

## Overview Presentation

### Purposes of our presentation

Describe our community, its strengths and challenges, and how these affect our Head Start families

Describe our agency, our Head Start program, its organizational structure and in general how we provide services.

Various members of our Head Start team will participate in the presentation

### Washington County

- 2<sup>nd</sup> largest county in Oregon-population of about 420,000
- Characterized by rapid growth (highest growth in absolute numbers of any county in Oregon) -by 2020 expected to surpass Mult. Co.(City of Portland) in population and be the most ethnically diverse county in the state
- Large Hispanic population- 11% according to the PSU Center for population studies-most believe there is an extreme under count- rapidly growing Asian population, particularly in Beaverton
- County covers 727 square miles, bordered on the east by city of Portland and the Willamette River, and extends to crest of the Coast range on the west. The Tualatin Valley which runs east-west following the Tualatin river is the principal natural feature in the county.
- 90% of the population lives in the eastern part of the county within the Portland Metro Area Urban Growth Boundary.
- The county includes 13 cities, Beaverton with a population of over 70,000 and Hillsboro with a population of 65,000 are the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> largest cities in Oregon.
- The county has 7 school districts.
- Wash. County is know as Oregon's Silicon forest due to the location of many high tech firms. Intel is the county's largest employer (11,000 employees). Other high tech firms include Tektronix, Sequent, Epson, Mentor Graphics, Nike corporate headquarters.  
In addition to manufacturing, agriculture and services are the largest fields of employment.
- Despite the high rate of job creation in high tech, most jobs require a level of education and training beyond that which most low income workers have. In addition, about 50% of the jobs created over the last decade have been low paying positions in the retail and services sectors.
- The median income in Wash. County is the highest of any area in the state-\$52,400 for a family of four. In our HStart program 63% of families earned less than \$9,000/yr. Our families are at roughly 20% of the area's median income.
- Housing costs are the highest of any area in the state. Average rents are \$635/mo, rents for older decent quality 2 bedroom units are \$585/mo. From 1988-97 rents increased 8-10% annually. Over the last 2 years rent increases have increased 4-5%/yr.
- The most disturbing fact about the local housing market is the low vacancy rates in affordable units (less than \$450-500/mo.). These rates are in the 1-2% range.
- The waiting list for Section 8 certificates or vouchers is 2-4 years.

Our homeless shelters serve about one out of eight families that request assistance. Most Hstart families pay in excess of 50% of their incomes for housing.

- County is resource poor compared to Multnomah County . There is a minimal allocation of local public funds to serve low income residents, compared to Portland/Multnomah County;  
county is large and transportation is a major issue for low income families accessing services that do exist;  
self-image of county is of an affluent community that doesn't have a low income problem (defined invariably as farmworkers);  
low income community widely dispersed and public doesn't have the visual image of poverty as one has in Portland.

### **Community Action Organization**

- Non-profit 501(C)(3) formed in 1965 under Economic Opportunity Act of 1965- War on Poverty program. Original Head Start grantee for the county beginning in 1971.
- CAO's overall mission is "to work in partnership with the community to assist low income persons to achieve self-determination. Copies of Strategic Plan, Goals and Objectives and Annual Workplans are included in your notebooks. Most recent Strategic Plan based on Tim Nolan's Applied Strategic Planning process in 96-97.
- CAO is the largest non-profit in the county involved with issues of the low income community.
- Governed by a 21 member board of directors, 1/3 representing the low income sector, 1/3 from local govt, and 1/3 from the private sector. Board members include Policy Council Chair, 2 parents of past Head Start children, local child care provider, and manager of the local low income medical/dental clinic.
- CAO has a staff of 175, annual budget of \$7.5 million, 26 program sites throughout the county. Staff is led by Jerralynn Ness our Executive Director. My position is the Deputy Director and I'm responsible for the programs and services to the public. Job includes serving as the Head Start Director.
- 3 Program Areas
  - Early Childhood Ed-** Head Start and our Even Start collaboration with PCC
  - Child and Family Support-** Metro CCRR, USDA Child Care Nutrition program, before and after school program for school age kids in FG and Banks, child care provider trainings, and a prenatal program for low income high risk women
  - Community Resources-**programs focusing on housing and emergency services including shelter, transitional housing, rent assistance, energy assistance, weatherization, fair housing, tenant education, food boxes, case management, and county wide information and referral. RITE center.
- Enormous growth over the last three years- about 50% growth in the agency budget, as a result of mergers with other community based non-profits-principally in the areas of early childhood ed, child and family support. Over 2/3s of the agency's budget is devoted to these programs.

### **Head Start Program**

- About 85 staff, budget of about \$3 million, principally from federal and state Head Start programs. After expansion will be split 60/40 between federal and state funds.

- Started the year serving 324 families, will end the year serving 460 plus about 20 additional children through in and Title 1 partnerships.
- Our service area is defined by an agreement with our sister Head Start program, Oregon Child Development Coalition (aka Migrant Head Start) who serves children in the Forest Grove and Banks School Districts. CAO Head Start serves all other areas of the county.
- Strategic Goals and Objectives are in your notebook under Goal 1 and focus on increasing the quantity and quality of Head Start services. Shorter-term program goals are located in our annual grant applications and this year include: expansion, increasing our school partnerships, implementing HSFIS, developing a Friends of H Start organization.
- Marilyn and others will describe in greater detail our program but I want to mention 4 key characteristics or initiatives that define CAO Head Start.

**Growth-** our program is growing by 42% this year, adding a total of 136 children, 120 children through state expansion, and adding 16 children in extended day community based child care settings through federal expansion.

Growth prompted by the fact that in absolute numbers Wash Co. is the county with the 4<sup>th</sup> highest number of unserved children in the state- 1200 (ODE, 1998)

-Over the past several years a 50 family Even Start program has been added in partnership with PCC, OCDC and 2 school districts.

Added for the first time full-time Ed coordinator and full-time SS/PI coordinator

**Change- New director and Program Manager**

Reorganization of the program, both management and operations, moved from a component based design to a matrix design which supports site and area based work teams- based on empowering area and center staffs and decentralize the program to be more responsive to local communities and local partners.

Restructuring the roles of teachers and family advocates

-Experimented with different program design models.

-Major improvements in facilities and equipment- most classrooms in public schools- only a handful of centers remain that were in use during our last review. In the process of replacing aging fleet of buses. Introduced technology into our classrooms. Implementing our first Head Start database-HSFIS.

-H Start much more integrated into CAO as opposed to more of a free standing program under the CAO umbrella; families have greater access to agency resources; collaboration between program areas occurs regularly; CAO Board knowledgeable, involved, and has great pride in H Start program.

-CAO has undertaken significant organization- wide capacity improvements to support H Start and other agency programs. New finance staff, new accounting system, creation of an HR position, creation of a Network Administrator position, creation of Deputy Director position.

**Advocacy-**Elaboration of a 2 pronged family services philosophy- family empowerment, community building. Resource rich H Start centers as focus of community life for low income families.

- Active involvement in state head start and child care networks.
- Involvement with legislative efforts by Policy council
- Understanding that there is a political theme to all of our work- poverty is by and large a function of economics, educational opportunities, and political power as opposed to a failing on the part of an individual family.

**Partnering-** Collaborations with School districts- Beaverton, Tigard-Tualatin, Hillsboro, Gaston. 22 of 28 classes in public schools. Responds to desires of our parents, provides added value for school districts due to our strong relationships with families, brings low income families into the schools; and responds directly to the state's "ready to learn" benchmark. Lowered cost and increased quality of facilities.

## **Head Start Families**

### **Demographics**

- 63% earn less than 9000/yr; compared to Northwest Jobs Gap Study which indicates that living wage for single adult and 2 children is \$16.36/hr or \$34,000/yr
- Over 50% are Hispanic/Latino in origin- west county from agricultural/campesino backgrounds in Oaxaca, Michoacan, east county from service and retail backgrounds in Acapulco, Mazatlan.
- Many more 2 parent families and foster children this year
- 55 of children have a diagnosed disability
- Education Levels – 31% no High School diploma or GED
- Employment – over 80% working or in job training (PIR 97-98)
- High level of satisfaction expressed about program services- Parent Survey, Self-Assessment

### **Strengths**

- Resourcefulness and resiliency
- Strong family structure in Hispanic families-immigrant drive to work and succeed; create better life for children; extensive and effective informal network in Hispanic community.
- High interest in literacy

### **Challenges**

- Affordable Housing
- Affordable Childcare- average rates of \$400-600/mo for preschoolers well beyond means of H Start families and well beyond state reimbursement rates
- Family Wage Jobs with benefits- Education, Training, English Language skills
- Transportation to and from employment
- Medical and dental access- many families do not qualify for Oregon Health Plan

Challenges for program: high need for bi-lingual staff; attracting qualified staff in a very tight and competitive job market; managing rapid change and expansion of the program; nurturing partnerships.