



Customer Service Survey

OREGON DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

DOC Statewide Customer Service Survey Results

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By
Research and Evaluation



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Introduction

The Oregon Department of Administration Services (DAS) instructed state agencies to conduct a “Customer Service Satisfaction” survey. Administrators from the Department of Corrections (DOC) selected parole officers (POs) as their primary customer. POs are considered *consumers* of DOC since they use counselor information to develop programming and services for inmates being released from DOC institutions.

The survey developed by DOC includes the six mandated questions measuring *Timeliness, Accuracy, Helpfulness, Expertise, Availability of Information and Overall Service*. The six mandated questions were essential for comparisons among participating agencies. Since the customer populations differ among agencies, interpretation differences could exist. To ensure DOC fully benefited from the survey, additional questions were asked of respondents. For each mandated question, other pertinent questions were developed to better understand and interpret responses. Some of Oregon’s best parole officers were interviewed; these POs identified questions that best differentiate well formulated transition plans from poor transition plans.

The series of questions differentiating good and poor transitional plans were further refined with Community Corrections staff and DOC administrators. The six mandated questions were complemented with 24 additional questions that addressed the following:

- Adequacy of information provided
- Sufficiency of mental health, housing, transportation and programming needs of offenders prior to release
- Timely completion of services
- Courtesy, communication and professionalism of DOC staff

Appendix A contains the survey that includes the six mandated questions and the 24 additional questions included by DOC.

Method

Participants

DOC randomly sampled inmates being released between March and June 2006. These randomly selected inmates were matched to POs assigned to each transition case 30 days after release. Matching 30 days after release insured the selected inmates completed the releasing process and were assigned a PO. POs were surveyed about a particular inmate's transition. Some POs completed multiple surveys while other POs were not included in the sample.

Materials

An optically scanned survey was used to collect data (Appendix A). Surveys were mailed monthly to POs selected in the process. If surveys were not completed and returned to DOC, follow-up letters were sent to Community Corrections offices. If these follow-up letters did not generate a response, a second letter was forwarded to the PO and their supervisor. Two follow-up letters were sent during and after the data collection process. The first follow-up letter was disseminated in early June 2006 and the second was disseminated in August 2006. Copies of each follow-up letter are in Appendix B.

Procedure

Data collection for this DAS mandated initiative began in March 2006 and concluded in June 2006. Each mandated question required a four point Likert scale: *Excellent, Good, Fair or Poor*. Twenty-four additional questions were added to the survey; some of these questions were open-ended, some were answered Yes/No and others used the same four point scale mentioned above.

Results

There were 665 total surveys sent to POs in Community Corrections throughout Oregon; there were 542 surveys completed and returned to DOC. The overall response rate is 82%. Some POs completed more than one survey during the four-month collection period; however, POs were not required to complete more than two surveys in any month.

Most POs responded to the initial request to complete the survey. Although some POs failed to comply with the initial and subsequent requests, most of the non-participants had legitimate reasons for not completing the survey. Some parole officers were out of the office or no longer employed by Community Corrections. Other reasons for non-compliance included the following: the inmate was transferred to federal prison, another county, state or country after being released; the PO was not involved with the transitions process, or was not the primary PO involved with transition.

The six mandated questions (in bold), the 24 additional questions and the associated responses are listed below (all other statistics are in Appendix C).

Timeliness

How would you rate the timeliness of the services provided by DOC?

- 85% answered excellent or good

As the acting parole officer, were you given enough information to prioritize the needs of supervision for parole?

- 90% answered yes

If the release date was changed for this offender, were you notified within 30 days of the offender's release?

- 90% answered yes

Was the transportation information from the institution to the community complete in the release plan?

- 82% answered yes

Were all possible options for housing provided in the release plan for this offender?

- 74% answered yes

If the offender had mental health needs (including medications), were programs and/or services discussed in the release plan?

- Nearly 20% answered yes
- 69% answered not applicable

If the offender had drug/alcohol needs, were programs and/or services discussed in the release plan?

- Nearly 60% answered yes
- 18% answered not applicable

Accuracy

How would you rate the ability of the DOC to provide services correctly the first time?

- 82% answered excellent or good

Were you provided with information regarding the type of treatment programs this offender participated in while incarcerated?

- 59% answered yes

If yes, did the offender complete those programs?

- 46% answered yes
- 46% answered unknown

Did you receive a field investigation for the offender 60 to 90 days prior to release?

- 85% answered yes

If you made changes or modified conditions in the release plan, were those changes implemented?

- 86% answered yes

Did you receive all the necessary information in the offender's release packet?

- 78% answered yes

If no, what additional information would have been useful?

- 81% made no comment
- 7% commented no treatment/programming completion was provided
- Just under 5% commented incomplete packet/wrong information was provided

Helpfulness

How would you rate the helpfulness of DOC employees in general?

- 86% answered excellent or good

How would you rate the helpfulness of the release counselor or other institutional staff regarding this case?

- 82% answered excellent or good

Was DOC staff helpful in meeting your needs in order to make contact with this offender prior to release?

- Approximately two-thirds answered yes

If yes, how did you make that contact?

- Nearly 60% made contact by phone
- 19% made face-to-face contact
- Over 20% made written contact

If you made that contact, was the information provided helpful for case planning purposes?

- 39% answered yes
- 55% answered unknown

If yes, what was helpful?

- 79% made no comment
- 13% said helpful services were provided/services were completed prior to release
- 5% made a comment not relevant to the study
- 3% said appropriate housing was provided

Expertise

How would you rate the knowledge and expertise of DOC employees?

- 85% answered excellent or good

If you communicated with DOC staff (release counselors, institutional counselors, correctional officers, administrators, etc.) during the release process, how would you rate that communication?

- 86% answered excellent or good

During the release process, if you entered an institution for release planning purposes, were you treated in a professional manner?

- 20% answered yes
- 80% said this question was not applicable

If no, what difficulties did you encounter?

- 98% of the respondents made no comment

When working with prison staff, how would you rate their understanding of your responsibilities as a parole officer?

- More than two-thirds answered excellent or good

Availability of Information

How do you rate the availability of information at DOC?

- 85% answered excellent or good

In the release planning process, did you utilize any institutional information in the Correctional Information System (CIS) database (including Chronos)?

- 86% answered yes

If yes, did you only utilize Chrono information?

- 74% answered yes

Overall Service

How do you rate the overall quality of service provided by DOC?

- 83% answered excellent or good

Thinking about the Oregon DOC as a whole, would you say the transition process from prison to parole in the last few years is... getting better, about the same or getting worse?

- 98% answered getting better or about the same

Most of the responses associated with the survey were positive; 82-86% of the mandated questions were answered with either an Excellent or Good response. The responses associated with the additional 24 questions follow this same trend. Approximately 63% of the participants said the transition process from prison to parole in the last year is getting better and 35% said DOC is about the same.

A significant number of POs responded Not Applicable to three of the additional questions. The questions were related to inmates who have mental health needs and/or drug/alcohol related issues. One of the three questions essentially asked POs if they received professional treatment when visiting the institutions. Sixty-five percent of the POs serving inmates with mental health needs said mental health needs and/or programs were established in the inmate's release plan prior to release; 63% said programs and services were discussed in the release plan for inmates with drug and alcohol issues. Thirdly, every PO who entered a DOC institution said they were treated in a professional manner.

While the majority of the responses were positive, fewer than 3% of the responses were rated as Poor. Establishing housing prior to release, determining mental health needs, providing adequate treatment programs, scheduling more face to face contacts between POs and inmates and developing a better understanding of a PO's job are areas DOC can improve in order to strengthen the bond between DOC and Community Corrections.

When releasing inmates have mental health medications or disabilities requiring specialized assistance or equipment, DOC has the responsibility to convey this information to POs.

Conversely, DOC may not be aware of housing options in all Oregon communities and some responsibility would rest with the PO. Delineating responsibilities associated with good transitional planning could benefit both DOC and Community Corrections.

Appendix A: Survey

Statewide Customer Service Performance Measure Survey

Dear Participant,

The Oregon Department of Administrative Services (DAS) has instructed each state agency to incorporate in their 2007 -09 budget a "Customer Service Satisfaction" survey. The Department of Corrections has identified parole officers as their primary customers.

This survey includes mandated questions related to the following components: Timeliness, Accuracy, Helpfulness, Expertise, Availability of Information, and Overall Service. Other questions have been added as they relate to the components above; however, the mandated questions must be answered using the four-point measurement scale (1=Excellent,2=Good,3=Fair,4=Poor).

A released inmate has been randomly selected from your caseload. Your participation in the completion of this survey is very important. Parole officers who do not return this survey will be sent a follow up letter and their acting manager will also be notified. Because these cases are randomly selected, some parole officers may be asked to complete more than one survey depending on how many of their offenders are selected.

Thank you for your time!

DOC Research & Evaluation Unit

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Below, please provide comments on how DOC can improve the transition process.

For Office Use Only

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Statewide Customer Service Performance Measure Survey



Note: Questions that refer to "DOC" include institutional staff and central office staff only.

Timeliness

- 1) As the acting parole officer, were you given enough information to prioritize the needs of supervision for parole?
 - Yes
 - No
- 2) If the release date was changed for this offender, were you notified within 30 days of the offender's release?
 - Yes
 - No
- 3) Was the transportation information from the institution to the community complete in the release plan?
 - Yes
 - No
- 4) Were all possible options for housing provided in the release plan for this offender?
 - Yes
 - No
 - None provided
- 5) If the offender had mental health needs (including medications), were programs and/or services discussed in the release plan?
 - Yes
 - No
 - Not applicable to this case
- 6) If the offender had drug/alcohol needs were programs and/or services discussed in the release plan?
 - Yes
 - No
 - Not applicable to this case
- A) How would you rate the timeliness of the services provided by DOC?
 - Excellent
 - Good
 - Fair
 - Poor

Accuracy

- 1) Were you provided with information regarding the type of treatment programs this offender participated in while incarcerated?
 - Yes *If yes, did the offender complete those programs?*
 - Yes
 - No
 - Unknown
 - No
- 2) Did you receive a field investigation for the offender 60 to 90 days prior to release?
 - Yes
 - No
- 3) If you made changes or modified conditions in the release plan, were those changes implemented?
 - Yes
 - No
- 4) Did you receive all the necessary information in the offender's release packet?
 - Yes
 - No *If no, what additional information would have been useful?*

- B) How would you rate the ability of the DOC to provide services correctly the first time?
 - Excellent
 - Good
 - Fair
 - Poor

Helpfulness

1) How would you rate the helpfulness of the release counselor or other institutional staff regarding this case?

- Excellent
- Good
- Fair
- Poor

2) Were DOC staff helpful in meeting your needs in order to make contact with this offender prior to release?

- Yes → *If yes, how did you make that contact?*
- No
 - Face-to-Face
 - Phone
 - Written

3) If you made that contact, was the information provided helpful for case planning purposes?

- Yes
 - No
 - Unknown
- If yes, what was helpful?*

C) How would you rate the helpfulness of DOC employees in general ?

- Excellent
- Good
- Fair
- Poor

Expertise

1) If you communicated with DOC staff (release counselors, institutional counselors, correctional officers, administrators, etc.) during the release process, how would you rate that communication?

- Excellent
- Good
- Fair
- Poor

2) During the release process, if you entered an institution for release planning purposes, were you treated in a professional manner?

- Yes
- No
- Sometimes
- Not Applicable

3) When working with prison staff, how would you rate their understanding of your responsibilities as a parole officer?

- Excellent
- Good
- Fair
- Poor

D) How would you rate the knowledge and expertise of DOC employees?

- Excellent
- Good
- Fair
- Poor

If no, what difficulties did you encounter?

Availability of Information

1) In the release planning process, did you utilize any institutional information in the Correctional Information System (CIS) database (including Chronos)?

- Yes → *If yes, did you only utilize Chrono information?*
- No
 - Yes
 - No

E) How do you rate the availability of information at DOC?

- Excellent
- Good
- Fair
- Poor

Overall Service

1) Thinking about the Oregon Department of Corrections as a whole, would you say the transition process from prison to parole in the last few years is...

- Getting better
- About the same
- Getting worse

F) How do you rate the overall quality of service provided by DOC?

- Excellent
- Good
- Fair
- Poor

Appendix B: Follow-up Letters

First follow-up letter

Customer Service Satisfaction Survey—follow-up letter:

Several parole officers from the (enter County here) County Community Corrections Office were sent Customer Service Satisfaction Surveys from DOC, Research & Evaluation. This survey is a mandated survey that DOC and other state agencies are required to distribute. We are also required to send a follow up letter to the participant (the PO), as well as their acting manager if we do not receive the survey back. To date we haven't received a completed survey from the POs listed in the attachment below. If you have not completed the survey, please complete and return it as quickly as possible. The attached list includes the PO's name and the offender's name in which the PO assisted during the **March** release period.

Surveys regarding the April, May and June releases were also sent out; reminder letters for these release months will follow at a later date.

We ask that POs please complete all surveys that were sent to them as soon as possible. These responses are very important in our efforts to improving the relationships between DOC and Community Corrections.

If you have any questions please contact me at the number or e-mail below.

Thank you for your time and participation!

Second follow-up letter

Customer Service Satisfaction Survey—final follow-up letter:

Several parole officers from the (enter County here) County Community Corrections Office were sent Customer Service Satisfaction Surveys from DOC, Research & Evaluation. This survey is a mandated survey that DOC and other state agencies are required to distribute. **We are also required to send a follow up letter to the participant (the PO), as well as their acting manager or director if we did not receive the survey(s) back.** This is not an e-mail meant to get anyone into trouble but rather a gentle reminder, and our final attempt to receive more surveys.

To date we haven't received a completed survey from the POs listed in the attachment above. Some POs are listed more than once. If you have not completed these surveys, please complete all that are listed and return them as quickly as possible (preferably within the next two weeks). If your name is on the list and you have misplaced your survey or for some reason you did not receive a survey, please e-mail (enter contact person here) at (enter e-mail address here) and he/she will send you a new survey. If you have already re-sent the survey(s) listed, please disregard this message.

The attached list includes the PO's name and the name of the released inmate. A random selection was done to select inmates being released in March, April, May and June of 2006. The POs who were assigned to the randomly selected released inmates were sent one or more surveys depending on how many cases they were assigned. Your responses are very important in our efforts to improving the relationships between DOC and Community Corrections.

If you have any questions please contact (enter contact information here).

Thank you for your time and participation!

Appendix C: Related Statistics

Statistics related to the six mandated questions:

Timeliness

- 1) How would you rate the timeliness of the services provided by DOC?
 - Excellent—24.52%
 - Good—60.92
 - Fair—12.07
 - Poor—2.49

Accuracy

- 2) How would you rate the ability of the DOC to provide services correctly the first time?
 - Excellent—19.16%
 - Good—63.03
 - Fair—15.52
 - Poor—2.30

Helpfulness

- 3) How would you rate the helpfulness of DOC employees in general?
 - Excellent—23.45%
 - Good—62.73
 - Fair—13.03
 - Poor—0.80

Expertise

- 4) How would you rate the knowledge and expertise of DOC employees?
 - Excellent—19.91%
 - Good—65.43
 - Fair—14.22
 - Poor—0.44

Availability of Information

- 5) How do you rate the availability of information at DOC?
 - Excellent—18.30%
 - Good—60.12
 - Fair—20.04
 - Poor—1.54

Overall Service

- 6) How do you rate the overall quality of service provided by DOC?
 - Excellent—14.83%
 - Good—68.63
 - Fair—15.40

Statistics related to other questions:

Timeliness

- 1) As the acting parole officer, were you given enough information to prioritize the needs of supervision for parole?
 - Yes—90.42%
 - No—9.58

- 2) If the release date was changed for this offender, were you notified within 30 days of the offender's release?
 - Yes—90.22%
 - No—9.78

- 3) Was the transportation information from the institution to the community complete in the release plan?
 - Yes—82.07%
 - No—17.93

- 4) Were all possible options for housing provided in the release plan for this offender?
 - Yes—74.76%
 - No—15.41
 - None provided—9.83

- 5) If the offender had mental health needs (including medications), were programs and/or services discussed in the release plan?
 - Yes—19.35%
 - No—11.30
 - Not applicable to this case—69.35

- 6) If the offender had drug/alcohol needs were programs and/or services discussed in the release plan?
 - Yes—59.39%
 - No—22.61
 - Not applicable to this case—18.01

Accuracy

- 1) Were you provided with information regarding the type of treatment programs this offender participated in while incarcerated?
 - Yes—59.06%
 - No—40.94

- 2) If yes, did the offender complete those programs?
 - Yes—46.21%
 - No—8.28
 - Unknown—45.52
- 3) Did you receive a field investigation for the offender 60 to 90 days prior to release?
 - Yes—85.36%
 - No—14.64
- 4) If you made changes or modified conditions in the release plan, were those changes implemented?
 - Yes—85.89%
 - No—14.11
- 5) Did you receive all the necessary information in the offender's release packet?
 - Yes—78.29%
 - No—21.71

Helpfulness

- 1) How would you rate the helpfulness of the release counselor or other institutional staff regarding this case?
 - Excellent—26.61%
 - Good—55.30
 - Fair—15.59
 - Poor—2.49
- 2) Was DOC staff helpful in meeting your needs in order to make contact with this offender prior to release?
 - Yes—66.23%
 - No—33.77
- 3) If yes, how did you make that contact?
 - Face-to-face—19.07%
 - Phone—58.76
 - Written—22.16
- 4) If you made that contact, was the information provided helpful for case planning purposes?
 - Yes—38.65%
 - No—6.29
 - Unknown—55.06

Expertise

- 1) If you communicated with DOC staff (release counselors, institutional counselors, correctional officers, administrators, etc.) during the release process, how would you rate that communication?
 - Excellent—30.16%
 - Good—55.98
 - Fair—13.04
 - Poor—0.82

- 2) During the release process, if you entered an institution for release planning purposes, were you treated in a professional manner?
 - Yes—20.0%
 - No—0.00
 - Sometimes—0.39
 - Not applicable—79.61

- 3) When working with prison staff, how would you rate their understanding of your responsibilities as a parole officer?
 - Excellent—11.75%
 - Good—56.91
 - Fair—25.35
 - Poor—5.99

Availability of Information

- 1) In the release planning process, did you utilize any institutional information in the Correctional Information System (CIS) database (including Chronos)?
 - Yes—85.63%
 - No—14.37

- 2) If yes, did you only utilize Chrono information?
 - Yes—73.56%
 - No—26.44

Overall Service

- 1) Thinking about the Oregon Department of Corrections as a whole, would you say the transition process from prison to parole in the last few years is...
 - Getting better—62.84%
 - About the same—35.06
 - Getting worse—2.11