

CAO 1997 Strategic Planning

MAJOR TRENDS

I. External

Welfare Reform:

- Reduction in Food Stamp benefits increases demands on community for supplemental food resources
- Work requirements will increase need for child care
- SSI eligibility changes will reduce incomes to families of disabled children
- Elimination of benefits to legal immigrants will likely increase demands for CAO services and services of other non-profit providers

Measure 47 puts at risk about \$50,000 of financial support CAO currently receives annually from cities and the county.

Competition for private funding from individuals, corporations, and foundations is increasing; donors are looking for places that their money can have the greatest impact.

There will be a shake-out in the non-profit sector with certain agencies going out of business and mergers of agencies becoming more prevalent.

County will continue to experience rapid growth, with the poverty population increasing at the same or greater rate.

Growth of the minority population will continue to outpace the growth of the population as a whole.

Poverty rate of minority populations will continue to be markedly higher than the poverty rate for the non minority population.

Rate of job creation in the county and the metro area will be high. Jobs created will predominantly pay low end wages.

Housing prices will continue to increase and availability of affordable rental units will be limited. Low income families will continue to pay a high percentage of their incomes for housing.

The number of rental subsidies through such programs as the Section 8 program will decline.

Federal funding for most low income programs, with the probable exception of CSBG and Head Start, will continue to decline

Collaboration and partnerships will continue to be a major theme in addressing community needs.

The movement to outcome-based measures of performance will continue to be a focus of funders, increasing costs as well as accountability.

II. Internal

CAO has little or no excess capacity to adequately respond to changing needs and conditions.

Reduced public funding has been accompanied by increased monitoring and scrutiny. Independent auditors are now being held to much stricter standards of accountability.

The need for personnel management support has grown and the field has become more specialized, requiring significant training in order to keep up with changes and a large body of knowledge.

Facilities are becoming significantly more expensive to lease or rent. With both relatively low inflation and low interest rates, owners are pricing real property at a premium. Occupancy expenses are scrutinized by major funders. With mortgage rates stabilized below 10%, ownership may become a more attractive alternative to long-term tenancy.

School bus transportation services, in particular, are being reduced for even the youngest children. Contracted services are replacing in-house transportation programs.

The trend is away from special event-type fundraising and working instead on building up individual donors and major gifts which require significant Board and volunteer involvement.

CAO PROGRAMS: What's working, what's not

Head Start

- Very high quality program
- Many experienced and highly skilled staff members
- Undergoing considerable change due to new director, new federal performance standards, program design changes, new center locations, possible state Head Start expansion, and funders expectations on linking with child care programs.
- Program does not cover its full costs; need to reduce occupancy expense and evaluate current method for allocating indirect admin charges.

Energy Assistance/Home Weatherization

- High quality well managed programs
- Energy Assistance is seasonal (6 mo./yr.); largest program of direct cash assistance to clients. Program does not cover its administrative and staffing costs.
- Weatherization program earns program income through utility company rebate programs.
- Federal funding likely to marginally decrease over next several years.

Homeless Programs

- Shelter - well managed with experienced and committed staff. Shelter funding is from a wide variety of sources, some of which are declining and relies on CAO discretionary funds. Shelter facility receives very high use and thus requires considerable maintenance.
- Contracted Homeless and Homeless Prevention Services
With the exception of Oregon Legal Services, all other providers are small and in relatively weak financial positions.
- Long Term Case Management/Transitional Housing
Good outcomes related to housing stability, case management approach needs to be modified to focus more on education and employment outcomes. Entering last year of primary funding under HUD SAFAH grant. Transitional housing selection, placement, project oversight does not cover its costs, however, no other agency in county has capacity/willingness to perform activities.
- Rent Assistance - Good outcomes related to homeless prevention. Underfunded. Two year CDBG grant has been obtained along with funds from cans and bottles, which will help.
- Tenant Education - Highly successful curriculum/classes on tenant rights/responsibilities, family budgeting, etc. Entering last year of funding under HUD SAFAH grant. "Homeless Cans and Bottles" fund could provide support; dollar amount uncertain.
- Information & Referral - High volume but low quality service. Technology and data bases in need of major update. Coordination with other community service providers needs strengthening. Funding currently inadequate to provide high quality service. Obtained two year funding from CDBG to improve system. Top priority for Washington County Healthy Communities.
- Other Basic Needs - Largest activity is providing intake and application services and scheduling appointments for local food pantries (mostly churches). Other activities include miscellaneous crisis information in areas other than housing and utilities. Reasonable level of service. Funding less than adequate and subject to reductions since it is dependent on local cities and county.
- Advocacy/Community Education - Generally high quality service, particularly in areas of Fair Housing and housing policy, despite limited funding. Foundation funding for mortgage foreclosure prevention will end after FY 97-98 due to limited resources organizing and involving low income residents in public policy issues is inadequate.

- Resource Development - All funds must be raised each year and requires Board involvement. Most funds raised are unrestricted. Staff restructuring plan for next year to better utilize skills of volunteers and staff. Have a good database but need more training for staff in-house support. Funds raised go to current year operations.
- Support Services - Have been unable to obtain adequate computer/MIS support. Systems and technological knowledge needs upgrading. Overall management of information very weak.
- Finance - Financial data is being produced at minimal expense to the agency. Various financial and finance related activities are not integrated. Budget preparation is independent of the accounting system and not fully automated. Similarly, fundraising is recorded in a separate database which is not linked to the accounting system. A master accounting system which can provide data for various related purposes would be the ideal.
- Personnel - Personnel policies have been significantly re-written and staff have received substantial training. CAO has developed greater knowledge but support is limited and systems are weak. Personnel not adequately linked to Finance (payroll and benefits).

The installation and maintenance of a comprehensive employee data base would significantly improve the agency's personnel management function.

- Facilities and Transportation - The employment of a Transportation and Facilities Manager has consolidated these components and improved efficiency and problem solving.

Increased preventative maintenance and funded depreciation would significantly preserve the value of real property and vehicles.

- Planning - Major planning requirements of CAO, both internally and as a lead in the community. Good skills in program planning but little capacity in the absence of a planning position.

CHANGE IN CUSTOMER BASE

Resource Development - The customer base, or donor, will continue to be primarily residents or businesses located in Washington County, but with an increasing need to reach out to national foundations.

Programs

Elderly population increasing

Growing minority population in County

- Sherwood Head Start 50% minority, Cedar Mill Head Start 33% minority

Immigrant families increasingly reluctant to seek help - fearful of INS

- SAFAH received no applications from immigrants in past four months, county WIC program experiencing similar problem.

Farmworker population continues to be the group with the lowest incomes.

- continue to settle out
- high need for emergency services
- directly impacted by immigration and welfare changes
- fewer places to turn for help

High level of anxiety due to welfare changes

- public assistance recipients transitioning to world of work
- increasing need for child care
- more low income people working but incomes not sufficient to meet basic needs and move families out of "at risk" conditions

Increased requests for homeless assistance

- more families with children
- more single father with children
- second generation homeless families
- more homeless families have jobs

Housing affordability is a persistent issue

- fewer affordable rentals
- tighter screening criteria used by owners
- fewer clients are home owners
- emergence of "ghetto-like" areas in older parts of Hillsboro, Beaverton

Families

- alcohol/drug, domestic violence issues more frequent
- greater number of borderline mental health/low functioning individuals
- more hyperactive children in Head Start
- more disabled children in Head Start
- emergence of gang activity
- depth of family needs increasing