services do not create societal risks. Finally, our system of checks and balances has many opportunities where citizens can contact us and give us feedback about our services and operations either directly or through other County systems.

1b.2

Public responsibility and community citizenship is the County's real work. Some of the outreach work done to anticipate and address public concerns include the following:

- Affirmative action outreach;
- Investment in community banks;
- Advertising in minority newspapers;
- Public sector quality news summarizing;
- Diversity outreach – contracting (M/W/EBE);
- Acting as examiners for the Oregon Quality Initiative;
- Labor management partnerships through professional organizations;
- Year 2000 community awareness problem outreach.

Support Services personnel also works individually and collectively on community projects such as:

- School to work program;
- Blood bank;

- Combined Charitable Giving Campaign;
- Advisory committees to local school organizations;
- Recycling program;
- Safety fairs;
- Speaking for community groups;
- Volunteer service for nonprofit agencies in the community.

C. Opportunities for Improvement

1b.1

There is little tracking of individual and collective service activities.

1b.2

DSS could compare itself with other organizations to demonstrate the extent of its efforts to support and strengthen the greater community.

D. Self-Assessment Points

30 X 60%= 18 rating points

2A: Strategy Development

A. Description

The DSS strategic plan is envisioned to improve our long-term ability to deliver a quality product and work with our customers to achieve County goals. Without a long-term focus, the day-to-day operations and unplanned emergencies can sidetrack us from our long-term objectives. Strategic planning helps keep DSS focused on long-term priorities while meeting ongoing expectations.

DSS's strategic plan reflects our priorities. It is achievable and we will hold ourselves accountable for the objectives we set. This first strategic plan for DSS spans the 1997 to 2000 time frame and will be a basis both for action and for our budget request.

DSS's strategic plan was developed using information from a variety of sources including: learning about the planning process, developing a mission statement, completing the Oregon Quality Assessment, using working groups, and surveying employees. In addition, a situation analysis helped to ascertain the current operational environment of DSS. This plan will be the basis for our strategic efforts over the next 3 years. DSS's strategic plan will align with and will link to the Multnomah County Benchmarks, Multnomah County RESULT's initiative, and the Oregon Quality Initiative.

DSS and our customers created our respective strategic plans at the same time. As we revisit our strategic plan in year two, we will have other County Departments strategic plans to help give us a clearer understanding of our customers' directions, so we can better meet their needs by revising our strategies and if necessary, our objectives.

B. Strengths

The DSS Strategic Planning and Development process has the following strengths:

2a.1

Strategic plans further legal compliance with federal, state law and Board policies. Recent additions include enhancements to the formalized process for RFPs (request for proposal) and M/W/ESB (minority-owned business enterprise and women-owned business enterprise) procurement.

2a.2

Solicited input from both employees and customers. Input was accomplished through surveys (written and oral) and employee evaluations. Survey results and customer feedback identified requirements, expectations, and opportunities.

2a.3

DSS division managers/supervisors identified strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) as part of our environmental scan. The SWOT led to the development and implementation of the departmental

objectives and strategies and actions plans that identify responsible persons and estimates of completion dates. SWOT analysis identified and linked weaknesses and threats. From these results defensive strategies were developed and implemented to reduce risks to the organization.

Department strategy sets direction to address organizational capabilities to strengthen business processes for the future. It is deployed through action plans defined in the strategic plan in addition to annual division action plans outlined in the annual budget narrative document.

2a.4

DSS employees are informed regarding the current changes and future direction in their work environment. The Department conducts an annual all-staff meeting with a follow-up report addressing feedback gathered at the meeting. The Department Director sends out all-staff emails updating employees on important issues. Some DSS Divisions also conduct all-staff meetings for similar purposes.

An active Diversity Committee addresses cultural diversity issues. RESULTS committee addresses quality and training issues. Planning input also occurs through an annual diversity conference, regular Diversity/RESULTs committee meetings and surveys.

2a.5

Technological changes and requirements are formally addressed through the departmental strategic planning process. The Information Resource Management (IRM) plan sets the direction for technological changes for the DSS plan based on all of the County departmental strategic plans.

DSS undertook a department-wide survey of employees to identify strengths and improvement opportunities for DSS. Needs were identified and resources were added during the budget process to help address those needs. The survey pointed to a need to improve employee recognition; further data collection includes brown-bag discussions with the Director.

2a.6

Expectations, requirements, and opportunities continue to be deployed through action plans or Process Improvement Teams (PITs). Depending on the topic, our PITs involve customers, suppliers and partners.

C. Opportunities for Improvement

The DSS Strategic Planning and Development process also provides opportunities for improvement. In a variety of areas, DSS's approach is sound but the current deployment strategies are not as strong.

2a.1 and 2a.6

DSS took a top-down approach to the strategy development process in all of the Strategic Planning categories, using a series of retreats involving the department's higher level managers. Front-line employees did not have formalized vehicles for input.

State ORS and local policies regulate many of the functions and services provided by DSS. Professional affiliations and informal networks convey legislative changes and can help address any compliance issues. While this is a strength, we could also use this as an opportunity to work with legislative workgroups to write legislation that would allow for greater opportunities to partner with our suppliers.

2a.2

SWOT analysis identified and linked weaknesses and threats, strengths and opportunities regarding our human resource capability and needs. From these results defensive strategies were developed and implemented to reduce risks to the organization. Strategies built on strength were developed to take advantage of opportunities. However, there was a significant amount of time that elapsed between the SWOT analysis and Strategic Plan discussions. Also, the bulk of information around which the Plan was built seems to be more anecdotal rather than current-data driven.

2a.3

DSS's role in many areas is to insure legal compliance with federal and state law and local policies. Independent audit reports and responses to other governmental units such as Tax Supervising Conservation Commission (TSCC) on compliance help ensure that we meet our legal mandates. The opportunity for DSS is to work with others to write legislation that would allow greater legal flexibility in how we do business.

2a.4

Divisions have an informal process driven by ad hoc meetings and discussions to assess risk in the business processes and address those risks with control mechanisms, policies, procedures manuals, and process improvement teams. This practice needs to become more formalized.

2a.5

DSS has translated strategy into measurable actions. DSS managers monitor and report progress at division manager meetings, and feedback can result in adjusting the implementation strategy. There is, however, no formal system for reviewing how various managers are progressing with their action plans in the budget narrative.

The organizational culture, particularly its unique aspects, is a key determinant in a strategic planning process. DSS, as part of the County, emphasizes process integrity and diversity. These elements in our organizational culture need to be more formally and systematically recognized in the strategic planning process.

D. Self-Assessment Points

40 X 45%=18 rating points

2B: Organizational Strategy

A. Description

One of our main organizational strategies is to use Key Results. Key Results are performance indicators at the program level and show the efficiency or effectiveness of a particular program or service. Key Results include customer satisfaction when appropriate. These were mandated by the Commissioners in 1993. Key Results have been established for all direct service programs. The focus for Key Results in FY 98-99 is on the better use of data to manage the organization. Key Results are published annually in the narrative budget document.

DSS produces an Annual Performance Report that discusses the Department's accomplishments during the year, trends and challenges. This report allows the Department to tell its "story" to the Board of County Commissioners and to the public. This report describes our programs using the Key Results.

Multnomah County and the Department of Support Services continue to strive to improve and refine the methods of performance tracking through Key Results.

B. Strengths

2b.1

DSS has a variety of strengths in its organization strategy.

- DSS action plan (as outlined in the strategic plan) requirements are addressed in the strategic plan which was consciously aligned with the RESULT Roadmap (the County-wide umbrella strategy). To check on action plans, the Department Director schedules regular meetings with all division managers as a group, and on an individual basis to report on progress.
- DSS strategic plan was electronically distributed to all DSS employees, and made available to our customers, with an opportunity for comment and feedback.

2b.2

- DSS follows the Strategic Plan for Information Technology (SPIT) that was developed with Countywide input and guides technological development.
- Progress and performance relative to the strategic plan action steps are incorporated into performance evaluations.

C. Opportunities for Improvement

DSS has some areas for improvements in this subcategory. Often the situation is that we have a good approach but our deployment needs further work.

2b.1

Divisions develop annual action plans that are incorporated into the narrative budget document. Budget Office publishes each division's annual action plan to help provide accountability. This approach can be further improved so that division action plans are aligned with the department strategic plan.

2b.2

There are currently no analyses that would forecast a two to five year projection of key measures and/or indicators of likely changes resulting from the organization's action plans. Collection of benchmark forecasting data is not comprehensive, and there are generally no entities identified for comparison purposes.

The focus for Key Results in FY98-99 is on the better use of that data to manage the organization. Key Result data is collected and published annually in the narrative budget document. Most Key Results have not been formally linked to the strategic plan nor to the county's long term benchmarks. Key Results are only projected out one year.

D. Self-Assessment Points

40 X 30%=12 rating points

3A: Customer and Market Knowledge

A. Description

DSS provides administrative services to other County departments so they can provide government funded programs/services to their constituents. Our primary customers are departments internal to the County. There are a few primary customers external to Multnomah County. We have many “secondary” customers. Generally, the services we provide to secondary customers are determined by our primary customers. Our role for County departments includes assisting them by ensuring that all of Multnomah County departments are in compliance with laws and appropriate policies. The needs of our primary customers determine many of our secondary customers and suppliers.

Often DSS is the front line on behalf of other departments. We strive to work with regulatory agencies, applicants, vendors, financial institutions, and other suppliers and secondary customers in ways that ensure their satisfaction so that our primary customers can get the employees, goods, services, and financial support practices they need to do business effectively.

The Divisions within DSS communicate with their customers to determine needed products and opportunities to improve or expand services. Communication occurs through focus groups, cross-department committees, individual interviews with customers, and informal feedback.

B. Strengths

3a.1

DSS uses key information requested or collected from customers to evaluate system processes and procedures for potential improvements. In some cases products and or services may be legislatively mandated, such as FMLA and Emergency Management. The Department of Support Services also holds an annual All-Staff Meeting that has been an effective forum for staff to evaluate its systems.

3a.2

DSS distributes publications to solicit customers and inform them of its services. Examples include marketing materials such as; “How to Do Business with the County” and “Efforts to Increase MWESB Utilization,” training schedules, the Regional Incident Command System (RISC) training calendar. Other vehicles for communication include committees such as the Information Technology Council (ITC) and the Internet and Intranet.

The Employee Relations Committee (ERC) is an innovative collaboration of Labor Relations, department management, and bargaining unit personnel whose goal is to work through issues of common interest. This has been successful in focusing attention on the issues important to County employees.

3a.3

DSS uses numerous methods to determine key product and service customer needs. The various forms of communication are: Operating Council presentation and discussion, surveys, employee 360 evaluations,

committees, focus groups, informal input, professional organizations, collaboration with outside agencies and individual interviews with key department personnel. DSS sometimes requests additional data to determine products and services.

C. Opportunities for Improvement

3a.1

DSS could develop more standardized tools to better understand its customers needs, especially through studying the complaints and customer satisfaction data.

3a.2

While the marketing materials used are a strength, the department could broaden its scope by marketing more programs and by better coordinating its marketing plans.

3a.3

The divisions demonstrate use of various communication approaches, but as a department there is no consistent process. The department has the opportunity to increase use of Process Improvement Teams, focus groups, surveys and individual interviews to expand its way of collecting the data necessary to improve products and services. The department should increase its communication about key product and service features

D. Self-Assessment Points

40 X 30%=12 rating points

3B: Customer Satisfaction and Relationship Enhancement

A. Description

DSS is very active in determining customer satisfaction and relationship enhancement. DSS leadership has communicated clearly the importance of this issue and DSS staff are coached to respond to requests in a timely and professional manner. Besides responding to requests we also put effort into discovering potential needs and building existing relationships. Each division is responding to these objectives in a way that is most suitable for it. The variety of DSS customer satisfaction and relationship enhancement techniques are not well documented, reviewed, or carefully examined for overlaps.

B. Strengths

3b.1

DSS determines the level, type, and amount of contact a customer requires through various forms of communication. In some cases the contact requirements are mandated. DSS currently uses surveys, DSS All-Staff meetings, Operating Council feedback, committees, focus groups, informal input, and collaboration with outside agencies to help determine customer contact requirements.

3b.2.

DSS has several effective approaches for determining and enhancing its customer satisfaction. We use quality tools such as focus groups, cross-department task forces and committees, surveys and process improvement teams to discover and respond to customer requests. Some of our divisions use customer satisfaction as a Key Result measure.

3b.3

Customer loyalty and relationships are built within DSS by involving stakeholders in process development or changes. Stakeholder involvement helps keep processes current and provides a means for evaluation and improvement.

DSS builds loyalty and relationships with its customers through various stakeholder committees, which encompass a wide group of customers. Customer relationships are built through PIT processes for improvements and the development of new processes. These stakeholder committees include, but are not limited to: the Purchasing Advisory Committee, Employee Relations Committee, GIS Stakeholders, Operating Council, ITC, HR Advisory Committee, and Integrated Enterprise System Team.

C. Opportunities for Improvement

3b.1

DSS does not have an overall consistent complaint system. Some programs have established a formal complaint system. Complaints are variously handled on an informal basis through customer-initiated requests or as required by law, and internal policies.

3b.2

Although many DSS divisions share the same pool of customers, DSS does not have a Department-wide customer satisfaction tool or method of collecting the division data.

DSS does not have a consistent method/process on follow-up for customer feedback. Some sections or individuals sometimes follow up with customers on an informal basis. Some deployments used to obtain prompt and actionable feedback are email, meetings, phone, informal contact, and training evaluation forms. Development of a consistent method has been assigned to the department RESULTS committee.

3b.3

DSS does not have its own benchmarking method for obtaining objective information on customer satisfaction or needs relative to other agencies. Not all Division key results include customer satisfaction, and no comparisons are made with other agencies.

D. Self-Assessment Points

40 X 25% = 10 rating points

4A: Selection and Use of Information and Data

A. Description

Through the Information Services Division (ISD), DSS develops, maintains, and operates many County computer and information systems, including: Wide Area Network, telecommunications, and mainframe operational systems for the following County departments/divisions: Juvenile Justice, Sheriff's Office, and Assessment and Taxation. ISD, in conjunction with other DSS Divisions, also maintains and supports the financial and employee databases that are used by all County departments. The approach to designing and reviewing these systems is through a Business Requirements Analysis. Specific DSS departmental needs generally translate into review of overall County requirements for those same services. To better support core business functions and goals, the Business Requirements Analyses were linked to departmental strategic planning during FY97-98 using Informational Resource Management (IRM) plans.

Other key databases such as those used to construct the Budget are designed, constructed, and maintained by individual Divisions within DSS. Attachment 1 shows the variety of databases used by DSS in its business operations.

Use of these databases is primarily by line staff for operational purposes at the department or division level. There is some high level analysis and use of this information for broader management purposes. DSS supports these uses by production of routine operational reports, responding to special requests for information, and by providing an increasing array of options for direct ad hoc query such as with the public safety Decision Support System.

Like other County departments, DSS uses Key Results indicators to monitor the function of key organization processes. These are periodically reviewed by the Division Managers and Department Director, and are included in an Annual Performance Report.

A sound systematic approach exists (Business Requirements Analyses) to assess and target improvement of the major operational systems. There is widespread deployment of data, with rapid implementation of the latest in information technology, but improvement of key databases is not complete.

B. Strengths

4a.1

The main types of data are shown on the DSS Data Systems Attachment 1.

4a.2

Deployment of data is accomplished by various mechanisms as determined by the needs of users and the Divisions that support them. These mechanisms include routing operating reports, responding to ad hoc requests, and annual reports.

4a.3

Operational employees have direct access to the databases they need to do their specific jobs either through PC or mainframe access. The Decision Analyzer system allows ad hoc queries into the LGFS database including accounts payable, general ledger, inventory, materials management, and purchasing functions. There is increasing use of the Intranet to deploy policies and procedures. There is an annual Budget, Financial Report, and Performance Report. DSS holds an annual all-staff meeting to disseminate critical information and to seek staff input.

4a.4

Business Requirements Analyses are the primary mechanism for identifying customer technology and data needs and focusing ISD's efforts into responding to them. Most DSS Divisions also use customer satisfaction surveys and/or focus groups to assess satisfaction of users with the type of support that DSS provides. Results of the surveys and focus groups are used to modify and improve products, including reports.

Business Requirements Analyses have been completed for the DSS operational systems, which has identified the need for an Integrated Enterprise System. The DSS Director's Office also maintains a Data Analyst to develop, improve, and administer Access databases that are used for budgeting and performance measurement.

C. Opportunities for Improvement

4a.1

The primary types of information and data are from routine operational systems. Ad Hoc information is either gathered by Process Improvement Teams, other project teams, or by the DSS Evaluation/Research Unit. There is no way to keep track and share this information beyond the immediate group of users.

4a.2

DSS has a variety of functions so deployment is usually at the individual division or work unit level with little interface with other divisions. (See Attachment 1 for the variety of operational systems used by DSS.) Many of these systems could benefit from upgrade and better integration.

4a.3

Use of individual nonintegrated databases has been the principal approach. There is a combination of mainframe and stand-alone PC systems to meet user requirements. LANs and the county WAN and Intranet have been recently developed to better integrate all County functions. Some key divisions in DSS have very few systematic information management resources. Employee Services and Labor Relations, for example, have individuals tracking complex laws, policies, and records with very minimal support from databases or other technology applications.

4a.4

Operating systems are functional but could be improved by updating and integration. A Business Requirements Analysis has shown that an Integrated Enterprise System is the best option to improve efficiency and linkage of several DSS functions. Development of this system is a key strategic priority.

D. Self-Assessment Points

25 X 43% = 10.8 rating points

4B: Selection and Use of Comparative Information and Data

A. Description

As a governmental organization, DSS is subject to a variety of laws that mandate various levels of review by external agencies. Examples of mandated reviews include: 1) review of the County Budget by the Tax Supervising and Conservation Commission; 2) requirements that the County produce an annual financial report that is audited. These external review requirements ensure basic public accountability.

Some Divisions (Budget, Finance) voluntarily submit their products to external review agencies such as the Government Finance Officer's Association to determine their standing against national standards of excellence. Other DSS Divisions (Information Services Division, Labor Relations, Employee Services, Risk Management) have no such formal national review systems so they seek out comparative information relevant to their particular operations in professional literature or by directly contacting similar jurisdictions.

Divisions conduct other comparisons on a more ad hoc basis, depending on specific needs. These can include the need to compare wage rates, contract language, staffing ratios in specific functions, etc. DSS also participates in Countywide review processes such as comparing the composition of its workforce against minority representation in the larger community workforce.

Finally, DSS supports the County Board of Commissioner's selection of key indicators of community health (Benchmarks) by providing comparative information on how other jurisdictions approach these problems. Best practice reviews are performed by the DSS Evaluation/Research Unit and made available to the Board of County Commissioners to better inform county policy and budgeting.

DSS collects a wide variety of comparative data but the employee survey shows that deployment throughout the organization could be improved. The DSS Evaluation/Research Unit is one of the few such units in the United States where comparative indicators of social functioning and national best practices are systematically gathered and applied to social policy decision making. While this work has been performed to assist other departments, DSS has not used this type of research to improve its own processes as yet.

B. Strengths

4b.1

External laws and regulations mandate that some systems are reviewed against commonly accepted rules and practices. The County Budget is reviewed by the Tax Supervising and Conservation Commission, and the County annual financial report is audited by an external firm.

4b.2

The Board of County Commissioners based on citizen input has selected three key County social and demographic benchmarks (reducing crime, increasing high school completion, and decreasing children in poverty) and a good government benchmark. The DSS Evaluation/Research unit is actively deployed in performing national best practice reviews that focus on the three long-term social benchmarks, while most of the other work of DSS addresses the provision of good government.

DSS has such a diversity of functions that individual divisions usually determine which sources of comparative information to use. The criteria are determined by standards of practice within each profession, e.g., generally accepted accounting practices or national professional association standards.

4b.3

Financial data is audited using generally accepted auditing standards. DSS compares its financial performance (return on investment) with other governmental investment pools and instruments. The County budget and Comprehensive Annual Financial Report are submitted to the Government Finance Officer's Association for annual review and comparison to other documents nationally.

We select data to ensure that we are professional in our norms; to give guidance on what is reasonable; to diagnose problems or look for causes; to use in budgetary decision making; and as an aid to establish policy.

4b.4

The County obtains long-term debt and short-term note ratings from Moody's Investors Service. Information Services Division compares response time, reliability, and availability annually with other organizations to see if it is competitive. Labor Relations compares contracts with those in other private and public employers looking for: innovative language; departures from market norms; market. Employee Services Division contacted counterparts to determine comparative practices and data/ratios/standards on applicant flows and staffing ratios (HR staff: employees). Risk management compares insurance requirements. DSS compares its workforce composition against minority representation in the community workforce as part of the County Affirmative Action plan.

The DSS Evaluation/Research unit is conducting a national best practice review of how different government jurisdictions are using comparative indicators of social functioning to manage their programs.

C. Opportunities for Improvement

4b.1

When we design/improve processes, we decide which data we need to compare ourselves with others (surveys, literature searches, etc.). Individual work teams and process improvement teams do collect and use comparative data but there is no central direction or coordination of this effort.

4b.2

Most work teams that gather comparative data use the data for their immediate purposes. If this data is shared at all it is shared in an ad hoc way, e.g., in an insurance manual or workgroup report. Some comparative data is included in the Key Results measures (bond ratings, return on investment, Affirmative Action performance) that are included in the budget. Also, since different tools are used to measure similar goals such as customer satisfaction, it is difficult to compare across divisions.

4b.3

Many manuals and workgroup reports are distributed through division mailing lists. Progress in meeting goals contained in the DSS Strategic Plan will be deployed via managers and periodic updates from the Director's Office. Key Results measures are included in the budget and widely distributed to key policy making personnel. Results of external reviews of the budget and financial records are posted in these respective work areas. However, generally speaking, the use and distribution of data can be more systematic.

4b.4

There is no systematic approach in DSS to expanding the selection and use of benchmarking data. The Director's Office is evaluating our use of Key Results indicators.

D. Self-Assessment Points

15 X 45% = 6.75 rating points

4C: Analysis and Review of Organization Performance

A. Description

Most DSS Divisions have identified Key Results measures that relate to their overall performance. These are periodically reviewed by the DSS management team and reported in the Annual Budget and an Annual Performance Report.

DSS's strategic plan has formulated action plans and a monitoring system to track progress toward those goals. The Director's Office has developed a system to track progress toward these goals.

The DSS Evaluation/Research Unit has focused on improving the use of Key Results, program evaluations, and other operational measures to: 1) improve accountability for use of public funds; and 2) assist key County decision makers in making more informed decisions regarding the County's strategic priorities for other departments.

DSS Divisions have four years' experience in gathering and using Key Results measures. Using these measures systematically has improved in the last two since the Department has gained full departmental status. The recent completion of a DSS Strategic Plan and linkage of that plan to Countywide priorities ensures that the major systems are in place to improve utilization of measures of operational performance.

B. Strengths

4c.1 and 4c.2

DSS integrates both financial and non-financial data into Key Results measures. Key Results measures are periodically reviewed by the DSS management team. Results are reported annually in the budget and via an Annual Performance Report.

DSS has conducted its first of two scheduled annual employee surveys. The survey was conducted in January 1998 and will be repeated in early 1999. The Evaluation/Research Unit and the DSS RESULTS Steering Committee analyze results of the Employee Survey. The Department Director distributes survey results feedback.

Most divisions perform customer satisfaction surveys and focus groups. Divisions primarily react to survey findings via their own action plans.

The DSS strategic plan sets goals and uses a monitoring system. The plan has just been implemented and monitoring has just begun.

C. Opportunities for Improvement

4c.1

The Annual Report was sent electronically to all DSS employees. Deployment could also include a forum for wider discussion regarding our customer-related performance, operational performance, competitive

performance, and financial- and market-related performance. Much of our data tells a positive story and we can disseminate this organizational performance data more widely.

4c.2

The DSS Management Team reviews strategic plan progress. Because the DSS Strategic Plan is newly implemented there is no track record that records how division work plans are adjusted to achieve departmental strategic goals.

D. Self-Assessment Points

40 X 50% = 20 rating points.

5A: Work Systems

A. Description

The Department of Support Services' Human Resources organization is primarily responsible for the formal design of jobs, job descriptions, compensation schemes and recognition mechanisms not only for DSS but for the entire County. Its efforts, partly because of a small staff size, have of necessity been directed towards meeting the needs of the County as a whole; the Department has admittedly not been able to adequately represent its own employees in the areas of job classification, compensation, and recognition.

In August 1998, the Department began a significant re-engineering effort involving de-centralizing personnel staff to various Departments and hiring eight new specialists who will be responsible for re-tooling the compensation, classification and recognition systems for the Department and the County. Additionally, a Classification/Compensation Study was commissioned for DSS and was completed in June, 1998. It will be used to revamp job descriptions in Human Resources. A second classification/compensation study now in final analysis stages will be used to update job descriptions for information technology positions throughout the County. This will have a significant impact on DSS' Information Services Division.

Training and Organizational Development staff has begun developing a comprehensive Employee Development Plan, Management Development curriculum, and other program strategies that meet some of the needs described below.

B. Strengths

5a.1

DSS has the following strengths in its work and job design for a diverse workforce:

- Recruitment Plan: The departmental personnel analyst plans each recruitment individually with hiring manager;
- The Department has access to Outreach database;
- Applications are written in compliance with Personnel Rules re affirmative action and diverse workplace practices;
- Interview panels reflect diversity;
- Diversity is part of the County mission (RESULTS) and that of DSS;
- Diversity is integrated into Countywide and DSS support infrastructure; i.e.: training, Diversity committees, Diversity Conference.

The following are examples of how DSS work processes support our organizational action plans:

- Classification system does exist and is being improved;
- Job design (Employee Services): broader job classifications allow for wider range of employee development, lateral movement, flexibility in job descriptions, ability to hire positions that meet needs of new human resource initiatives or strategic planning efforts;

- RESULTS advocates for team processes; quantified measurement outcomes;
- Process Improvement Teams (PITs) are cross-functional, non-hierarchical and linked to work processes, re-engineering and action plans;
- PITs have training, dedicated management and oversight;
- PITs support non-hierarchical leadership and involvement;
- Formal Committees convene around specific issues such as Human Resources re-engineering;
- Standing meetings for work units or functional teams implement organizational goals for collaboration and employee involvement;
- Ad hoc committees convene to implement strategic plans ("A-Team");
- Some employees/work units are given significant flexibility in designing job descriptions and improving work processes;
- Work has begun to design new jobs and to develop ADA-compliant, job-specific job descriptions;
- Widespread use of PITS, committees and standing meetings foster communication;
- Organizational infrastructure supports PITs, committees and meetings;
- Department-wide surveys capture some information;
- Information/training about RESULTS is widely available.

The following are DSS strengths in departmental communication, cooperation, knowledge, and skill sharing:

- DSS communications have many informal mechanisms, generally unwritten, which allow for great flexibility;
- There is selective and expanding use of the Intranet to broadcast information and policies;
- Unit-specific objectives are established for cross-training;
- Countywide, Department-wide, or work-unit specific surveys and other feedback tools are used for communication;
- There is significant use of newsletters, calendars, email, either department or County. Communication tools are generally left to discretion, needs, and initiative of work units;
- Communication is evaluated through Department-wide surveys.

DSS has a variety of strengths to ensure a flexible, rapid response, and continuous learning:

- Customer service is a highly placed value in County mission, RESULTS initiative;
- Training is provided on general customer service, and on developing satisfaction surveys;
- Training, institutional support, and recognition are provided for process improvement teams targeting customer satisfaction and improved operations;
- Unit-specific re-engineering is performed to meet customer needs (Personnel de-centralization);
- Some work units compare operations/customer satisfaction to outside or best practices standards;
- Work units/divisions encouraged to survey customers for satisfaction levels;
- DSS surveys employees and uses feedback at DSS's all-staff meeting;
- RESULTS Roadmaps, mission statement available to every employee;
- DSS survey administered annually for all staff.

5a.2

DSS has some strengths in its compensation and recognition system:

- For compensation, DSS adheres to overall County requirements;
- Some divisions formally recognize employees;
- Occasionally groups or individuals are given public recognition through Board or peers;
- Subgroups/committees are recognized at staff meetings;
- DSS holds all-staff meetings as a form of recognition;
- Formalized RESULTS and Diversity awards development in process;
- DSS employees participate in the Countywide service award program that recognizes length of service;
- DSS has conducted focus groups and brown-bag sessions to determine how employees want to be recognized for quality accomplishments as a result of DSS survey;
- Work units/divisions acknowledge performance informally;
- Unit/division-specific initiatives are used to equalize/analyze compensation and merit, i.e. Employee Services' class/comp study, Local 88's Information Technology comp study.

C. Opportunities for Improvement

5a.1

DSS has a variety of opportunities to improve its work system:

- Currently no formalized career development program or support for career paths within Multnomah County or DSS exists. A new Employee Development program is underway;
- There is no strategy for skill sharing;
- We need more formal discussions between supervisors and employees about current and future work;
- There is inconsistent application of the Affirmative Action and Personnel Rules among the Divisions. The Affirmative Action plan for the Department is currently in final draft stages;
- DSS has no diversity strategy and has not clearly defined the multiple levels of the meaning of diversity. This information could be used to affect assignment of staff on teams;
- No work plan exists about how to learn about and use diversity effectively;
- There is no system to assess work styles and changes required for a job; ways of learning how to do things better;
- Training on customer service/survey development is available but not consistently used;
- No systematic structures are in place to define needs & develop employees to meet those needs;
- No job assessment or audit processes exist to assist managers in evaluating job and work design;
- Strategies are not developed on how to meet needs of new workforce: skill development, assessment of needs, flexibility in personnel classification system;
- No formal mechanism exists to measure level of individual initiative and self-directed responsibility in job design and management;
- Comparison to "best practices" or other comparisons is inconsistent;
- Job descriptions and class specifications need to be written to comply with ADA requirements regarding essential job functions;

- Mission Statement and Values are not displayed throughout the organization. This display would keep the mission before the organization as a measuring tool and help create a unity of purpose in the organization.
- There is no formal training and development plan for employees.

5a.2

DSS has a variety of opportunities to improve its compensation and recognition system:

- The variety of compensation and recognition mechanisms are not consistently applied throughout division;
- We have not adequately surveyed employees to see what they need;
- We have not consistently recognized, celebrated important accomplishments;
- Division directors do not have a formal schedule to revisit theme of recognition;
- DSS has not previously been proactive re class compensation issues;

D. Self-Assessment Points

40 X 45% = 18 rating points

5B: Employee Education, Training, and Development

A. Description

In keeping with the County value system and philosophy regarding the importance of education, training and staff development, DSS provides a two-pronged approach to deploying these resources. Each division has budget dedicated to Travel and Training; staff negotiate with their managers and/or supervisors to access these funds, which are intended to provide education and training specific to particular jobs and certification (if needed). DSS employees can also attend free training provided by Countywide Training and Organizational Development on topics deemed mandatory (Orientation, Alcohol/Drug Policy, Diversity) or “generic” (customer service, communications, etc.) or related to technology (in which the County invests \$300K/yr). Training coordinators within specific divisions may also provide education and training on division-specific topics.

A Countywide Employee Development Plan is in the development process. It will include individual training plans that provide recommended course sequences. The county’s Health and Wellness Program also provides education and training on various health-related topics.

B. Strengths

5b.1

The following are strengths in the way DSS education and training supports our actions:

- Training classes and other learning opportunities offered through Countywide Training and Development are specifically aligned with RESULTS Goals and County policy;
- An employee development approach is in place that emphasizes an orientation process for new employees during their first year with the County. DSS employees participate;
- Countywide Training and Organizational Development has piloted a mentorship program with DSS participants in addition to others in the County. The program helped participants consider and address individual development goals. Full-scale implementation is planned;
- Training courses are offered to managers, supervisors and other leaders in the County (including DSS) about how to lead teams, run meetings, deal with discipline and performance issues, communicate, and value diversity;
- Employees and supervisors in some divisions are encouraged by their supervisors to identify training and development goals as part of their performance-evaluation process;
- Employees in most divisions are provided work time and expenses to attend training and/or conferences deemed appropriate to help improve the capability of the individual and DSS over the longer term;
- Training on safety is provided by Risk Management;
- Health training is provided by Employee Health promotion.

5b.2

The following are additional strengths in the way DSS education and training supports our work systems:

- Training and Organizational Development uses surveys, end-of-class evaluations, meetings with work teams and management teams, and incidental input to identify training needs and seek information about training design. A service agreement process is now being implemented to help align training for individuals work groups with organizational goals. This will be available to assist DSS work units;
- Computer Software Training is available to DSS employees both as classroom hands-on training and via the Internet for those who find classroom training difficult to attend and for those with different learning styles;
- DSS solicits input from employees regarding training needs via employee survey;
- DSS takes advantage of training available through membership in professional organizations;
- In Fall 1997, Countywide Training and Organizational Development conducted a Countywide needs assessment including DSS. Results included a prioritized list of topics for training needed in the next fiscal year. These topics have been offered as classes available to DSS and other departments;
- Quarterly calendars often contain mini-surveys asking employees to submit their thoughts and specific objectives for new course topics;
- DSS staff members and others from other departments are often involved in planning objectives to be included in requests for proposals and in selection committees to choose vendors for training provided by outside consultants.

5b.3

The following are strengths in the way DSS education and training is provided to new employees:

- A Countywide new-employee orientation process is in place including benefits packets for new employees during their first week, an orientation training session focusing on organizational values and programs, and a six-month follow-up packet encouraging consideration of employee development goals;
- Some DSS divisions offer formal and informal orientation of new employees specific to their work environment;
- Learning opportunities are provided to DSS employees on-line, in classroom training, as presentations during staff meetings, through one-on-one coaching, and through library and video resources available to employees.

5b.4

The following is a strength in the way knowledge and skills are reinforced on the job:

- Because employees attending training classes are asked to get their supervisor's approval for attending the training, supervisors know what training employees are taking and can set expectations about performance changes as a result of the training.

5b.5

The following are strengths in the way DSS evaluates and improves education and training opportunities:

- Training and Organizational Development uses surveys, end-of-class evaluations, meetings with work teams and management teams, and incidental input to identify training needs and seek information about training design;
- DSS Employee Survey identified the need for improved access to training.

DSS Employee Survey results have been communicated to all employees. The January 1998 All-Staff meeting involved discussions and identification of key issues including the need for more consistent access to training.

The Department director is addressing issues from the All-Staff meeting.

Countywide training and development uses end-of-class surveys to determine participant reactions to training; a follow up process of surveying participants six months after training about how well skills apply on the job has been developed but not fully implemented.

C. Opportunities for Improvement

5b.1

- Some division and program budgets in DSS do not include funds for education and training.
- There is no long-term career development program currently in place to address organizational needs such as rapid technological changes, and changing customer demands.
- Workload issues prevent employees needing skills from finding time to develop those skills through attending training, professional reading, and/or practicing with new tools.
- Education and training are not linked to Action Plans or strategic plans; training is ad hoc. Few employees have training skills to encourage development of on-the job training in DSS divisions.

5b.2

- No evaluation of short- or long-term training benefits to individual or organization is in place.
- Guidance is lacking for employees and supervisors to develop training plans and career development plans tied to strategic/action plans.
- DSS doesn't identify professional growth/new skill development opportunities or state expectations for achieving training objectives. Supervisors may set expectations and then not follow up regarding quality, usefulness, sufficiency.

5b.3

- Mandatory training for DSS managers and supervisors is unclear: there are no uniform consequences for non-participation. Information channels for employees to help them learn about more training opportunities are generally informal and ad-hoc.
- First-day benefits packet sent to new employees may not be well- understood by managers and staff.
- Learning opportunities using on-line customized training have only recently become available.
- DSS employees may not be fully aware of all the training/learning options available to them.
- Learning opportunities are not deployed consistently throughout DSS.

5b.4

- No data exists to show to what extent DSS employees are expected to demonstrate new skills after attending training. No consistent approach is used to determine to what extent DSS employees are required to demonstrate skills after attending training.

5b.5

There is no systematic way to ensure that dollars available for education, training and conferences are equitably distributed throughout the department.

There is no consistent method for evaluating education and training attended by DSS employees outside the County or communicating the results of that evaluation to other DSS employees.

D. Self-Assessment Points

30 X 45%= 13.5 rating points

5C: Employee Well-Being and Satisfaction

A. Description

DSS houses a number of services and programs (Risk Management, RESULTS training, recognition awards, Health and Wellness Program, Employee Benefits) that are designed to provide safety, a sense of well-being and satisfaction to the County at large and to its employees.

The Department adheres to the overall mission of making the County an excellent place to work. Formal efforts geared towards measuring and improving employee satisfaction have primarily been directed towards designing employee satisfaction surveys, deploying the surveys, and tallying results. The next challenge will be to identify strategies, mechanisms and other avenues to meet the articulated needs of employees in the areas of well-being and satisfaction. Brown-bag lunches, focus groups, and management forums have been scheduled to begin the process.

B. Strengths

5c.1

DSS has a variety of strengths in terms of the work environment:

-
- Ergonomic resources are available to all staff: equipment purchase, workstation design, workstation analysis. The resources are well deployed especially in the Portland Building;
- There is a departmental safety committee: periodic safety inspections; building safety/emergency drills;
- Accident investigation procedure are in place;
- There are comprehensive emergency procedures and workplace violence processes. Workplace violence prevention policy has been drafted;
- Structural safety improvements have been made to Portland Building;
- Indoor air quality monitoring has resulted in carpet removal and replacement;
- DSS has an accident-free record.

5c.2

DSS has a variety of strengths in terms of the work climate:

- There is a comprehensive employee health promotion/wellness program;
- Benefits packages have been developed with labor/management agreement;
- New benefits board is being established;
- The County provides domestic partner coverage;
- There are generous employee assistance program benefits, childcare referral service, transit passes;
- Diversity and Results committees have been initiated;
- There are flexible work schedules within labor contract limitations, and a catastrophic leave donation option;
- Employees are encouraged to compete for other jobs within the department when opportunities for growth and development exist;
- Employee suggestions to DSS director via email are encouraged;
- Employee evaluation process encourages statement of employee development goals;

- DSS holds annual meeting of entire department;
- Some employees are given time to participate in departmental activities other than their immediate job duties (attend diversity conference, participate in committees, etc.).

5c.3

DSS has a variety of strengths in terms of employee satisfaction:

- An employee satisfaction survey has been completed and follow-up activities initiated;
- 360-degree evaluations available;
- Employee satisfaction within DSS evaluated and being further analyzed by the Director's Office;
- Exit interview with director have been initiated with data used for improvements;
- Exit interview with EAP done randomly; data used for AA/EEO evaluation;
- Data is collected on absenteeism, turnover, grievances, BOLI, complaints, AA/EEO, worker's compensation, mediation, litigation;
- Employee evaluations capture employee satisfaction comments;
- Managers have informal "open door" policies;
- Department supports countywide RESULTS goal of making county an "excellent place to work";
- Mediation services are available from affirmative action;
- Risk Management conducts a customer service survey;
- Diversity and RESULTS committees are active forces for ongoing improvement and innovation;
- Employee satisfaction within DSS has been evaluated and being further analyzed by Director's Office.

C. Opportunities for Improvement

5c.1

DSS has a variety of opportunities for improvement in terms of the work environment:

- Substandard buildings house some of the DSS functions;
- Not all DSS buildings and environments have similar opportunities for environmental improvement;
- The Safety/Reference Library is not known to all employees;
- DSS staff are not trained to handle basic ergonomic issues on their own (concept of ergonomic teams being piloted in another department could be done here).

5c.2

DSS has a variety of opportunities for improvement in terms of the work climate:

- There is not enough time for many employees to participate in departmental activities other than their immediate job duties;
- There are not enough opportunities for employees from different sections to work together on common issues.

5c.3

DSS has a variety of opportunities for improvement in terms of employee satisfaction:

- Data is not used systematically and effectively to pinpoint issues;
- Department could provide more timely feedback and closure on satisfaction and appraisal issues;
- Employees do not typically provide feedback to higher levels of management;
- Some employees may not readily volunteer feedback;
- There are no formalized communication mechanisms to dialogue about employee satisfaction.

D. Self-Assessment Points

30 X 45% = 13.5 rating points

6A: Management of Product and Service Processes

A. Description

The Department of Support Services provides a wide variety of services and processes. Given the diversity of services, the approach to process design and implementation varies by division and by process within the division.

B. Strengths

6a.1

Methods have been developed to gather customer input so that DSS can understand changing customer and market requirements and technology. These include surveys, focus groups, direct customer input and participation on process improvement teams. Here are examples of strategies we deploy to gather input which is incorporated into new products.

- Affirmative Action works for both the County and the City of Portland. It surveys both entities and uses the knowledge gained from one to assist in designing programs for both governmental units.
- The Budget Office revises the budget process annually. The approach includes meeting with the Chair's Office (the customer) and with department staff (the partners/suppliers) to ensure that the deliverables will meet the needs of the customer and that the timelines are acceptable to the departments.
- The Employee Services Division has been working with a special advisory group called the Human Resources Forum to redesign existing processes. This team made up of customers and suppliers of the current processes has been evaluating the effectiveness of the current delivery processes and suggesting ways to reengineer the process to improve service delivery.
- Finance and ISD have customer teams that work with the Division to evaluate current service levels and suggest areas for improvement.
- Employee Benefits worked with a stakeholders committee to gather employee feedback on the benefits program through focus groups and written comments. The results were published in the Health & Benefits newsletter.
- Training and Organizational Development routinely works with Diversity, RESULTS and training coordinators, with Information Technology Council, and with Countywide Cultural Diversity Committee to present data and plans for service improvements, obtain ideas and feedback and evaluate progress and effectiveness. These groups help set priorities, design programs, and evaluate results.

6a.2

Most divisions do annual or semi-annual benchmarks, some informal, of their products and services or receive data from outside auditors that is used to identify potential areas for improvement. Finance, Information Services, and Affirmative Action conduct annual surveys to determine how well current service levels are meeting customer expectations.

Some processes or services have requirements that are defined in law or statute and have to be modified to meet changing legal requirements. Finance frequently modifies current processes to maintain compliance with changing laws.

Process Improvement Teams (PITs) are used by many divisions to improve process and service delivery. Successful PITs have been conducted in several divisions such as Finance, ISD, Employee Services, and Risk Management. In this way DSS can make sure its products are well designed for customer satisfaction.

Processes in some areas are documented and circulated to customers. This allows customers to interact with and identify problem areas in many of the divisions' processes. Processes in Finance and Employee Services are documented in the Administrative Procedures. The Purchasing section defines many of its processes in the Public Contracts Review Board Rules. Labor Relations chairs the Employee Relations Committee where management and labor representatives work collaboratively to identify areas of agreement as well as disagreement. Risk Management provides comprehensive instructions on most of their processes. Most of these documented procedures are reviewed periodically and are changed as needed.

Benchmarks exist in many areas and Key Results allow many areas to track process improvement results over time. Key Results have been identified for many Divisions within DSS. These are tracked and reported upon annually.

C. Opportunities for Improvement

There are also some ways DSS can improve in this subcategory:

6a.1

- Although many individuals in the Department have been trained in the use of Total Quality Management tools and techniques, there seems to be a shortage of time to put the knowledge into practice.
- Mechanisms (flexibility of rules or processes) may not be in place to systematically use customer input to make changes. DSS programs and divisions respond to customer complaints, or make reactionary changes to processes. However, most do not collect data systematically to identify recurring problems and select best possible solutions.

6a.2

- ISD routinely benchmarks its data processing and telecommunications services against external providers of similar services. Other divisions can do the same to demonstrate its competitiveness and find areas for improvement.
- There is no method for systematic analysis of new and changing technology as a means of identifying potential improvement opportunities.
- The Department maintains a registry of all process improvement projects to share information about current projects and to allow divisions to "borrow" from successes. The list is circulated to all divisions through the Department RESULTS Team. This information can be shared more widely and used more extensively.

D. Self-Assessment Points

Score: $60 \times 38\% = 22.8$ rating points

6B: Management of Support Processes

A. Description

In many areas, the support functions to the service delivery processes in the Department of Support Services are housed in other areas of DSS. For instance, the Finance Division identifies Employee Services, the Information Services Division, and Budget as support functions. They also receive support from agencies outside of DSS, e.g. Facilities and County Counsel. And, an additional complexity is that, most DSS divisions provide their own support services. For instance:

- In many areas, we serve the same customer base. This allows us to work together to design new/enhanced products and services. Finance and Employee Services have worked with ISD on a number of occasions to design improved or enhanced services to other County departments. It also allows us to share information about changing customer requirements.
- Being part of the same department allows us to plan strategically, prioritize projects and assign resources in a coordinated fashion.
- Having a single department manager, we have the ability to identify problem areas and develop solutions at the department level.
- For support functions that are outside DSS, we have developed partnering relationships that allow us to communicate customer requirements and develop cooperative solutions. The Telecommunications Section works closely with Facilities to make sure that all of the issues surrounding a redesign of a building or a move are handled in ways that meet customer expectations. Risk Management also works with Facilities and with County Counsel to improve processes and to assess performance.

B. Strengths

6b.1

To determine key requirements for support processes outside the department, we have adopted a partnering relationship approach that allows us to work cooperatively to manage service levels and to monitor and improve process effectiveness. Finance, Employee Services, Risk Management, and ISD routinely meet with external business partners to identify service level requirements.

6b.2

Most divisions have adopted the Process Improvement Team (PIT) process for evaluating and improving business processes. The PIT process has been used by nearly all divisions in DSS.

6b.3

Since divisions share overlapping customer bases, identification of key requirements and necessary resources can be done on a Department level. This allows us to coordinate and do some prioritization about which areas need to be addressed. Finance has worked with ISD and Employee Services to define requirements and identify ways of improving service delivery.

6b.4

Key Results or service metrics have been developed for many services. These metrics are communicated to partners and suppliers and are used to maintain process improvements. For example, ISD meets on a regular basis to review service levels and resolve service delivery problems with key support vendors and business partners including US West, GTE, IBM, Microsoft, ComSys, etc.

6b.5

In some areas, these performance metrics are included in service contracts. ISD and Benefits have included customer performance metrics in several of its contracts with key support providers.

C. Opportunities for Improvement

6b.1

We can further improve our deployment of total quality management tools. This can improve the way we set requirements for support processes.

6b.2

We can improve our methods for listening to customer input.

6b.3

We can improve our understanding and use of Key Result Measures and other measures of support processes.

6b.4

In terms of maintaining process performance we do not have defined performance indices in all divisions. Many of the performance indicators that do exist do not include a mechanism to provide feedback to key support functions. This makes it difficult for support services to participate in process improvement efforts.

6b.5

We have no effective approach for evaluating and improving our processes as they relate to services we provide to our own divisions.

Coordination among divisions is still intermittent and inconsistent. Most programs and services are still developed and implemented in isolation, so there are many overlapping services.

D. Self-Assessment Points

20 X 38% = 7.6 rating points

6C: Management of Supplier and Partnering Processes

A. Description

For many of the services in Support Services, the customer is a partner in managing the needs and processes. For instance:

- Payroll and County timekeepers must coordinate their timing and activities so that accurate paychecks can be produced.
- Computer systems modifications and enhancements are initiated by the customer, who is also the recipient of the service.
- The Annual Budget's ultimate customer is the Board. The Board must approve the Budget. The budget is produced as a partnership with the various departments that use it and the budget process for articulating their programs, identifying resource needs and sources, and also as a tracking tool once approved.

In areas where the Department of Support Services relies on outside vendors a number of techniques are used:

- ISD's Communications Section, Benefits, and Training/OD work with vendors to identify requirements and standards of performance and then tracks actual performance against the identified standard.
- Purchasing works with departments to make sure that standards of performance are included in requisitions and requests for proposals.
- In many areas, regular meetings are held to evaluate current service against performance indices and develop strategies for improving performance.
- Training events such as workshops use evaluations to identify strengths and opportunities for improvements.

B. Strengths

6c.1

DSS is an internal support organization. Many of our suppliers are regulatory agencies, vendors, and financial institutions. We provide processes and training to help our customers (other County agencies) to get the most effective services and products without risk to the County.

6c.2

External suppliers are identified through competitive bid processes. Divisions are able to identify quality/performance criteria that are included in the contract. This process is fully deployed to all agencies.

6c.3

We have a feedback loop that consists of regular meetings with suppliers to review current performance levels and to identify areas for improvement. Risk Management, Benefits, Training & Organizational Development, and ISD routinely meet with external suppliers to review performance and identify service-level problems.

C. Opportunities for Improvement

6c.1

Communication regarding our performance requirements for internal services feedback is often informal and instantaneous.

6c.2

DSS does not have an approach for communicating its needs so that partners and suppliers can assist it in meeting its goals.

6c.3

DSS evaluates and improves its management of supplier and partnering processes on an ad hoc basis as service level problems come up. There is no set of deployment strategies.

D. Self Assessment Points

20 X 42% = 8.4 rating points

7A: Customer Satisfaction Results Team 3

A. Description of Results

DSS results in customer satisfaction have been good to excellent. We are strong in this area for the following reasons:

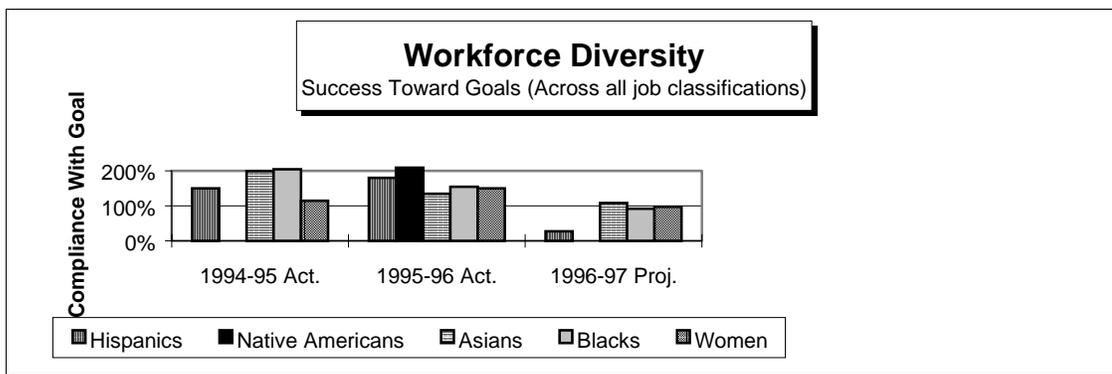
- There is a pattern of good to excellent levels in customer satisfaction results in many or most areas of importance to DSS.
- This pattern of good to excellent levels have been set and sustained for the last few years.

There are, however, also some aspects of our customer satisfaction results that suggest DSS has opportunities for improvements. For example:

- The general improvement and standardization of our customer satisfaction measurement practices.
- The practice of measuring customer satisfaction needs to become formalized department-wide to all appropriate divisions.
- The need for finding and doing relevant comparisons and benchmarks in customer satisfaction measurement practices.

B. Strengths

Generally speaking, we are making many efforts in improving customer satisfaction. Many of these efforts are not being documented using quantifiable measures. However, our Key Results measure data which give evidence of trends in customer satisfaction for the three divisions with the largest budgets. Other divisions may also use customer satisfaction measures when appropriate.



Workforce diversity is a goal for DSS. We are achieving this goal at 100% or more in most identity groups.

Excellent Customer Satisfaction	1994-95 Actual	1995-96 Actual	1996-97 Actual
Accounting: % of satisfied customers	96%	97.3%	100%
Payroll: % of satisfied customers	98%	95.5%	100%
Purchasing: % of satisfied customers	80%	73.3%	75%
Materials Management: % of satisfied customers	85.7%	97.1%	95.1%
Contracts Administration: % of satisfied customers	85%	76%	86.7%
Training: 7 is highest	6.11	6.24	6.40

Finance is one of our key divisions. The chart shows excellent results in terms of our products and our customer satisfaction. All units except Treasury, in this Division, measure customer satisfaction. The quality of Treasury's work is reflected in the General Obligation Bond Rating of Aa1 and MIG1 for our Short-term Note Rating.

C. Opportunities for Improvements

Information Services Division has lost three customers: Juvenile Justice; Assessment and Taxation (software), and Animal Control. Employee Services Division did not provide all the services as timely as desired by departments. This result was turned into an opportunity and a strength because it led to the successful reengineering of Human Resources.

DSS has a variety of opportunities in terms of customer satisfaction:

- Improve low levels of customer satisfaction in some units;
- Maintain current levels of high customer satisfaction in many units;
- Consider expanding customer satisfaction measures to some units;
- When appropriate, seek and document customer satisfaction measures for any department-wide initiatives;
- When appropriate, standardize and improve our measures of customer-satisfaction measurement;
- When appropriate, seek and document comparisons of our results in customer satisfaction with other entities whose measurement and practices are of comparable quality to ours.

D. Self Assessment Points

125 X 50% = 62.50 rating points

7B: Financial and Market Results

A. Description of Results

As the Department of Support Services' primary function is to provide services for internal customers, most of its measures involve service outcomes, not financial results. However, DSS also manages the County's financial assets and administers its health benefits. These two areas do have measurable financial results that are appropriate to report in this section:

- 1) The County's Bond Rating;
- 2) Return on County investment compared to the Treasury Bill Yield and the State Pool Yield;
- 3) The County's total health plan costs per employee in relation to the health plan costs of other governments and other employers. Comparison data for other governments and employers is taken from the annual Foster Higgins Health Care Benefits Survey.

The results of these three indicate that:

- 1) The County consistently maintains an excellent bond rating;
- 2) The County gets a comparable or superior rate of return on its investment;
- 3) The cost of its health benefits is comparable to other governments and other employers.

In addition, the County consistently receives an unqualified opinion on its Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR). We have also received a certificate of excellence from the Government Finance Officers Association on the CAFR and on the County's Budget.

County Bond Ratings

Key Results	1994-95 Actual	1995-96 Actual	1996-97 Actual	1997-98 Actual
Long-term Obligations Bond rating	Aa1	Aa1	Aa1	Aa1
Short-term Note rating	MIG1	MIG1	MIG1	MIG1

County Return on Investment Compared with T-Bill Yield and State Pool Yield

Key Results	1994-95 Actual	1995-96 Actual	1996-97 Actual	1997-98 Actual
Annual return compared to the T-Bill Yield and State Pool Yield				
County	5.74%	5.79%	5.51%	5.60%
90 Day T-Bill	5.37%	5.17%	5.12%	5.15%
State Pool	5.17%	5.75%	5.61%	5.63%

County Benefits Cost Compared with Other Employers

Key Results	1994-95 Actual	1995-96 Actual	1996-97 Actual	1997-98 Actual
Cost as a percent of average government health plan cost	92.5%	82%	89.4%	101.8%
Cost as a percent of average responding employer health plan cost	99.4%	96.3%	99.7%	101.6%

B. Strengths

- DSS has appropriate financial measures and shows good to excellent results.
- These results have been sustained over time.
- The results show that the County is better than or equal to comparable organizations.

C. Opportunities for Improvement

Benefit costs have been increasing relative to comparable organizations.

D. Self-Assessment Points

125 X 75% = 94 rating points

7C: Human Resource Results

A. Description of Results

Generally, DSS employees feel that work processes support organizational action plans.

B. Strengths

Departmental support of Process Improvement Teams (PITS) to empower employees and involve job design cross-functionally results in formation of 14 PITs (as of September 1998) from nine Divisions within DSS whose savings from improvements total approximately \$93,000.

- From DSS survey, employees give a mean score of 2.88 (1=strongly agree; 6= strongly disagree) to Human Resources Development and Management questions as outlined below:
- DSS generally supports individual initiative and self-directed responsibility: Survey: “We don’t need to ‘go through channels’ to improve a process” – 2.33 mean; “Process Improvement can be started by anyone” – 2.25 mean; “We feel safe to express alternative views” – 2.49 mean; “We are empowered to take action for quality” – 2.52 mean).
- DSS employees (total employee results) generally agree that Diversity is valued throughout the department both in terms of employees and customers: Survey: “People of color don’t need to do more” – 2.10 mean; “Minorities are treated justly” – 2.09 mean; “Our division is flexible for diverse customers” – 2.31 mean).
- DSS employees generally feel that the department supports cross-functional communication and cooperation: Survey: “We work cooperatively despite differences” – 2.13 mean; “Work units cooperate” – 2.60 mean).
- DSS supports flexibility, rapid response and continuous learning: Survey: “We rapidly make improvements” – 2.5 mean; “We improve customer service continually” – 2.29 mean).

Other specific improvements in work system performance that can be attributed to work system design and support for process improvement include the following (from DSS Annual Performance Report, 12/12/97.)

Improvements in Risk Management’s loss prevention and cost containment programs and activities:

Key Result - Risk Management	1994-95 Actual	1995-96 Actual	1996-97 Actual
Workers’ Compensation Claims / 100 FTE	9.1	7.7	7.0
Work Days Lost Annually / 100 FTE	40	25	21

Improvements in Affirmative Action Program

Key Results – Affirmative Action	1994-95 Actual	1995-96 Actual	1996-97 Actual
% Affirmative Action Plan Implemented to date	85%	80%	85%

Improvements in DSS’ Employee Services activities. (It should be noted that the functions and therefore the Key Results of Employee Services will change effective with the 1998-99 fiscal year.)

Key Results-Employee Services	1994-95 Actual	1995-96 Actual	1996-97 Actual
% Eligible lists delivered in 4 weeks	48.2%	51.4%	56.5%
% Minority Applicants	24.4%	25.4%	27.2%

Improvements in Information Services Program

Key Results-Information Services	1994-95 Actual	1995-96 Actual	1996-97 Actual
On-line response time	3.4 sec	2.8 sec	2.7 sec
% Scheduled reports on time	98.7%	99.3%	99.5%
% Scheduled operating time computer is available	98.0%	99.0%	99.4%
% Scheduled time WAN available	NA	88%	99%

Improvements in DSS’ Finance Division:

Key Results-Finance	1994-95 Actual	1995-96 Actual	1996-97 Actual
Cost per dollar purchased	\$0.0065	\$0.0051	\$0.0045
% Customers satisfied-Purchasing	NA	73.3%	75%
% Contracts thru Contracts and Purchasing within 5 business days	91%	94%	90%
% Purchases from M/WBE contractors	5.6%	2.8%	4.7%
% Customers satisfied-Contracts	NA	76%	86.7%

Compensation and recognition results:

- 63% of respondents to DSS Employee Survey agreed that they received meaningful recognition
- 75% of DSS employees completed the survey
- From DSS survey, employees feel that “manager recognizes contributions”- 2.37 mean.
- Department is continuing Information Technology Study to analyze (and adjust if necessary) compensation issues

Employee education, training, and development results:

- Training and Organizational Development program activities remain highly used throughout the organization, with high average evaluations: (From DSS Annual Performance Report, 1997).

Key Results – Employee Services	1994-95 Actual	1995-96 Actual	1996-97 Actual
Training Capacity Usage	83%	96%	87%
Student Evaluation of Courses	6.11	6.24	6.40

- All employees rate Training program positively for relevancy of training, process of registration, staff responsiveness.
- Training will continue to be used by DSS employees (from Training Needs Assessment, 1997).
- DSS Employee survey re Training topics show support for training: “Training has improved cultural understanding” – 2.64 mean; “We receive education and training” – 2.53 mean; “Learning opportunities are provided” – 2.00 mean.
- Revised New Employee Orientation receives high evaluations (average rating of 4.5 out of 5 points).
- Training on computers and use of computer-assisted learning continue to be popular.

Employee well-being and satisfaction results:

- Emergency Management Training (as a measure of DSS’s concern for the work environment) has increased in attendance:

Key Results – Emergency Management	1994-95 Actual	1995-96 Actual	1996-97 Actual
Emergency Management Training Attendance % of Capacity	105%	111%	126%

- Health Promotion program continues good participation. Benefits costs have consistently been less than or near the average of those of other governmental agencies:

Key Result	1994-95 Actual	1995-96 Actual	1996-97 Actual	1997-98 Actual
Participation Rate-Health Promotion Programs	45.5%	45.2%	41.0%	43.0%
Cost as a percent of average responding employer health plan cost	99.4%	96.3%	99.7%	101.6%

- DSS employees (total employee response) indicate general sense of safety and acceptance of diversity: Employee Survey: “Gays, lesbians are not harassed” –2.22 mean; “Differently abled are treated fairly” – 2.17 mean; “We feel safe to express alternative views” -2.49 mean.
- DSS employees indicate generally high level of satisfaction with work: Employee Survey: “We are highly efficient,” – 2.50 mean; “We balance quality and efficiency” -2.07 mean; “DSS is a good place to work” 2.06 mean; “I feel good about the work I do” – 1.80 mean.
- DSS employees indicate generally high satisfaction levels regarding motivation and empowerment: Employee Survey: “People see their ideas acted upon” -2.58 mean; “Employees feel listened to” -2.54 mean; “We are empowered to take action for quality” -2.52 mean; Non-management input is actively sought” -2.41 mean; Non-managers make customer decisions” -2.13 mean.

B. Opportunities for Improvement

- Formalize diversity strategy and integrate into work plans;
- Develop career development strategies and other Employee Development programs including Management Development;
- Develop systematic plan to share skills and skill development;
- Link training plan with hiring, performance, evaluation;
- Develop systematic approach to assessing work styles, changes in job requirements, job design;
- Develop workforce development plan;
- Identify improved employee recognition strategies;
- Improve classification/compensation system;
- Identify system to distribute training resources equitably throughout the Department;
- Link education and training to Action Plans or strategic plans;
- Develop systematic cost/benefit analysis for education and training;
- Improve/develop training plans/guidelines/job expectations;
- Develop measures to determine to what extent employees should demonstrate skills after attending training;
- Develop measures to assure training is necessary and sufficient;
- Develop mechanisms to foster trust, open communication in the organization;
- Identify strategies to help more employees attend training, other learning opportunities;
- Improve employee feedback mechanisms so higher levels can be accessed, those who do not readily give feedback are included;
- Use data more systematically to pinpoint issues;
- Provide more timely feedback and closure on satisfaction issues;
- Elicit employee feedback on appraisal system.

D. Self-Assessment Points

50 X 50% = 25 rating points

7D: Supplier and Partner Results

A. Description

Partners to the Department of Support Services include other County departments who provide the inputs that we use to process payroll, maintain the County's general ledger, collect and disburse payments, etc. Suppliers and partners also include firms that we contract with, or outsource to, in order to provide services to other County agencies or directly to the citizens of the County. In most areas, data on supplier performance is anecdotal or nonexistent

B. Strengths

The Telephone program outsources telephone repair services:

Service	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98
Average time to repair	5.8 hrs	7.3 hrs	6.7 hrs	6.0 hrs

The Benefits program has established performance guarantees with its major suppliers that include penalties for failure to meet standards.

C. Opportunities for Improvement

DSS has few results identified in this subcategory.

We do not know how DSS results compare to those of other entities.

D. Self Assessment Points

$25 \times 30\% = 7.5$ rating points

7E: Organization-specific Results

A. Description

This section describes the quality levels and trends for key products and services provided by the Department of Support Services. Unfortunately, few comparisons with other local governments or private companies are available.

B. Strengths

Key Results indicators are available for many services provided by the Department of Support Services.

Division	Service Area	94-95	95-96	96-97	97-98
Budget	Accuracy of revenue projections	+3.49%	+2.56%	+1.58%	+2.0%
Budget	Accuracy of expenditure projections	-.05%	-1.25%	-3.22%	+2.0%
Finance	Percent of satisfied customers	96%	97.3%	100%	95%
Finance	Number of incidents of non-compliance	0	0	0	0
Payroll	Percent of satisfied customers	98%	95.5%	100%	100%
Purchasing	Cost per dollar purchased	\$0.0065	\$0.0051	\$0.0045	\$0.005
Purchasing	Percent of satisfied customers	80%	73.3%	75%	80%
Materials Management	Percent of satisfied customers	85.7%	97.1%	95.1%	95%
Contracts	Percent of satisfied customers	85%	76%	86.7%	95%
Contracts	Percent of contracts routed within 5 business days	91%	94%	90%	90%
Personnel	Percent of eligible lists delivered within 4 weeks	48.2%	51.4%	56.5%	NA
Benefits	Participation rate in Health Promotion programs	45.5%	45.2%	43%	42%
Risk Management	Frequency of workers' compensation claims per 100 FTE	9.1	7.7	9.0	8.0
Risk Management	Number of work days lost annually per 100 FTE	40	25	20	22
Information Services	Percent of satisfied customers	54%	89%	89%	85%
Computer Operation	Online response time	3.4 sec	2.8 sec	2.75 sec	2.8 sec
Computer Operation	Percent of schedule reports delivered on time	98.7%	99.3%	99.5%	99.5%
Computer Operation	Percent of computer system availability	98.0%	99.0%	99.4%	99.7%
Network Services	Percent of network availability	NA	88%	99%	95%
Telephone Services	Average time to repair	5.8 hrs	7.3 hrs	6.7 hrs	8.0 hrs

Other divisional benchmarks are as follows:

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- The Benefits program has helped make the Employee Consortium on Improving Health Benefits a success.
- Labor Relations compares County salaries and benefits to area-wide norms and successfully has positioned our wages generally within 10% of the median
- Finance submits its annual report (CAFR) to the Government Finance Officers Association for consideration for a Certificate of Achievement of Excellence in Financial Reporting. It has been awarded the Certificate for thirteen consecutive years.
- Finance also has an external audit conducted each year. There have not been any exceptions taken to the books and records.
- The Treasury program measures its earnings against the State Pool and 90 day T-Bills and has performed comparably

C. Opportunities for Improvement

For some divisions, there is only anecdotal data that relate these Key Results to measures of quality in other local governments or private agencies.

D. Self Assessment Points

125 X 60% = 62.5 rating points