



155 Cottage Street NE, U20
Salem, Oregon 97301-3966
503-378-3201 Fon
503-3784048 Fax
www.econ.state.or.us/opb

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Executive Director

January 8, 2004

TO: Progress Board Members

FROM: Jeffrey Tryens
Executive Director

Rita Conrad
Senior Policy Analyst

SUBJECT: Oregon Progress Board November 18, 2003 Meeting Minutes

Members present: Neil Bryant, Heather Kaplinger, Duke Shepard, Diane Snyder (by phone) Ed Whitelaw (by phone), Brett Wilcox, and Max Williams. Staff: Jeff Tryens, Rita Conrad, and Jeffrey Pritchard (intern).

Brett Wilcox called the meeting to order at 12:35 p.m.

Minutes of the July 2003 Board meeting were approved.

Presentation of Hunger Findings

Oregon State University researchers Mark Edwards and Bruce Weber released their findings on causes of hunger and food insecurity in Oregon.

Mark stated that this report was commissioned by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service because of Oregon's high-hunger ranking. Results are based on the Census Bureau's Current Population Survey (CPS) data and its Food Security Supplement data (April 1999 and 2001). After reviewing official definitions and methodology, Mark presented these findings:

1. Oregon's hunger rate relative to its level of poverty is "out of line" (higher) than other states.
2. Compared to the rest of the U.S., Oregon's vulnerable populations could be at greater risk:
 - a. Vulnerable groups (e.g., the unemployed) could be hungrier
 - b. Groups not usually vulnerable elsewhere could be experiencing higher hunger rates:
 - ☞ Households with at least one full-year, full-time worker (5.5% hungry here; 2% U.S.)
 - ☞ Two-parent families with children (7.3% here; 2% U.S.);
 - ☞ Households with blue collar men (6.8% here; 2.9% U.S.);
 - ☞ Households with blue collar women (10.4% here; 2.5% U.S.);
 - ☞ Households with administrative support/sales women (7.5% here; 2.5% U.S.)
 - c. Vulnerable groups could be larger than elsewhere (e.g., more unemployed in Oregon)

3. Oregon families in all income categories are more likely to be hungrier than in other states.
4. What we need to learn:
 - a. Do costs of housing, childcare and healthcare influence hunger?
 - b. If so, are these cost-burdens uniquely high in Oregon (either because of high prices or low incomes)?
 - c. How much does a lack of support (extended family, community) increase hunger?

Discussion

Brett: How big was the sample? Answer: Oregon's sample size was 755 households. We were careful in testing statistical significance to the .05 level. For most groups, the confidence intervals are plus or minus two percent.

Neil: What influence does the Oregon Health Plan have on hunger? Answer: We will study that in the next phase.

Neil: How long have those who are hungry been in Oregon? Answer: The real impact (where Oregon differs) is in people moving locally, within the county. For them, the rates are twice as high. Cause and effect is unknown. Recent arrivals are relatively small, so even with a high-hunger rate; they would not have a great impact because of small numbers. There is some evidence that they are hungry. In-migrants generally have greater education and skills.

Max: How about the impact of housing costs? Answer: Haven't studied that yet – will be in next phase. Questions like, "Do people choose to live in housing that is too expensive?" will be addressed.

Gary: Do you have data broken down by region (coast, eastern, central valley)? Answer: There was no significant statistical difference for metro versus non-metro. We were unable to go down to counties and regions. Jeff clarified that when the Oregon Population Survey (OPS) asked hunger questions (two years ago), regional rates showed that there was variability within regions. They did not match the CPS, but you could track the variability across regions.

Jeff expressed some concern over the dramatic conclusions, especially regarding full-time, full-year workers (5.5% hungry here; 2% U.S.). Bruce clarified that the data spanned two years (1999-2001). The exercise that requires a match between the March (labor data) and April (hunger data) segments of the CPS, and no one has done that before. Mark offered to report back on a cluster of years to validate the conclusion. There was general agreement that this would be a good idea. If valid, there are clear policy implications.

Ed wondered if there are factors in Oregon that would help us understand the cause/effect relationship between hunger and intrastate mobility findings. Bruce said that he did not currently have a hypothesis, had not sorted it out and would appreciate any help.

Gary asked what next steps are in understanding these numbers? Answer: We must look at costs relative to income. How is their annual income spent?

Bruce agreed and clarified that the first step is drilling down to be more specific. The first phase used national CPS data. The next phase is to use the OPS, which uses the short version of the national protocol to ask hunger questions. Then try to understand whether social supports play a role. Oregon Population Survey doesn't ask that specifically, but does ask about voting and how connected people feel to their communities, which might be an indicator of mobility and social supports. It will look at income and costs.

Max asked whether church-going might have more impact on hunger than voting, given that Oregon has one of the lowest church-going rates in the country. Answer: The survey does not ask about religious affiliation, but we can correlate to church-going by county. “We can nose into it, but not nail it down.”

Brett suggested looking at broader labor statistics to validate full-time, full-year worker hunger numbers. Bruce agreed to dig deeper.

Audience Questions

Thomas from the Oregon Food Bank asked about the income divide that has grown faster here than in other states because of higher-end-segment growing. Bruce affirmed the importance of this issue and is working on how to address it. Jeff clarified that the income disparity is slowing because the higher end is dropping. Oregon’s rank has dropped from 12th (highest disparity) to 25th

Tina Kotek from Children First of Oregon asked about asset questions. Jeff responded that, beginning in 2002, we ask about homeownership, savings for college and retirement -- but not assets.

Improving Links Between Community Organizations and Benchmarks

Jeff updated the Board on discussions with Jack McGowan of SOLV regarding a mutually beneficial process to better link SOLV, and eventually other community organizations, to Oregon Benchmarks. Responding to the Board’s concerns and request for written information, he presented a memo outlining a collaborative project with SOLV. He indicated that Jack is enthusiastic about a memorandum of understanding (MOU), signed by the Governor, for a developing a training program that helps non-profits link to benchmarks, much like the training the Progress Board does with state agencies.

Jeff stated that he is looking for guidance regarding a way to raise funds from the foundation world. At Max’s request, he met with Lowell Greathouse from the United Way, who runs one of their vision groups. We discussed this as an idea for other areas. He was quite impressed, and thought we could raise money from foundations who want their projects to link up to Oregon Benchmarks in meaningful ways. Jeff felt that if this project works, the Board could hire staff or spin it off.

Gary expressed serious concern about this project not netting new funds after costs. He clarified that the Legislature did not say “offer new service to raise money.”

Jeff responded that he does not see a way to get anybody to give the Board money to carry out its state work. He is trying to broaden the base so the Progress Board has some viability. Working with Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs) is a viable strategy. Max affirmed this was a motivation behind him asking Jeff to meet with Lowell Greathouse and believes it is consistent with the Board’s mission. There was general agreement on this among Board members. Neil affirmed that this (help with visioning and linking to benchmarks) would be of interest to the United Way in his county.

(Jeff responded to Neil’s statement that going to the Legislature without success relates to “no grass roots support.” He clarified that the Board was able to generate 50 letters of support in three weeks and that it is inaccurate to imply that there is no grass roots support for the Progress Board.)

The Board asked Jeff to come back with a more detailed agreement and a work plan, a greater understanding of the financial issues, impact on ongoing activities, as well as the actual MOU. Gary was more comfortable with this and asked for clarification of long-term implications, including how the project would turn down organizations (for approval).

There was discussion of the “pilot” aspect of this project, and that if only one pilot was run, it should be United Way. Max responded by saying that United Way is probably less ready with this than SOLV.

Jeff affirmed that he needs Board approval to work with SOLV staff and will come back as many times as necessary.

Performance Measurement in State Government

Jeff updated the Board on recent developments in improving performance measurement in state government. He summarized the preliminary findings of the Advisory Committee on Government Performance and Accountability (ACGPA). The report says that Oregon’s current performance approach is sound, but needs improvement. It suggests that there are some system changes that need to occur, including more upstream strategic planning focusing on core priorities of government and on “drivers” of key results such as economic development and child well-being. The final report will consolidate the findings of all three subcommittees – Management Practices, Performance Measurement and Regulatory Streamlining.

Brett added details on a case study the Performance Measurement Subcommittee conducted with state agencies involved in child well-being. The committee looked across the system in both child well-being and economic development and watched agency experts redesign the current landscape of performance measures. Child well-being agencies reached consensus quickly on what the basic goals, strategies and measures should be. Brett stated that the ACGPA report urges the state to this type of exercise “more and faster.” Brett mentioned that Gary has been incredibly supportive and that the work Jeff and Rita has done with agencies exceeds what many other states have accomplished. Brett feels we have real opportunities.

Discussion

Neil asked if agencies were still meeting. Brett answered “yes,” but focus is on logical outcomes, not just programs, needs to happen more.

Max commented that the Legislature has spent a lot of time on this issue, for example the role of mental health in public safety. He emphasized that local governments were also part of the problem in standard bureaucratic resistance to change and players changing hats. The fact that Oregon is dealing with this issue has won recognition from the federal government in the form of a recent General Accounting Office (GAO) best practices case study. Brett acknowledged that the beauty of the political process is that each individual brings his or her own issues, but emphasized the importance of pushing toward database decisions to keep politics honest.

Gary credited the Social Supports Investment Work Group “SSIWG” process for the quick progress child well-being agencies made in refocusing on outcomes and drivers. He questioned how to move it forward for the Governor and the Legislature. Max affirmed that the challenge is in implementation – reorganizing and reallocating resources. Neil noted that there seems to be only some progress in collaboration since 1998 when 12 agencies adopted teen pregnancy as a benchmark, but were not collaborating.

Brett noted that if the tax initiative passes, it will force a practical change into something like Washington’s “Priorities of Government” approach, which asks how available revenues should be allocated to results (not silos). Gary cautioned that Section 89 of the appropriation bill prescribes how much will come out of each area of the budget and that the Governor’s ability to be creative is not as great as people think. Max responded that even though there is enough “pandering” out there

for some rationale to come back into the reduction process. No one wants to talk about it right now. This is a call the Governor would make if necessary.

Jeff presented the Progress Board's application for a National Center for Civic Innovation (NCCI) grant to help agencies be more effective in communicating performance information to the public. The Board would work with three agencies to set up three separate kinds of communication efforts and organize them in a way that allows them to be evaluated. Half the money is for evaluation. The Oregon University System, Department of Education, Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT), Board of Nursing, and Housing and Community Services are among agencies expressing an interest. The project would allow the Progress Board to acquire information to improve its performance measure guidelines in future biennia. The only requirement is that agencies must have their performance information on their websites. Participation is strictly voluntary. Oregon Department of Transportation, which originally planned to apply as an individual agency, is enthusiastic. The Board will get \$15,000 and the rest will be for an outside evaluator. The Progress Board will run a citizens' advisory group. The application has to be in by end of year. If the grant is approved, the Board would have to get limitation from the E-Board to spend the money, but not approval to submit grant.

Retreat Follow-up

Jeff passed out and reviewed with the Board a one-page summary of retreat highlights.

Discussion

Brett puts himself in the "little think" category, setting up the system. He feels that the current 75-25 split (75% state government) can shift over time.

Gary affirmed that the Board is more than a performance arm of government, but for the benefit of the Governor and the Legislature, the Board needs to focus on work other than visioning. It is necessary to get support; to get people to say the Progress Board is worth funding. Max agreed that the Board needs to provide the service Gary is talking about and be cautious of losing itself in visioning.

In response to Max's question, "What do we do now?" Jeff presented a product-oriented work plan which he believes reflects the new balance.

Brett asked Gary what the Governor's vision was for Progress Board in the next biennium. Gary said that getting agencies to pay attention to benchmarks and using benchmarks as a tool for "some of that vision." Jeff noted that that is what the Board is doing. Linking agency goals and measures to the benchmarks are useful, meaningful and powerful. Gary noted that that is why balance is so important, so that the Board can impact government performance.

Jeff highlighted how things have changed for the Board with the new focus on government performance. According to tradition, this would be the time for the Progress Board to shift gears and begin to organize a big Oregon Shines III outreach process involving community meetings. Since this is not going to happen, then doing projects like the NCCI grant will allow the Board to add value.

The Board may still be able to find other visioning trains leaving the station. Jeff reported that the Chalkboard Project is still very much in the developmental and is unsure what will happen. Max noted that as much information as we can get to NGOs would be great.

Neil said that the retreat helped him understand what is required, but as a Board member, he wants to do something else. He said that every United Way struggles with how to give money and they

would pay for a program to help them do that. Foundations would be very receptive to similar proposals. His community would be willing to pay. Neil feels there are a lot of opportunities out there and would like to see the Board pursue them.

Jeff reviewed the proposed work plan for 2003 - 05. He noted that expert assistance was needed to complete the race and ethnicity report, which would cost approximately \$5,000. Gary moved to accept the work plan with the caveat that the sections of the plan designated “new” would require explicit Board approval before staff proceeds. The Board approved the work plan.

Executive Director’s Report

Rita presented the just-released County Data Book and the Competitive Index project underway with the Oregon Business Council.

Jeff reviewed the Sustainability Board’s guidance to agencies and noted that there were overlapping issues with Oregon Shines.

He noted that the Institute for Natural Resources has a new Executive Director Gail Achterman. Gail is eager to be the new owner of the State of the Environment Report (SOER). There will have to be a formal transfer. A new report should be out within the next few years. Jeff is both sad and happy to let this project go.

Jeff reported on work with the Department of Community Colleges and Workforce Development on a new literacy survey (n=1,000) for Benchmark #27. They have engaged two Portland State University (PSU) experts, including synthetic estimate guru Stephen Reder to come up with a new measure. They think the current benchmark makes Oregon’s rate of intermediate literacy look lower than it ought to be because we use the Oregon standard as 325 as the standard. The National Adult Literacy Survey (NALS) used 275. It’s complicated by the fact that the 1992 NALS study looked at one set, while Oregon looked at another in 1990 in advance of national survey. There are unexplained numbers from these studies. The results Oregon got from the 1990 survey put Oregon dramatically higher than all peer states in intermediate literacy with no way of explaining why.

Wrap Up

Jeff queried the Board about whether it feels clearer about its direction. He expressed concern about where the Board wants to go so he can get it there. Brett said the retreat was very helpful and that Board members need to get more involved. Jeff said help was needed in reviewing agencies who have applied for the NCCI grant. Duke and Heather volunteered. Neil said he will bounce ideas around in his county. Max will come up with more people for Jeff to talk to. Brett suggested talking to The Oregon Community Foundation.

Meeting adjourned 3:08 p.m.