



Multnomah County Organizes to Save Millions in Administrative Services

Overview

Home to the City of Portland and nearly 750,000 residents, Multnomah County is Oregon's most populous county. More than 4,500 employees provide the community with a wide range of services.

By the fall of 2009, state budget cuts were impacting the operating environments of government entities across the nation. As 2010 rang in, the significance of Oregon's budget challenge was rapidly growing. And it was clear that things weren't going to change any time soon. Rather than let the situation continue to unfold on its own, Multnomah County leadership was committed to taking proactive steps to evaluate the county cost structure. As a starting point, Coraggio was hired to conduct a comprehensive analysis of the County's Administrative Services and, as part of the assignment, bring back to County leadership a specific set of recommendations for ways to positively impact its cost structure.

Challenge

Our challenge was identifying cost-cutting opportunities that, when implemented, would not negatively impact the delivery of essential programs and services to residents. Also important was the need to understand the County's culture, which was firmly entrenched in a familiar way of doing business for more than 100 years. Add to that the fact that a significant portion of the

County's workforce is union-represented. We knew that impacting the cost structure would mean impacting the way people worked and that any changes leadership acted on would require bold vision, intense focus and the full alignment of elected officials and County management.

Solution

Though our assignment was to identify administrative costs savings for the County, we knew this project was bigger than just saving money. Success really depended on taking a more holistic point of view. We knew the project was as much about organizational change as it was about eliminating cost. The truth was—significant change was inevitable. In order to effectively implement the cost savings from our analysis, we believed County leadership would also have to consider ways to sustain the savings over the long term.

From the onset, we worked collaboratively with multiple internal Administrative Services groups to understand the nuance of the service delivery model and associated costs. During this process, we took time to provide staff the opportunity to voice their anxiety associated with the project. We also worked to engage all levels of leadership and many elected officials to assess the risks associated with implementing cross-cutting measures, as well as developing new ideas for improving—and sustaining—

operating efficiencies.

Coraggio recommended \$47 million in cost reductions over a five year period with no impact to vital programs and services to residents. County leadership is now moving into implementation planning for this new initiative—Multnomah Evolves.

“Running an efficient and effective organization is a top priority for Multnomah County. Coraggio's thorough analysis and recommendations have been integral in helping us make well-informed decisions on how to best serve our community in a very challenging budget environment.”

- Jeff Cogen
Former Chair



About Coraggio Group

Coraggio Group is a Portland-based strategy and organizational change consultancy. Our clients choose us to help them get clear, get focused and get moving on their most important strategic and operational challenges. For more information about Coraggio Group, please visit coraggiogroup.com or call us at 503-493-1452.