
Josephine (JO) County (CO) Justice System (JS) & Public Safety Services (PSS)

JO CO JS&PSS Issue The 2012 expiration of federal funding for services resulted in two JO CO proposed levies as a solution. They both failed.

Financial Condition Review In May 2012 the OR Secretary of State published an analysis entitled, “*Oregon’s Counties: 2012 Financial Condition Review*.”³ Part of that report was about how each of Oregon’s 36 counties had addressed its financial condition.

Summary The objective of the 2012 report was to analyze the financial condition of county governments within the State of Oregon, and to identify general strategies of other states for addressing financial concerns. We also looked specifically at the federal timber payments to counties, which are scheduled to end, to identify the added financial strain. **We did not propose specific solutions for counties because the decisions about county taxes and the level of services are based upon local priorities, within practical and legal requirements and limitations.**

Early identification of financial problems can enable a government to introduce remedies sooner. State monitoring of local governments can provide assurance that key partners in service delivery are financially sound, and if warning trends appear, can also prompt action. **One of the key challenges facing several states and their local governments is the right solution when a government is in severe financial distress.** We compiled and included in this report actions taken by other states to monitor the financial condition of their local governments.

1. Hugo Neighborhood Association & Historical Society (HNA&HS). July 9, 2013. *Justice System Exploratory Committee*. Hugo, OR.

2. Hugo Neighborhood Association. July 9, 2013. *All Voters & Votes Are Legitimate*. Hugo, OR.

3. Oregon Secretary of State. May 2012. *Oregon’s Counties: 2012 Financial Condition Review*. Secretary of State Audit Report Kate Brown, Secretary of State Gary Blackmer, Director, Audits Division.

State Assessment

For purposes of the 2012 analysis of Oregon’s 36 counties, 10 indicators were selected that provide a general assessment of the financial condition of Oregon’s counties. For each indicator a detailed discussion and analysis was presented. Using the results, eight counties were identified whose financial condition may indicate a higher risk of distress than other counties.

Background Of County and State Relationships

Counties play a key role in providing government services, and even precede Oregon’s statehood. Once “Oregon Country” and its counties were carved into states, Oregon transitioned from having a provisional government to a territorial government, and finally to a state government. This evolution was mirrored at the county level as well, starting with four counties in 1843, with further dividing through the years to the current 36 counties in 1917.

Originally, all counties functioned almost exclusively as agents of state government. In 1958 an amendment to the Oregon Constitution authorized counties to adopt “home rule” charters, and a 1973 state law granted all counties the power to exercise broad home rule authority.

Today’s counties provide a wide range of public services including: **public health, mental health, community corrections, juvenile services, criminal prosecution, hospitals, nursing homes, airports, parks, libraries, land-use planning, building regulations, refuse disposal, elections, air-pollution control, veterans services, economic development, urban renewal, public housing, vector control, county fairs, museums, animal control, civil defense, and senior services.**

Some of these services are supported with local taxes, whereas others rely in part upon state and federal revenue for support such as public health and senior services.

OR Secretary Of State’s 2012 Financial Condition Review For OR Counties

Definition Of Financial Condition For purposes of the *Oregon’s Counties: 2012 Financial Condition Review* report, the state defined financial condition as a local government’s **ability to maintain existing service levels**, withstand local and regional economic disruptions, and meet the demands of natural growth, decline, and change.

Eight Oregon Counties At Risk Oregon’s analysis identified eight counties whose financial condition may indicate a high risk of distress.

- Coos
- Curry
- Douglas
- Jackson
- Josephine
- Klamath
- Lane
- Polk

Financial Condition Indicators Oregon selected the following 10 indicators to provide a general assessment of the financial condition of Oregon’s counties.

- Local Support
- Retirement Benefit Obligation
- Timber Payments Dependence
- Public Safety
- Debt Burden
- Personal Income
- Liquidity
- Population Trends
- Fund Balance
- Unemployment

Additional educational brochures address each of the 10 fiscal condition indicators.

Want more information? Contact a member of the *Exploratory Committee*.

Exploratory Committee's Mission

Mission An independent Justice System and Public Safety Services Exploratory Committee (*Exploratory Committee*) to investigate the JO CO Justice System & Public Safety Services (JS&PSS) issue was formed under the leadership of the Hugo Neighborhood Association and Historical Society (HNA&HS).

Big picture ideas for the exploratory effort include the following.

1. Identifying the JS&PSS issue.
2. Identifying the JS&PSS sub-issues for research and analysis.
3. Identifying a range in level of services
4. Identifying a range of cost for services.
5. Identifying revenues for services.

The ultimate goal is an adequate justice system and public safety services. Is it possible to have a higher level of service for a lower cost? The purpose of the *Exploratory Committee* is to gather information adequate enough to understand the JS&PSS issues. This includes educational outreach efforts.

The *Exploratory Committee's* purpose is limited to investigating and researching the JS&PSS issues. It will not make evaluations of right or wrong, nor make recommendations on how to vote.

The contents of this brochure are expressions of the opinions and beliefs of those that contribute based on their thoughts and experiences. Hopefully, their efforts will assist the public toward informed decision-making.

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Justice System Exploratory Committee

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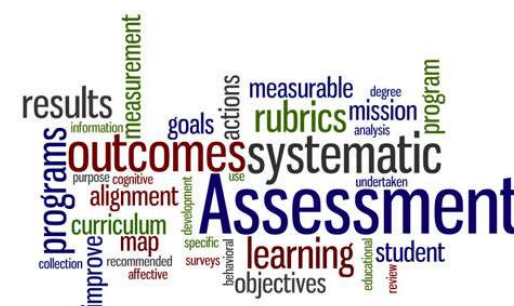
HNA&HS

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OREGON'S COUNTIES: 2012 FINANCIAL CONDITION REVIEW

Brochure Br. III.H.4.1
Justice System & Public Safety Services Series



Draft July 20, 2013

*Hugo Justice System Exploratory
Committee*