

# Interim Briefing 1: County Comparisons

Pierce County Human Services Department Study

May 3, 2019

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## INTRODUCTION

### Project Overview

Pierce County issued a Request for Proposal (RFP) to select a vendor to evaluate its Human Service Department's current business processes and funding streams, make recommendations for ways to improve service delivery with emphasis on identifying financial savings while increasing service efficiencies, and to develop a plan to implement these recommendations. To accomplish this, the county engaged Public Consulting Group, Inc (PCG) to assess the delivery of its current human services and examine how similar jurisdictions manage their human services functions, with a focus on better aligning services and streamlining delivery where possible.

### Document Overview

To assist Pierce County with the Human Services Department Study, PCG reviewed the way other jurisdictions organize, fund, and assess their human services department. This deliverable, which is a consolidation of that review, draws on research and interviews with representatives from selected counties. The document will summarize the findings of the research, including other county practices, and will focus on the top six opportunities. The subsequent sections summarize our findings from similar jurisdictions and program areas, including the following elements:

- Summary of selected counties
- Findings and major trends of selected counties
- Opportunities which may inform the recommendations report that PCG will submit to the County at the conclusion of the project.

## METHODOLOGY

PCG selected interviewees by utilizing connections developed through current and former clients, from the Pierce County leadership team, discussions with national partners such as the American Public Human Services Association (APHSA), and through research. We reviewed data and information for dozens of counties before finalizing the list of 15 that we prioritized contacting. These counties were chosen due to their similarities to Pierce County's general demographics and services offered, as well as for their differences in managing and delivering human services. The final list was based on variety of factors including, but not limited to: population size, geographic size, human services budget, programs offered, performance or outcome-based budgeting practices, and philosophical approach to delivering services. Although a strict "apples to apples" comparison *is not possible* because of the differences inherent in each county, including geography, population, and political atmosphere, we feel that the counties included in this briefing can provide insight into how common challenges are addressed across the state and country.

Working from the final list of 15, PCG identified the appropriate contact for each county. Appropriate interviewees were at the Director or Deputy Director level, or the equivalent title in that county, to ensure they have broad enough knowledge about all the human services programs and their administration. The interviews covered topics such as structure, funding, staffing, centralized and outsourced services, and performance management.

Seven of the fifteen counties we contacted responded and agreed to a phone interview and are included, herein: King County, Clark County, Snohomish County, Spokane County, Washington County, San Mateo County, and Mesa County. Additional information was added for an eighth county based on prior discussions. Two additional counties responded, but no relevant information was able to be gleaned from them, and five counties did not respond.

*See Appendix A for a matrix of the demographic/programmatic criteria we used to select counties and Appendix B for the guiding interview questions.*

## County Comparison Matrix and Commonalities

The table below summarizes some of the key attributes and features of each county’s human services’ system. Through individual interviews and provided materials, the table outlines how the sample counties compare to one another and specifically, to Pierce County. We have bolded items that are items of note. More information about the policies and practices utilized by the counties below can be found in the subsequent pages. More information about each category is included in Appendix C.

	Pierce	King	Clark	Snohomish	Spokane	San Mateo	Mesa	Washington	Buncombe
<b>Total HS Staff</b>	218.34	325	47	240	66.6	775	270	130	589
<b>HS Staff: Co Residents</b>	1:3,995	1:6,739	<b>1:10,099</b>	1:3,340	1:3,258	1:995	1:556	1:4,530	1:437
<b>Additional Programs</b>	WSU Extension	Best Starts Kids	Indigent Defense	—	—	<b>Public Assistance</b>	<b>Public Assistance</b>	—	<b>Public Assistance</b>
<b>% Indirect vs. Direct</b>	60%/40%*	80%/20%*	65%/35%	65%/35%	<b>94%/6%</b>	40%/60%*	20%/80%*	90%/10%*	—
<b>% of Budget that is taxes/fees and General Fund</b>	4.1% GF; 14.6% taxes and fees	<1% GF; 11-12% special purpose rev.	18% GF; 26% Tax/Fees	30-35%	<b>0% GF</b> ; 17% local	16%GF; 7% taxes; 2% other revenue	15-17%; <5% taxes	5% GF; 4% taxes	<b>50%</b>
<b>Administrative costs</b>	10%	—	—	—	5-10%	17%	“Very low”	10%	—
<b>Physical Locations</b>	2	5**	—	1	1	<b>8+</b>	3	2	1
<b>Support Services</b>	—	Plan and Coord	—	Plan & Eval	—	Staff Dev	—	—	Plan/Eval and Perf Mgmt
<b>Philosophy</b>	Being a key part of the safety net	Systems-builder	Systems-builder and integrator	Partnerships and Community-building	Community-builders	Problem-solvers	Data driven and empowering staff	Connecting clients to the appropriate services	Focus on core services

\* Best approximation given the materials provided and discussions held

— unavailable or unable to be compared

\*\* Employees are located at 5 separate sites; however, clients are only seen at 2 locations.

### Some commonalities across the counties included:



Significant county/general funding (in at least half of counties).



A shared philosophy and approach to addressing the needs in the community that centers on systems-building and not on direct services.



A thoughtfulness to use positions and staffing differently.



A focused effort on evaluating each and every program, contract, and service.



A commitment to training, engaging and empowering staff and the community to be active participants in a clearly articulated vision for service provision.

## KING COUNTY, WA



### Summary

King County, with a population of over 2 million, is the most populous county in Washington, and includes the City of Seattle. The Department of Community and Human Services (DCHS) has an annual budget of over \$2 billion and includes 218 full-time equivalents (FTEs). In addition to services for behavioral health, developmental disabilities, substance abuse, and older adults, DCHS also funds services for veterans and has a significant focus on housing and homelessness. There are several local initiatives that have their own dedicated stream of funding, including *Best Starts for Kids*, which is funded by a property tax levy that provides over \$65 million per year. Another levy provides \$50-60 million annually to support services for veterans and seniors. In addition, the county collects the 0.1% sales tax to support mental health and drug dependency services. In total, about 13% of total funds for DCHS come from the county, which includes both these levies and a very small amount of general funds. A significant portion of services in the Department are contracted out, as indicated by the relatively low number of FTEs compared to the total budget amount.

The county has a number of documents that guide the provision of human services. Framework policies developed in 2007 set priorities for the use of discretionary funds and clarify the county's role in human services. The Equity and Social Justice Strategic Plan guides investment in services and the community organizations that provide them, as well as investments in county employees and leadership to ensure that they have the skills needed to deliver and manage oversight of services according to these plans. Due to the large amount of accessible funding, King County is able to provide a wider array of services than most other counties, and to leverage funds to bring new community partners and services to the table.

### Key Findings

**Reducing Administrative Costs:** As with all other counties we spoke with in Washington, King uses various administrative sources to fund overhead and administrative costs. The Department's approach to reducing administrative costs is to always be asking, "should we do it or should a contractor do it?" To that end, their preference is to contract a vast majority of services, as it is often less expensive and aligns with what they see as the primary role of the DCHS which is to build community/systems capacity. Direct services at DCHS are limited to veterans' programs, adult and youth employment programs and supports, and designated crisis responders for behavioral health.

**Systems-BUILDER:** DCHS leadership has, over the years, reflected on what the right role is for the Department to play in tandem with community providers. The Department considers setting the system conditions for all the contractors to work together for the betterment of the population they're serving, as part of the Department's job. They see themselves as system architects and not compliance monitors, meaning their value doesn't solely take the form of check writer but of convener. Echoing statements from other counties, including Clark, they don't see counties as being able to be both direct service providers as well as systems-builders, if for no other reason than that they see the problems are too big for government, alone, to solve. DCHS leadership believes that the entire system can succeed only if they work together and that the Department's job is to:

***"You have to ask yourself, 'Where is stopping or changing more helpful than doing something new?'" – Leo Flor, King County Department of Community and Human Services Director***

- Bring a humility to the table that creates buy-in from everyone else.
- Use the funding they have, however limited, as an influencer.

- Garner respect from the community by having and providing a vision. For example, senior centers are incentivized through thoughtfully designed contracts to create a network of senior care-giving services.

In contrast to other counties, while DCHS has not, specifically, created new agencies to support service delivery and reduce the Department’s footprint, they have created governance groups, in line with their role as a systems-builder, to compound influence.

**Results-Based Accountability:** King County DCHS practices Results-Based Accountability (RBA). RBA is a way of thinking and acting that starts with envisioning and articulating the end goal and working backward, step by step, from the ultimate outcome towards the means to achieve that outcome. This process starts with understanding the conditions in the community and what success would look like, in terms of indicators, and determining the population’s baseline. From there, the analysis moves to what should be proposed to shift the needle on the population indicators. One of the key takeaways from DCHS is that when they have an idea for how to change those population-level outcomes, they will engage with the community **and ask them** how to measure what they want to change. It is worth noting that sometimes you get programmatic results but not population-level change. In that case, you need to pick new programs.

✔ Collaborative Partnerships

The Department sees their role as one to convince like organizations to work together, not compete, and they structure contracts that way. **“The traditional notion of competition-based meritocracy doesn’t work.”**

✔ Reviews of Contract Agencies

One strategy DCHS employed was to look at both agencies that have been doing the work forever and agencies that are doing *many different* activities and re-evaluating their abilities and successfulness. DCHS has come to embrace and not fear those agencies who are not fully mature if they identify, within the community programmatic gaps, populations that are underserved, or citizens who aren’t be served well. The act of developing and monitoring contracts is where you turn your philosophy into reality. **Contract monitoring should be more like coaching.**

✔ Results-Based Accountability

Results-based accountability gives the Department the framework to make system-level changes and **have real impacts on outcomes for the community by focusing on population-level outcomes not just programmatic results.**

## CLARK COUNTY, WA



### Summary

Clark County, Washington is the 5th most populous county in Washington, with a population of 479,500. They have 47.5 FTEs that comprise their Department of Community Services (DCS), which has an annual budget of \$36.3 million. The services they provide (directly or indirectly) closely mirror those provided by Pierce County with a few notable exceptions, such as programming specifically directed towards youth, including a youth commission and a youth task force, and indigent defense services. Forty-four percent of DCS funds come from the county via taxes and fees or general funds, including revenue from the 0.1% sales tax that is primarily used to support community-based support services like therapeutic courts, transitional services in the county jail, and youth programs that have a behavioral health focus. County reorganizations in 2012 and 2019 have resulted in changes to the programs administered by the Department, which are detailed further below.

### Key Findings

Of all the counties we reviewed and contacted, Clark has made one of the most concerted efforts to re-think how they deliver services, choosing to contract as many of its services to community providers as possible; thereby reducing, in the last 10 years, their FTE allocation from 108 to 47.5 (including a reduction of management team members from 18 to 6). Their most recent (3/2019) organizational chart can be found in Appendix C.

***“You can’t get your head up if you’re a direct service provider.”***  
– Vanessa Gaston, Clark County Community Services Director

***Streamlining and Reducing Administrative Overhead:*** The Department was/is serious about reducing a high administrative cost that covered layers of management. They took a focused look at where they could cut back, including reducing space costs, minimizing copiers and supply costs, and consolidating management. Most significantly, however, they have been focused and innovative in their approach to using community partners. For example, Clark County DCS has:

- Developed a clear understanding of what they’re good at and adjusted their overall philosophy to be one that isn’t a direct service provider but is one of developing an integrated system. Only 35% of services are provided directly by the Department, including crisis response for behavioral health, the Access to Recovery program, and most youth programs.
- Created non-profits or quasi-governmental agencies (such as the multi-county RSN Southwest Behavioral Health and Area Agency on Aging and Disability of Southwest Washington) that can provide direct service when an (appropriate) community provider couldn’t be found.
- Lowered indirect cost by 63%. Countywide indirect costs peaked in 2012 at \$1,068,044 and in 2018 were \$676,937. It currently constitutes 5.12% of their total expenditures.
- Expanded services with other providers to reduce Department staffing (for example, Crisis Services staffing was reduced from 19 FTEs to 10 in 2018 with no decrease in outcomes for clients). This included contracting the crisis hotline and mobile crisis outreach team.
- Leveraged partnerships with other county agencies and non-profits such that the transfer of Weatherization to Community Development in 2012, which, while this service is still provided by the county, is now better aligned with similar services within the county structure.
- Not had to RIF (reduction in force) but one employee as a result of their changes.

***Improving Outcomes Through Partnerships:*** Clark DCS builds capacity and provides support and leadership to staff to think about the community in innovative evidence based and solution-oriented ways. They see themselves as system-builders whose role it is to engage agencies to work together

toward shared goals. They have chosen to contract most of their services to save county money, but also because they see their non-profit partners as more innovative and adaptive to change while they see themselves as better at funding and leveraging services not necessarily direct service providers. Together the partnerships can build capacity in nonprofits and help funders leverage each other's dollars.

They have taken the approach that efforts like this take many years if done strategically and successfully and require an ongoing review of services, partners, and systems. Just a few of the outcomes they have seen in the last few years have included:

- Increased stable housing by 44.6%, increased employment status and/or enrollment in school or a job training program by 419.7% and decreased the rate of homelessness by 71.7% for participants in Access to Recovery support services.
- For Crisis Services, 63% of the individuals committed for involuntary mental health treatment were able to receive their treatment locally. The county also maintains one of the lowest detention averages for a catchment area of its size – the initial detention rate in 2018 averaged 27 individuals per month.
- Increased the number of developmentally disabled clients employed by 13% in 2018.

**Sharing Data:** The county, acknowledging the need to identify trends across programs, and identify users of multiple services and clients who are shared across agencies/providers, has embarked on an ambitious data warehouse project. They recognized that the variety of different systems (homeless coordinated entry, housing, youth, and other simple or complex data repositories), meant that the information they collected and services they provided were uncoordinated from an analytical perspective. They wanted to be able to look in one place, across these systems for common data points and common customers. Creating a data warehouse would allow them to show these common elements and see reports to identify gaps and see what the emergent needs are for these customers. Also working across systems will allow them to talk about integration — integration of behavioral health, healthcare, disability — how do they integrate and how to fund pilot programs and train providers to think differently.

✔ Philosophy	✔ Partnerships	✔ Data Warehousing
According to the Director, Community Services sees as its role to be a “strategic-thinker and systems-builder.” Their <b>responsibility is to understand what services are needed in the community, who is providing them, and build the competencies and capabilities to support those needs.</b>	The Department has a focused effort on leveraging partnerships and partnership opportunities; they have created several nonprofits and quasi-governmental agencies to fill service gaps.	<b>This data will allow DCS to make informed, data-driven decisions about service and resource allocation.</b> Furthermore, these decisions can be made in the larger context of population, health, and service trends that may affect the vulnerable populations served by the Department.

## SNOHOMISH COUNTY, WA



### Summary

Snohomish County has a population of just over 800,000, making it the 3<sup>rd</sup> most populous county in Washington. The Human Services Department (HSD) has an annual budget of \$120 million and 240 FTEs. The Department provides an array of services that includes behavioral health, mental health, services for early learning and those with developmental disabilities, as well as housing programs and services for veterans and seniors. One third of total funding is from the county, including general fund dollars, 0.1% sales tax for mental health and drug dependency services, and document recording fees, and total administrative costs are around 8% of the overall operating and administrative budget. Thirty-five percent of FTEs are direct service staff, and the biggest in-house services are involuntary treatment, case management under Title XIX for people who wish to remain in their home, LIHEAP and Weatherization, and traditional CAP programs, as well as Early Head Start. The county has worked to develop a culture of “3 Es:” Excellence, Equity/Inclusion, and Economic Development, and actively seeks innovations in the delivery of services in an efficient and effective manner. The Department is also a participant, along with Pierce County, in a Gates Foundation tri-county initiative aimed at ending family homelessness, and has used funds made available by this initiative to create positions for housing navigators.

### Key Findings

**Administrative Cost Review:** In an effort to reduce administrative costs, HSD has employed such strategies as home-basing staff, as applicable, and creating a planning and evaluation unit to review practices and systems to determine what’s working as well as initiating updates and cost-saving measures. The Department has also reviewed where state and federal funders make requests of the HSD that don’t cover costs. As a result, they have prioritized contracting — or re-negotiating those contracts — where they can, knowing those are the ones that take money from other services and/or require county investments to cover costs.

In addition, Snohomish HSD takes a thoughtful philosophy into contracting, choosing to retain services in-house for four specific reasons:

- History
- Analysis of risk
- Alignment with other agencies where the county already provides services
- Desire to provide in-home services

Otherwise, as a general rule HSD likes to partner for a contract where they can. They feel strongly about looking outside of silos and wanting to help agencies build capacity. One of the processes they live by is regularly getting partners/stakeholders (anyone who has a vested interest) in a room and sharing what’s working, what’s not working, and generally communicating and planning through facilitated work sessions.

**No Wrong Door.** The Department is focused on a no wrong door approach at assessment and referral, and has an assessment tool that allows them to determine where a client falls on the spectrum between crisis and stability at a given time. This tool is not used for all clients, such as those in involuntary care, and remains a work in progress to some extent, but it does allow staff to determine how best to serve many clients, no matter where they initially make contact with the Department.

***“Our default position is to partner not just contract or deliver it ourselves because we think we can do it better.”***  
-Mary Jane Brell Vujovic, Human Services Department Director

**Priority-Based Budgeting/Budgeting for Outcomes:** Results-based contracting can be extremely difficult, so the county has taken the more-achievable step of developing a priority-based budgeting system. Priority-based budgeting is a more thoughtful, goal-oriented alternative to incremental budgeting. During this process the county identifies its highest strategic priorities and then ranks services according to how well they align with the priorities. From there, the county allocates resources in accordance with the ranking. This allows the county to invest resources to meet its stated objectives. It helps them to better articulate why the services they offer exist, what price they pay for them, and, consequently, what value they offer citizens.

✔ **Philosophy**

The Department seeks to innovate and is not afraid to try new approaches to delivering and administering services. This includes **redefining why they should keep services in-house and looking to partner with outside providers** as a guideline.

✔ **Budgeting Priorities**

The Priority-Based Budgeting process ensures that programs do not continue to operate simply because “it’s always been done this way.” **Programs must demonstrate value and produce the outcomes that the county is seeking to retain funding priority.** While this requires a significant amount of oversight and work on an annual basis, it allows the county to align service provision more closely to goals.

✔ **Service Review from Administrative Cost Perspective**

The process for allocating central services costs and the struggles around high administrative costs is similar to Pierce. To address this, the Department has identified drivers of administrative cost and actively seeks to offset those costs whenever possible, either through contracting out services or negotiating with funders to reduce the impact of a service request on administrative costs.

## SPOKANE COUNTY, WA



### Summary

Spokane County has a population of almost 508,000, making it the 4<sup>th</sup> most populous county in Washington. The Community Services, Housing, and Community Development (CSHCD) Department was formed when several existing programs were combined, and provides the county with shared resources that lead to reduced costs, greater efficiencies, and standardized processes across programs. CSHCD has an annual budget of \$51 million in FY19, which supports almost 67 FTEs. However, none of these funds come from county general funds. While some programs receive a portion of their funding from property taxes and document recording fees, as well as the 0.1% sales tax for behavioral health services, the use of these funds is fairly strictly proscribed, and does not leave the county with much flexibility. Historically, the expectation in the county has been that social services programs would not require additional funds from the county, and would rely on the grant funding streams available at the federal or state level. Currently, the Department has very low indirect rates for administrative fees, ranging from 3.24% down to 0.31% for different programs. The Department is also in the midst of a shift in the way that behavioral health services are funded and administered in the county, as the county-run Behavioral Health Organization (BHO) has transitioned to a Behavioral Health Administrative Services Organization (BHASO). Along with this shift, is a change in responsibility for some services that the county has traditionally provided, that in some cases are being shifted to the state. CSHCD has worked over the years to build strong working relationships with both funders and community providers, and to take advantage of the expertise and capacity of community providers, at one point contracting services to as many different providers as King County.

### Key Findings

**Performance Measures for Community Providers:** The Department has been working with community providers that provide Developmental Disability services to develop and implement performance measures for more than 20 years. Initially, the Department created the measures on their own, but this has developed into a partnership with providers to come up with specific metrics each year. Providers who are not achieving their agreed-upon measures are placed into a “provisional qualification” status, where they receive additional monitoring, and are not allowed to accept new clients. Generally, only one or two of the eleven providers for whom these measures have been implemented will spend any time under provisional qualification status over the course of a year. These measures, along with close quarterly monitoring for all Developmental Disability service providers, ensure that the Department is purchasing the services that meet the needs of the community.

**Understanding of Department Philosophy:** CSHCD received no county general funds to support its work, nor does it seek any. Traditionally, the county philosophy is that social services programs should pay for themselves, so Department leadership knows that they will have to work within that restriction and provide services that can be funded through a state or federal source, or through one of the other funding mechanisms available. The county has low administrative rates and indirect costs, and is able to keep program costs low by closely monitoring programs, only paying for services that are proven to work, and ensuring that they are focused on the outcomes that providers are being paid to produce. Further, as the Department provides only a few, select direct services, they are able to focus on monitoring and ensuring that contractors are meeting county needs, since bringing services back in house is not an option.

**Time of Transition:** The county has recently shifted from a county-led Behavioral Health Organization (BHO) to a Behavioral Health Administrative Service Organization (BHASO) model. Due to the different funding needs of the BHASO model, the county has been forced to review all programming, and to determine whether any programs formerly funded by the county could be shifted to the state, or to another entity. The elimination of the BHO reduced the Department’s budget by over \$100 million between FY18 and FY19, and resulted in a reduction in staffing of 18 FTEs. The shift to the

BHASO and the associated changes in funding streams has allowed the county to move away from some services that can be provided elsewhere and focus on core services.

**Shared Resources and Efficiency:** Department leadership felt strongly that the ability to share resources across programs and divisions has led to efficiencies and improvements in services. Several years ago, the Community Services and Housing and Community Development programs were combined, and are now able to share some centralized services, such as fiscal, IT, and contracting. This reduces the need for additional staff to handle these tasks for each program, and allows program staff to concentrate on programs and not administrative tasks. This leads to cost savings as well as shared knowledge across programs, since there are central services staff who work with each of the programs that the Department administers.

✔ Strong Community Partnerships

The Department has worked closely with community providers for many years, as well as other community partners who may play a role in helping the Department meet its goals, even if they are not direct contractors. **Because of these strong relationships, providers and partners are quick to step up when a need arises**, due to a change in policy or programming, or an incident that requires a significant response.

✔ Shared Resources

The combination of the Community Services and Housing and Community Development Departments has proven beneficial in that it allows for shared services across all programs. This reduces the administrative burden on program staff and allows for greater focus on clients. Internally, this also provides the Department with a group of staff who have knowledge across all programs, and who can take a holistic view at how services are funded and provided across the Department.

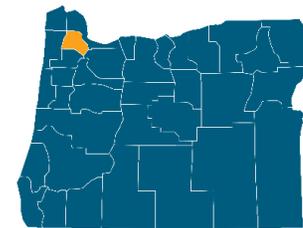
✔ Performance Measures

Performance measures in the Developmental Disability programs that the Department contracts out have been developed jointly over time with providers. These provide clear guidance to both providers and the Department around expectations, as well as consequences for when these expectations are not met. These measures also ensure that providers are focused on the needs of the Department and the clients that they serve.

## WASHINGTON COUNTY, OR

### Summary

Washington County, Oregon is smaller in both geographic size and total population than Pierce County, but has a similar-sized county budget, and shares with Pierce County close proximity to a larger urban center, in this case, Portland, Oregon (although city/county relationships differ between the two states). With a population of over 588,000, Washington County is the 2<sup>nd</sup> most populous county in Oregon. The county's Department of Health and Human Services consists of eight divisions and covers a wide range of activities including an animal shelter, public health, and recycling, along with services for behavioral health, developmental disabilities, aging and those with disabilities, as well as services for veterans, children, youth and families.



The Human Services Division, which was the focus of our research, is focused on mental health, addiction, and developmental disabilities and consists of about 130 FTEs, with an annual budget of \$54.8 million. The number of FTEs has grown in recent years due to increased demand driven by legislation that expanded eligibility for developmental disability services. However, most Department staff oversee or manage programs; the large majority of services are contracted out, and no county Human Services staff carry client caseloads. There are about 120 providers that are contracted to provide human services for the county. A recent department-wide strategic planning effort currently informs many of the activities that the Human Services Division is undertaking.

### Key Findings

**Focus on Cross-Training:** As part of the Department's most recent strategic planning effort, additional focus was placed on ensuring that staff were knowledgeable about the other services provided within the Department. The goal is to create a "one-stop" shop for clients, who can receive a warm hand-off to the person or provider who can help them to access the services that they need. In order to ensure that staff are aware of all of the services that the Department has available, managers attend meetings of other divisions to provide updates and information on the programs that they oversee, ensuring that staff are kept up to date with what is happening in other parts of the county. In addition, the majority of Mental Health and Developmental Disability staff are cross-trained, ensuring that they know when to make an appropriate referral to a colleague in another division.

**Coordinate Outreach:** The Department is working to ensure that it takes advantage of outreach opportunities in the community, and that it properly coordinates messaging across programs. Different programs are working to share outreach and marketing materials and attend events together, presenting a unified view of county services to those seeking assistance, rather than reinforcing an image of individual services siloed by division.

**Some Flexibility with Funding:** While Washington County utilizes a relatively small amount of county general funds to fund Human Services (roughly five percent, similar to Pierce County), there is some additional flexibility in how those funds are used, including the ability to direct them towards administrative costs. Additionally, in certain situations the state allows the Department to repurpose funds that are not expended in a given fiscal year for a different project in the following year.

✓ **Philosophy**

The Department is working to ensure that all division staff are well informed about the services provided by the Human Services Division and the larger Department of Health and Human Services, to provide a “one-stop shopping” experience for clients. ***All staff are expected to be able to guide clients to the services that they need, regardless of whether they are within their own program.***

✓ **Coordinated Outreach**

Instead of having multiple programs from the Department conduct similar outreach activities, ***programs are reaching out*** to each other to more efficiently handle these activities. This delivers a more unified presentation of Department services to potential clients, and reinforces the “one-stop” philosophy.

✓ **Funding Flexibility**

The Division is granted some ***flexibility in how county funds are used, and can apply these funds towards administrative costs that may not be covered by grants*** or other funding mechanisms used to provide services.

## SAN MATEO COUNTY, CA

### Summary

San Mateo County is the 14<sup>th</sup> largest county in California and is located 20 miles south of San Francisco. The San Mateo Human Services Agency (HSA) employs 775 FTE staff to serve 771,410 county residents. The large number of FTEs reflects the wide array of services that are provided at the county level in CA, as compared to WA. The largest majority of staff are providing financial assistance and child/adult welfare services (63%). The agency also provides health coverage, employment and homeless programs, along with mental health services. Around 25% of the department's funding is from county dollars, which includes 16% from the fund balance, (of which 50% can be rolled over to the next year if it is not expended and is used for one-time costs), 2% from other county revenue, and 7% from Measure K, which is a special tax approved by county voters in 2016. This tax adds a half-cent to the sales tax to support critical services in the county. This funding allows the Agency to undertake activities beyond those that are supported by state and federal funds.



### Key Findings

San Mateo County, while resource-rich, has undertaken some activities — and leadership perspectives — that we believe might be useful for Pierce County to understand and consider. We have detailed those below.

**Performance-Based Contracting and Reviews:** The Agency implemented a performance-based contracting process whereby they design contracts for the services and outcomes they want from the program. All contracts have to complete monthly reports on movement toward those outcomes, and the Director will report the hot topic items to county management. To support these contracts, the county provides trainings and refresher trainings for staff, including the proper use of RFPs, how to write, how to monitor, how to monitor sub-recipients, how to coach, and how to develop and measure appropriate performance standards and how those are relevant. Performance-based contracting has proven to be very effective at helping the county and the providers work together to achieve positive outcomes; however, notes the Director, it is somewhat administratively burdensome: “if you want the data, you have to fund it.”

In addition, like many counties, the Agency conducted a comprehensive contract review to evaluate which ones were truly needed and provided significant value and where there were still gaps. The Agency asked questions to formulate contract performance, which is done every year when they re-evaluate their contracts. Some of the questions include:

- What problem is the program trying to solve?
- How are the clients better off?
- How are we measuring the impact?
- Is it a solution needing a problem, or a problem needing a solution?

Within the scope of the contract review, leadership has also worked to eliminate political favor contracts. As a result of all of these efforts, HSA has cut contracts that were no longer “needed”, but gave them one to two years to phase out of the contract so as not to disrupt service delivery.

**Performance Management:** HSA also has an agency-wide LEAN/Six-Sigma initiative which gives staff the skills to determine and evaluate what practices are working for them, do more with less, and how to make processes more efficient, effective, and streamlined. LEAN/Six Sigma is a highly data-driven practice, which was initially a very different way of thinking and working for their agency, but the data and practices associated with this methodology have allowed them to identify problems and measure solutions in ways they weren't able to before.

**Coordinated Service Delivery:** Agency and Division staff and leadership are working to coordinate outreach to the community. Instead of having multiple programs from the Department conduct similar outreach activities, programs are reaching out to each other to more efficiently handle these activities. This also helps deliver a more unified presentation of Agency services to potential clients, and reinforces the "one-stop" philosophy that the Agency is working hard, every day, to employ across branches.

**Administrative Savings? Sure, but how about Revenue-Based Businesses!:** Through their employment program, they run a full warehouse and kitchen for people with mental health and physical disabilities. This allows for clients to obtain job skills and connect with a job developer to get employment and allows for the county to capitalize on revenue opportunities.

✔ **Coordinated Service Delivery**

While the Director articulates that they have a long way to go, the HSA is working diligently to improve their coordinated entry processes. They have better aligned outreach and are working to improve the intake processes across sites and providers.

✔ **Revenue-Based Businesses**

They have capitalized on opportunities to turn workforce development activities into full-fledged business that both **provide real-world experience for clients as well as supplement the Agency budget with an additional source of revenue.**

✔ **Review of Contracts**

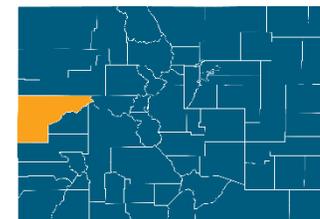
They have thoroughly reviewed all of their contracts as well as **contracts that are "political favor" which has resulted in a better alignment and complete package of services that aim to solve problems** not just solutions in need of problems.

## ADDITIONAL COUNTIES

On the following pages you will find a few takeaways from two additional counties. While both counties are quite different than Pierce in the services that are provided (both provide public assistance and social work services, which occupy a large share of staff and budget) there are important opportunities that can be shared by both.

### MESA COUNTY, CO

Located on the western border of Colorado, Mesa County encompasses 3,309 square miles with the county seat, Grand Junction, as the largest city in Western Colorado. There are 150,083 residents in Mesa County, of which a quarter are over the age of 60. The Department of Community and Human Services (DCHS) provides employment, veterans', and aging services as well as eligibility determination for public assistance programs and child/adult protective services. DCHS is the largest county department with about 270 FTEs, and is funded from county (20%), state (30%), and federal (50%) dollars. Of the county dollars they receive, \$4-4.5 million is from property tax revenue and some sales tax. These county dollars are designed to cover the “gap” in what it takes to do the services and are not earmarked for specific programs, providing the county with some flexibility in how these funds are applied.



### Key Finding

**The 4 Disciplines of Execution:** Mesa County has implemented this practice and developed common core values throughout the Department. The value proposition of something like the 4 Disciplines is to allow counties to “execute on a plan in the midst of the whirlwind of distractions. Most people are so busy just maintaining the business—just keeping their heads above water—most of the time they can’t even hear you, let alone execute on your most important priorities.”<sup>1</sup>



For Mesa County, the 4 Disciplines have helped them see major improvements with staff retention and the quality of service delivery. For the operationalization of this philosophy and practice framework, the Department created clear, tangible goals that all staff are working towards. This gives everyone aligned direction and clear guidance about the role they play in population-level outcomes. When undertaking the process of developing a goal/goals, Mesa County provided some lessons learned:

1. Create clear, tangible goals.
2. Don't be afraid if you get it wrong the first time. Or the second.
3. Be clear that everyone (*everyone*) is working toward the same goal. Every division has the same goal.

***“As one of the most critical pieces, it’s important to prove to staff you don’t just care about numbers and dollars.”***  
–Tracey Garchar, Mesa County Human Services Director

<sup>1</sup> <http://the4disciplinesofexecution.com/>

4. Because of 2 and 3, an agency must be very conscious of what and how it chooses a goal/goals. Something must be picked that staff can look at and say, "I can impact that." The agency should take great care not to alienate staff with its pick.
5. Make sure there is data to support the work toward the goals.
6. Empower staff to be participants in the process and follow-through on their parts. Hire staff who are experts, treat them as experts, and empower them to be active in the process and achieving the goal(s).

## BUNCOMBE COUNTY, NC

Buncombe County, North Carolina, population 257,000, is located in the western part of the state. In, roughly, 2011 the county moved from a loosely "integrated" to truly consolidated model of providing Human Services. The Department of Human Services has 589 FTEs and provides services for the following: Public Health, Social Services, Medical Examiner, Veterans Services, Aging Services, Behavioral Health, Animal Services, and the Family Justice Center. They also oversee contracts and grants through a Foundation that seeks to reduce human service gaps and maximize county funding. In 2019, the Human Services budget was \$87.8M, of which close to 50% is funded from county dollars. While Buncombe's use of and quantity of county dollars to support Human Services functions makes for an impractical comparison to Pierce County, the county's general philosophy toward focusing on core services and utilizing community partners where county government isn't mandated to provide services provides for some valuable opportunities.



### Key Finding

The county has long-been considered an innovator in human services in the region, because of several factors: forward-thinking, systems-building leadership, an outsized revenue base due to the influx of tourism dollars to the county, and progressive county government that has a general propensity to fund human services programming. Despite being a resource-rich community, however, the county has adopted a **streamlining government approach** and has, over the last ten years worked diligently to reduce the quantity of non-mandated services that are provided within the Human Services agency in an effort to enhance core services by achieving process efficiency, service effectiveness, and improved client outcomes. Since 2005, leadership has followed a model designed to regain resources and reinvest them for this purpose. For example, the Department:

- Created a planning and evaluation team that managed projects, ensured programs met outcomes, and provided leadership and technical assistance to program staff as they implemented program changes, innovated, refocused priorities, and streamlined services. The efforts of this team resulted in a cost avoidance/savings to the county that exceeded \$3 million over the initial four-year period.
- Integrated all clerical support into centralized unit.
- Worked with community providers to go after grants instead of doing that in-house.
- Contracted with community providers to provide services that were traditionally done in-house including: case management services, clerical functions, child care, jail and public health services, transcription, and others saving millions of dollars a year in service delivery and oversight.
- Implemented process efficiencies, including increasing online and paperless processes, reducing unnecessary steps in the delivery of services, improving accountability and workload measurement tools, and streamlining service access among internal and external partners.
- Implementing geo-districting and home/community-basing of staff to reduce overhead as well as travel costs and time for staff who are either providing direct-service in the community or services that are agnostic of location.

## OPPORTUNITIES

### Overview

Each opportunity detailed below has been reviewed and selected with the following factors in mind:

- Applicability in the Pierce County environment.
- The ability to capitalize on administrative cost savings and reducing overhead.
- Promising practices that have made a difference in outcomes for other counties.
- Commonalities of philosophy, leadership, structure, or practice across high-performing counties.

*In addition, leadership from all the counties we spoke with shared the below advice for Pierce as it relates to efforts they have undertaken:*

- Significant efforts that have real impacts (to services and/or bottom line) take time! Serious time.
- There are no significant quick fixes.
- Driven, outcome-focused leadership is key. Leaders should be empowered to do what needs to be done to achieve those outcomes.
- Get the support of the Council and Executive Leadership and educate them on what the Department should be focused on (i.e. better outcomes and what is needed to achieve those). Remind them of their vision and strategies the Department needs in order to achieve that vision.
- Humility with the provider community garners respect.

### Opportunities

In the pages that follow we have detailed six opportunities based on our conversations and data/information review of other counties in light of what we know at this point about Pierce County. Below each opportunity are some expected outcomes based on other counties as well as considerations for Pierce as they weigh the strength of the opportunity in their specific environment.

#### 1. ASSESS AND FORMALIZE THE ROLE OF THE DEPARTMENT IN PROVIDING HUMAN SERVICES AND USE THAT TO GUIDE ALL WORK/ACTIVITIES

One of the unifying features of at least 5 of the counties we spoke with was a clear service delivery philosophy that centers less on do-it-yourself and more on being a coordinator of services through indirect service provision. These counties have made substantive efforts to contract out as many services as make sense (most counties had clear criteria for when they contracted versus keeping them in house; only a few took the perspective of trying to contract everything they could). Counties articulated that they are finding that they can add more value as a convener than as a check writer and balancer. As one county articulated, “system problems need system solutions.” A philosophy shared, almost verbatim, by at least three counties was the philosophy that **very few counties can be systems-focused and provide substantial direct services.**

In considering the evolution of human services delivery, **originally, agencies delivered services themselves.** Many counties across the country still prescribe to this method and see this as their primary role. Thinking has, however, continued to shift, then **towards more contracting for services with the government role focused on quality control and compliance.** Some systems have **now evolved to a third way of thinking that centers on the**

**mentality that the community can do it better than government alone.** In this disruptive model, the job of government is to set the system conditions for all those contracts to work together for the good of the system as system architects not compliance monitors. While it is possible that, even in this third model, a county would still provide some amount of direct services, it is likely this would entail a shift to more contracting of services, or at least greater collaboration in how services are developed and delivered.

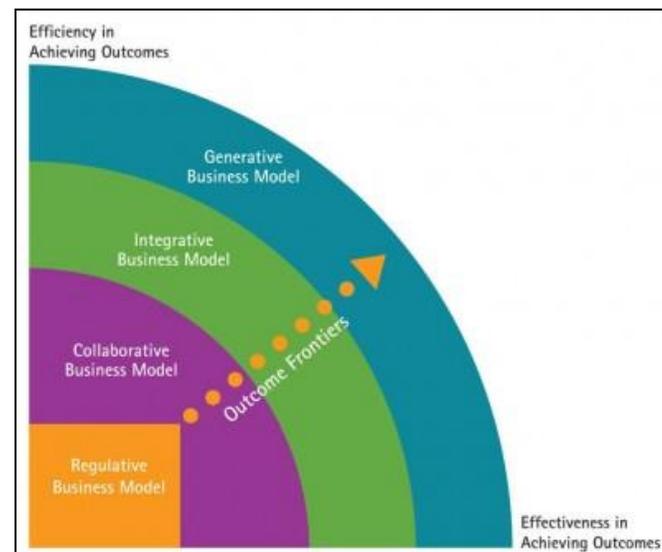
This philosophical shift is validated by publications from APHSA; they have developed models that demonstrate the great value in efficiency and effectiveness by moving to a more *Generative Business Model* (meaning capacity-creator and systems-solution developer) instead of a *Regulative Business Model* (see the figure at right).<sup>2</sup> Below is a detailed characterization of a generative business model:

- Disruptive processes are regularly tested, implemented, and scaled.
- Processes facilitate access to services addressing multi-dimensional client needs.
- External supporting agencies are actively identified, based on client needs, and engaged in program development and revision.
- Historical and predictive analytics are used to identify opportunities for streamlining, in anticipation of client needs.
- Staff are recruited, hired, and rewarded based on the changing/future needs of the organization.

**Pierce County should reflect on opportunities and impacts afforded by:**

- (1) Reflecting on the Department's perspective on the value to the community of providing direct services and the approach to direct services vs. systems-building;** and,
- (2) Establishing a guiding philosophy** to formalize how the Department will deliver services, including prioritizing which services are provided directly vs. contracted out.

Once established, it is crucial that the Department move forward with the communication and implementation of the model of service delivery that best supports this philosophy. If this represents a shift from current or historical practices, the Department will need to set aside enough time to manage this shift, and to develop the internal and external buy-in that will allow the Department to most benefit from this new model while at the same time avoiding potential negative outcomes such as gaps in service or the loss of institutional knowledge.



<sup>2</sup> [http://www.aphsa.org/content/dam/aphsa/pdfs/NW1/Business-Model\\_Sept2013.pdf](http://www.aphsa.org/content/dam/aphsa/pdfs/NW1/Business-Model_Sept2013.pdf)

Potential Outcomes	
<b>If Your Role is More Exclusively Indirect Service Provider....</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You may be able to be more focused on ensuring that tax dollars are spent on the outcomes that are desired.</li> <li>Counties have seen substantial reductions in staff and administrative costs with the move to a more integrative/generative model as they have shifted services into the hands of the community.</li> <li>Community partners will expand their current offerings, or new partners will emerge, to provide services that the Department is seeking to contract out.</li> </ul>
<b>If Your Role is (also) Providing Coordination and Systems-Building....</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You give the community more control over and support to solve problems while taking pressure, costs, and direct service responsibility off the county (that looks different than the current “advisory” structure).</li> <li>Community partners will be the ones to go after grants, not the Department. There may be additional funding opportunities for services as a result.</li> <li>Instead of hoping that the “right” provider comes up with the “right” plan to deliver services, you will play an active role in working with community partners to identify how and by whom services will be delivered.</li> <li>It is a role that is best when fully embraced. The Department should further nurture their involvement in (or better, yet, lead) community-wide planning efforts, as it has in behavioral health, to ensure that services that community providers offer meet the needs that the Department sees. It includes a major shift in mindset from “we do it better than anyone else” to “we see our value-add as a community convener and systems-builder.”</li> </ul>
Considerations	
<b>Alignment with the Current Strategic Plan and Guiding Principles</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Any philosophical shift must be in alignment with the components of the current strategic plan and/or guiding principles.</li> <li>Changes could provide more resources and more focus on developing community capacity to meet the goals of the county.</li> </ul>
<b>Ability to Contract</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Many, if not all of the services currently provided by Pierce (with the exception of services such as veterans, behavioral health services, and homelessness that have been prioritized by county leadership) could be contracted if a provider can be found/developed.</li> <li>This shift will need to be managed carefully to ensure no gaps in services are created, and that community partners are able to meet or exceed the level of services that are currently being provided. Even if the Department wishes to shift to more indirect service provision, it should be alert to occasions when community providers are unable or unwilling to provide a service at the cost the county is willing to pay.</li> <li>The ability to transfer staff or address staffing changes through attrition should be considered.</li> </ul>
<b>Time and Perseverance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Any large-scale change that moves the Department toward more contracting and fewer in-house services takes substantial time. At least two of the counties we interviewed made these changes, slowly over close to 10 years.</li> <li>Although it may take years to fully implement a new philosophy, the Department should resist the urge to take shortcuts, partially implement changes, or allow exceptions for certain programs or providers. Any of these actions will send the message that this change is optional for both internal and external stakeholders, and will limit buy-in.</li> </ul>
<b>Regulatory Requirements</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Each grant comes with its own set of regulatory requirements. The Department should ensure any change to the way services are delivered take these into account.</li> </ul>

## 2. (REGULARLY) REVIEW ALL CONTRACTS

As the Department reflects on a move toward more contracting, one consideration is to review whether the Department is as robust as it needs to be in selecting and evaluating contract providers and is taking the right approach to monitoring. Some activities may include:

- Work to further engage community providers in developing contract language, metrics and outcomes. Don't feel hamstrung by only including language and measures as required by funds. Discuss: what problem is the program trying to solve? How are the clients better off? How are we measuring the impact?
- Ensure you are competitively procuring all contracts and that they are in alignment with the *actual* needs of the Department.
- Consider incorporating systems-building provisions.
- Don't fear fully mature agencies if there are programmatic gaps, populations that are underserved, or citizens who aren't presently served or served well.
- Update an approach to contract monitoring that is less compliance-driven and punitive and more coaching-oriented. This should not be done to the detriment of meeting mandated performance measures.
- Review contracts holistically and not just individually. This allows the Department to better see where there are gaps in the overall services delivery system.
- Review any "political favor" contracts. There may not be any in Pierce County at present, but several counties listed these as something that redirect focus, energy, and resources from the agency's goals. One question to ask is: Is it a solution needing a problem, or a problem needing a solution?

### Potential Outcomes

- Improves communication and support to providers.
- Improves overall performance of providers (and therefore outcomes for clients).
- Contracts are designed specifically around problems and funds are not wasted.

### Considerations

- When cutting contracts or shifting resources to other agencies, consider building in transition time, as needed.
- A shift toward a "coaching" model will require additional training for staff.

## 3. EMPLOY ADDITIONAL ADMINISTRATIVE COST REDUCING STRATEGIES

When asked, most of the counties we contacted who had some sort of focus on reducing administrative costs said that reducing the number of services that they provide in-house was their primary source for reductions. Beyond that, the strategies worth weighing include:

**Administrative and Leadership Positions:** With the recent loss of a division manager position, the Department could review opportunities to reduce leadership and oversight. This was suggested by at least one staff member during our interviews. Another consideration would be to review clerical and support staff positions.

**Physical Space and Facility Support:** Several opportunities may exist to reduce physical space and facility support, including: renegotiating leases, consolidating staff into one location and reducing any subsequent duplication of clerical or front desk staff, and allowing staff to work remotely.

Potential Outcomes	
<b>Administrative and Leadership Positions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Additional alignment of strategies for shared populations (assuming management ratios don't get too out of alignment).</li> <li>• Cost savings.</li> </ul>
<b>Physical space</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Further coordination around services.</li> <li>• Morale booster for staff; staff are asking for this.</li> <li>• Cost savings.</li> </ul>

Considerations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not sure adequate space is available at either location to house all staff.</li> <li>• Savings may not be substantial given the limited number of positions and efforts already undertaken by Finance.</li> </ul>

#### 4. COORDINATE FUNDING TO ENSURE THERE IS NO DUPLICATION OF SERVICES, UNMET NEED, OR COMMUNITY PARTNERS COMPETING

One of the common strategies of the agencies who contract a vast majority of services is the thoughtfulness they employ to ensure that:

- There is not duplication of services, unless there is a service-level goal to provide consumer choice and/or populations who are better served by a different provider or one in their specific community.
- There is no unmet need either geographically, by population or there is no service gap.
- Community partners aren't competing against each other but are working together, each with a specific niche.

A regular, dedicated review (not just of the current contracts as noted in Opportunity 2, above, but of where there is duplication and missing pieces of the entirety of the continuum) would help ensure that you tailor your distribution of funding to the capacity of the community providers. This doesn't mean handing out money to everyone, but that you would ensure you are getting the mix of services and providers that you want, who (comprehensively) meet the needs identified by the Department strategy, which could mean some coordination across funding sources.

Potential Outcomes	
<b>Funding</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The opportunity to better "braid" funding from multiple sources at the state and local levels.</li> </ul>
<b>Unmet Need</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unrealized needs may be able to be met.</li> </ul>

Considerations	
<b>Past Department Efforts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Department has taken some steps in this direction with the work done to identify funds across all programs that could be used to pay administrative costs. This would obviously be a different kind of review, but can build on that framework.</li> <li>• This also should/may be happening already as part of the behavioral health changes.</li> </ul>
<b>The Process</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The goal would be to take a scan of their community partners (and those orgs that maybe you don't partner with) to check for any gaps in services or unused capacity.</li> <li>• Community partners (established agencies and advisors) <b>and clients</b> must be involved in this process.</li> </ul>

## 5. EXPLORE SYSTEMS AND/OR AGENCY CREATION

One of the strategies that some counties have employed is creating non-profits or quasi-public agencies as a way to provide services that neither the Department nor a community provider is positioned to provide (as with the Community Development Corporation in housing, and as done by Clark County). Similarly, at least one county, King, has created governance structures that provide assistance and support to agencies as they work to address unmet community needs. Creating new agencies or governance structures to fill community gaps in service and/or coordination. Some examples of these include:

- King County has been working to create several governance structures that serve as advisory, engagement, and coordinating consortia and committees to ensure the Department and providers are aligned, organized, and working toward shared goals for service delivery.
- San Mateo County created a non-profit organization called the Children's Fund that is designed to assist foster and low-income children in the county and provide them with goods and services that are not available through public funds. This organization was founded to meet a need in the community where public funds were not available.
- Buncombe County Health and Human Services created the Buncombe County Service Foundation, which was designed to build and manage the county's strategic partnership and serve as the non-profit arm of HHS. This makes them eligible for grants and funding opportunities when the county might not be able to access, all while reducing county costs to deliver services.
- Clark County Area Agency on Aging & Disabilities of Southwest Washington is governed by the Southwest Washington Council of Governments on Aging and Disabilities (COG). COG's sole purpose is sponsorship and oversight for the Area Agency on Aging & Disabilities of Southwest Washington (Area Agency).

As Pierce County considers the further contracting of services, the list above should give them examples of additional flexibility and opportunities to supplement or bridge community capacity.

Potential Outcomes	
<b>Creation of Non-Governmental Organizations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhance or supplement community capacity (temporarily or long-term).</li> <li>• Reduce county and administrative costs, and dependency on general funds or other local dollars to provide services.</li> <li>• The ability to go after grants that aren't available for governmental organizations.</li> </ul>
<b>Governance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improved outcomes and coordination across community providers who share populations, clients, and/or provide services that should be aligned.</li> </ul>

### Considerations

#### Partnering

- While the Clark County example may not be directly relevant to Pierce, the concept of partnering with COG's, cities, counties, or other county departments should not be lost. As one county said, "you're never too large to partner with another jurisdiction."

## 6. EMBRACE A PHILOSOPHY OF CONTINUOUS QUALITY IMPROVEMENT/MANAGING TO RESULTS OR GOALS

If the Department wants to truly make an impact into how services are delivered, one opportunity to do that would be to invest in and fully commit to a formal process of engaging staff — *and community partners* — at all levels by: meeting, chartering and goal setting, and continuous process improvement through a process such as Balanced Scorecard, 4 Disciplines of Execution, Results Based Accountability, LEAN/Six Sigma (though these are more process-focused), PDCA/PDSA, Managing to Outcomes, or another performance management methodology that ties outcomes to activities. In addition, the following culture-focused components could be built into your formal processes.

As seen in most high performing organizations, it helps to have a concrete framework or methodology that is built into the organizational culture and ensures staff and community voices are heard, work is aligned to outcomes, results are measured and discussed, population changes are noted, and adjustments can be made based on data tied to an overall goal. In addition to a structured framework, some counties have a staff person or team (often a performance management unit or planning/evaluation team) who leads and provides guidance and support for these functions. San Mateo, Buncombe, and King are a few examples of counties who have done this.

### Potential Outcomes

- Cost savings in the millions (The Buncombe County Planning/Evaluation Team found \$3.4M in cost savings/cost avoidance in their first four years).
- Improved outcomes for shared clients with more aligned goals to strategies.

### Considerations

- While it is often difficult to add a staff person, and these counties would probably tell you that the positions more than paid for themselves, it *is* possible to build this kind of constant evaluative process into the culture of the agency. However, if you're truly after significant cost savings, it is near impossible to train staff to eliminate/contract their own jobs.

## Appendix A: Sample County Comparison Table

	County	State	Population	Size	Median Household Income	Total Budget	“HS” Organization	“HS” Budget*	Similar “HS” Programs	Outcomes-Based Budgeting
	Pierce	WA	872,220	1,806 sq mi	\$64,434	\$1.09B	Human Services	\$88.1M		
1.	King	WA	2,190,200	2,132 sq mi	\$86,095	\$11.6B	Community and Human Services	\$1.6B	✓	✓
2.	Snohomish	WA	805,120	2,090 sq mi	\$78,716	\$983M	Human Services	\$120M	✓	✓
3.	Spokane	WA	507,950	1,781 sq mi	\$53,043	\$790M	Community Svcs, Housing, Community Dev	\$51M	✓	
4.	Clark	WA	479,500	656 sq mi	\$69,062	\$518M	Community Services	\$36.3M	✓	✓
5.	Mecklenburg	NC	1,080,000	546 sq mi	\$62,978	\$1.74B	Health & Human Services	\$255.2M		Quality Assurance
6.	Salt Lake County	UT	1,029,665	742 sq mi	\$71,471	\$1.2B	Human Services	\$235.2M	✓	Data Driven
7.	Montgomery	PA	826,075	487 sq mi	\$87,304	\$420M	Health & Human Services	\$158.1M	✓	Quality Improvement
8.	Multnomah	OR	788,459	466 sq mi	\$62,629	\$2.1B	Human Services	\$162.5M	✓	Quality Improvement
9.	San Mateo	CA	771,410	744 sq mi	\$108,627	\$2.75B	Human Services	\$270.6M		✓
10.	Bernalillo	NM	670,968	1,166 sq mi	\$51,005	\$713.5B	Com Servs / Housing, Health & Welfare	\$51M	✓	✓
11.	Washington	OR	588,957	726 sq mi	\$75,634	\$1.2B	Health & Human Services	\$54.8M	✓	
12.	Chester	PA	519,293	759 sq mi	\$96,656	\$475.9M	Human Services	\$223.6M		✓
13.	Washoe	NV	445,551	6,542 sq mi	\$61,498	\$658.7M	Human Services	\$112M		✓
14.	Dakota	MN	421,751	587 sq mi	\$80,832	\$409.4M	Community Services	\$127.5M		✓
15.	Mesa	CO	150,083	3,341 sq mi	\$52,742	\$172.8M	Human Services	\$24M		✓
16.	Buncombe	NC	257,607	660 sq mi	\$50,040	\$425.3M	Health & Human Services	\$87.8M		✓

\*Human Services budget numbers are from interviews and publicly available information

## Appendix B: County Comparison Guiding Questions

1. What percentage of your program dollars come from County funds? State funds? Federal funds? Other sources?
  - For those programs funded with county dollars, are there restrictions on how those funds can be spent?
  - What are your sources of administrative funds?
2. What percentage of Human Services activities that the county funds are direct vs. indirect (i.e., provided by a contracted entity)?
3. Which, if any, of your core human services activities are contracted out to community providers? When and why did you choose to move these services to community providers? Why did you choose to keep services in house?
4. How did you design the contracts for the activities that you contracted out? Were you able to continue using the same funding sources to pay for these services once the county was no longer performing them directly?
5. How does your county assess central services costs across your programs? Can you share the percentage of your administrative fees that go to the county for these kinds of costs?
6. Are you administering any programs that you are not required to by the state or federal government?
7. How many different office sites do you have for human services staff in your county?
8. What elements of the way your human services programs are organized do you find the most helpful? The most challenging?
9. How do you coordinate across programs at entry? Are there links between programs at the “front door”?
10. How did you develop performance measures for programs that you administer? For programs that you’ve contracted out?
11. Are contractors meeting the performance benchmarks that you have set?
12. If you could share one best practice from the way your human services department operates, what would it be?

### Appendix C: County Comparison Chart Category Information

Category	Definition	Value
Total HS Staff	Number of FTEs at HS Agency for that County	Enables comparison of scale of agencies across counties
HS Staff: Co Residents	Ratio of HS agency FTEs to the total population of the County	While somewhat imprecise, provides indication of level of service provided
Additional Programs	Programs provided by a county HS agency that go beyond the array of services provided or administered by Pierce County	Identify agencies that provide more or fewer services than Pierce County and factor this into comparisons
% Indirect vs. Direct	Percentage of services contracted out by a county vs. those provided directly by HS agency (note – this is often an estimate provided by a county’s leadership)	Provides context to staffing levels and staffing ratios, as well as insight as to how agency views its role.
% of Budget that is taxes/fees and General Fund	Percentage of funds that come from county sources as opposed to state or federal grants. This information was provided in interviews, or gathered from publicly available documents.	Helps understand how much of HS agency’s funding may be under county control, and where there may be ability to adjust use of funds to better meet county objectives
Administrative burden	The estimated percentage of agency funding that goes towards administrative costs, such as staff salaries, overhead, and so on, as opposed to program activities.	Provides comparison of the funds allocated to program activities across counties that may administer services and programs differently.

Physical Locations	Number of sites across which HS services are administered or provided by county staff. Clients may not be seen in-person at all sites.	Allows for comparison across counties, and helps add additional context to discussion around collaboration across programs.
Support Services	Additional units of a county's HS agency or department that provide additional services, separate from the delivery or administration of programs, to support the agency's mission.	Identifies HS agencies that have dedicated units for certain services, and those that must either rely on another department or internal staff for these services.
Philosophy	A general summary of agency leadership's view of their primary focus, in terms of their approach to serving the community.	Helps to determine how or why a county may choose to pursue a given path for the provision or administration of services or programs.

## Appendix D: Clark County DCS Organizational Chart

