

Subcommittees' Report on behalf of the LCOG Task Force for
"Creating a Climate of Prosperity" in the Lane County Region

Human Services Coordination
Economic Enhancement
Communication

April 2010

In February 2010, the Board of Directors of the Lane Council of Governments charged a 20-member Task Force with identifying manageable steps that the LCOG organization could take to enhance the well-being of the region toward the creation of a "Climate of Prosperity." Specifically, the Force was asked to consider three regional issue areas and, through an analysis of each, to identify inhibiting factors that limited full realization of potential. In the end, three subcommittees were asked to recommend steps that LCOG could take to improve community well-being in their respective areas.

Guidelines were set forth for both the Task Force and its subcommittees by the LCOG Board of Directors:

Purpose and Intended Outcome from the Work of the Task Force

With input from the subcommittees, identify specific steps that the LCOG organization can take that will complement the work of others in the region to integrate job creation, human services coordination and communication to establish a climate of prosperity and well-being in the region, and to craft a report and recommendation for the consideration of the LCOG Board.

Purpose and Intended Outcomes of the Subcommittees

With the larger mission in mind, to assess the designated subject areas, determine deficits or inhibiting factors in the achievement of objectives, and propose action steps to the task force.

In the Area of Human Services Coordination

Subcommittee Members: Coburg Mayor Judy Volta, Eugene City Councilor Chris Pryor, Looking Glass CEO Craig Opperman, United Way Executive Director Priscilla Gould, Lane County Human Services Commission Manager Steve Manela, LCOG Senior & Disabled Services Director Kay Metzger

The subcommittee began the discussion by brainstorming barriers and inhibiting factors to human services coordination in Lane County. Then it attempted to identify concrete opportunities for the LCOG organization to impact human services coordination. And lastly, the subcommittee identified specific actions that could be taken in the near future.

Inhibiting Factors

- Confusing and complex policies, procedures and eligibility rules are a barrier to access and human services coordination.
- Local officials feel powerless to impact positive change and improvement.
- Lack of cooperation between agencies and jurisdictions, turf issues, i.e. “This problem isn’t within my jurisdiction”.
- Silos within human services delivery system
- Consumer feels overwhelmed, i.e. “Where do I go to get help?”
- Lack of funding, competition for limited dollars
- Lack of common set of priorities
- Who’s responsible? Confusion about who is responsible and who can fix
- Problems associated with decisions made about 30 years ago by County administration to divest itself of certain areas of human service
- System is very complex
- Agencies operating in self-preservation mode, belief that cooperation may lead to reduced funding, influence, etc.
- The need to justify human services to the community
- Lack of real time data and information on human services needs in the county. Need objective reports on needs, capacity and benefits/outcomes.

Opportunities

- Collaboration in new ways and on a new level towards a common good
- The Lane County 211 system (211lane.org) convened by the United Way currently offers a database of non-profit and governmental human services resources. United Way is working with community partners, both public and private, towards expanding the service to include telephonic I&R. By dialing 211 a caller can receive information and referral over the phone, directing them to available human services in Lane County. The most cost effective estimate to implement the telephonic 211 service is approximately \$150,000.

- The opportunity for collaboration on the 211 project is very timely, as United Way is actively moving towards gaining support, both financially and politically, towards implementing this new service. (A summer or Fall launch is planned if the resources come together.)
- It's important to maintain outreach and connection to the rural communities. There is an opportunity to expand the membership of the Human Services Commission to include an LCOG representative from a rural area. LCOG board should consider making this request to the HSC partner jurisdictions.
- Opportunity for non-traditional, collective advocacy on agreed-upon issues (much like the United Front design).
- Opportunity to offer support for Federal Legislation (H.R.211) that will fund 211 services.
- Opportunity to work with Lane County to ensure that prevention and human services are an integral part of future County funding along side the public safety.
- We create a climate of prosperity by addressing social needs through prevention, early intervention and treatment.

Proposed Action Steps

- Presentation to the LCOG Board on 211 services to Lane County residents.
- Ask for endorsement of 211 by LCOG Board members
 - Economic endorsement, i.e. jurisdictions contributing towards funding
 - Political endorsement, at the local and federal level.
- Educate LCOG Board members on regional human services issues/needs/resources through future presentations.
- Explore ways to use LCOG's data management expertise.
- Consider recommendation to add rural LCOG member to the Human Services Commission.
- Monitor County funding initiatives to ensure prevention, intervention and treatment availability to rural residents.

In the Area of Economic Enhancement

Subcommittee Members: Faye Stewart, Tony McCown, Phil Brubaker, Jim Torrey, Jack Roberts, Chuck Forster, Robert Scoggin, Mike McKenzie Bahr, John Tamulonis, Mike Sullivan, and Milo Mecham

Nature of the problem: We need more jobs in the region

LCOG characteristics that can contribute to solutions:

1. Regional forum
2. Regional voice
3. Existing infrastructure: a Board that has a history of regional participation, willingness to discuss important issues and the LEC

What LCOG might do:

1. Foster regional discussions of jobs development
2. Work on a regional perspective
3. Develop regional criteria for jobs improvement
4. Elevate the LEC (put board members on the LEC, give the LEC a regional impact)

Forum powers

- A. A voice in the distribution of ED funds (reinstate a voice at the County, other places that distribute funds)
- B. Responsibility for developing, maintaining regional recommendations
- C. Permanent focus on economic development / jobs improvement

Forum roles

- A. Information gathering and dissemination
- B. Regional consensus building
- C. Develop, maintain a regional plan that contains criteria designed to foster regional jobs improvement
- D. Provide a regional voice on Economic development inside and outside the region
- E. Identification of barriers to development whether particular or general, with the ability to call attention to those barriers
- F. Preserve equality of jurisdictional representation in developing and projecting advisory activities

In the Area of Communication

Subcommittee Members: Don Hampton, Greg James, Amber Fossen, Brenda Wilson, Tony Black, Byron Vanderpool

The Subcommittee chose to define “Communications” in very broad terms, so that it includes:

- All communications among and between:
 - Citizens and Government
 - Business and Government
 - Government and Government
- Communications Technologies.
- Coordination, for example on grant applications.
- Relationship management.
- Mediation – neutral-party services.
- Training and education.
- Branding, i.e. “when I have a need for information, I immediately think to call LCOG.”
- Intergenerational communications strategies, especially new technologies.

Inhibiting Factors:

- Member Agencies don’t know what services LCOG provides. What are LCOG’s specialties?
- Agencies/Citizens don’t have a single place to go for contacts/services.
- Our local voice is not as loud as Portland’s in Salem. We sometimes disagree with one another while in Salem.
- Could use one location to find out what other jurisdictions are doing – something like the AOC newsletter to keep everyone informed.
- Public should have one location to find meeting dates and times, as well as agendas and meeting materials. Also a single location for government news and updates.
- Would like to have a 3-1-1 telephone system region wide. One location for information and referral.
- As an elected official/government employee how do I find the expert and specialized information in a topic area? Knowledgebase.
- LCOG has done a poor job of marketing itself.
- Could use a course in “Respectful Communications 101.”

- Social media evolve VERY rapidly – government tends to be VERY slow to adopt new media.

Opportunities:

- The 28 member agencies of LCOG have a large amount of knowledge and resource between them.
- The region has more than 60 years successful experience in cooperative ventures.
- The LCOG Board has shown commitment to taking action in the area of improving communications.
- LCOG has been very successful in getting outside funding to develop new services.
- Local agencies (e.g. LTD) have experience with new social technologies such as Facebook and Twitter.

Proposed Action Steps:

- Hire an Information Officer at LCOG. This position needs to:
 - Have Vision.
 - Move Communications Projects Forward (so it needs to be a dedicated position, not simply another work assignment.)
 - Understand and Make Technology Decisions.
 - Coordinate Relationships.
 - Help to Brand LCOG – Want Someone’s First Thought to Be “LCOG” When You Want Information.
 - Work Freely Across Organizational Boundaries Within, and Without LCOG.
 - Arrange for Trainings and Demonstrations.
 - Have Free Access to / Report to the LCOG Board.
- Establish a “Regional Voice” Process, to Promote Our Members’ Needs at the State Legislature.