

Regional Services Assessment

Emergency Preparedness



North Central Texas
Council of Governments

Overview:

The purpose of this survey report exists for the benefit of the jurisdictions, as well as to enable the North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) to better serve the region. We are interested in assessing what our member jurisdictions think about the customer service that we provide, the communications and technology services available, jurisdictional representation, program assistance, member benefits, and training and exercises. This survey assesses those key areas and provides the region with the opportunity to express feedback concerns, suggestions, and thoughts. We are very interested in the needs of those in both the urban and rural communities, as they are often very different. The information gathered from the survey has been reviewed by NCTCOG's Emergency Preparedness Department leadership and will be the basis for a plan of action developed to address recommendations provided in the survey.

Executive Summary

The NCTCOG Regional Services Assessment Survey remained open to the region from May 17, 2011 to June 10, 2011 and had a total of **58** respondents with an average of **36.29** responses per question. **53%** of all respondents came from an urban jurisdiction and **47%** came from a rural jurisdiction. The highest percentage of respondents came from jurisdictions with populations of 5,000-15,000 at **16%** and 30,000-50,000 at **16%**. The lowest percentage of respondents came from jurisdictions with populations of 400,000-750,000 at **0%**, less than 4,999 at **2%**, and 250,000-400,000 at **2%**. The majority of respondents were Program Managers at **41%** and Appointed Officials at **27%**. Emergency Management and Fire dominated the disciplines at **56%** and **21%**, respectively.

Overall, the lowest ratings received in the Improvements category are not exceptionally low. The lowest mean received on a question with options from 1 to 5 (1 being the lowest and 5 being the highest) was a **2.95**. The lowest mode received was a **3**. Within the same parameters, the highest mean received on a question was a **4.31** and the highest mode was a **5**. The average mean for the survey was **3.76** and the average mode was **4**.

The following outline describes notable themes and recommendations for the department based on the best practices and improvements highlighted in this report:

- **Theme:** EP staff rated above average for technical ability and the overall experience of dealing with EP staff.
- **Recommendation:** Continue current practices with increased focus on the customers and their needs.

- **Theme:** EP staff need increased focus on response time and availability for emergencies.
- **Recommendation:** Overall responses suggest increased focus on returning calls, emails, etc. from the customer. However, the responses appear that the customer understands that it might take time to work on the situation but they do ask that EP staff

keep them informed and up to date on the status of responses. EP commits to a 24-hour response indicating that the request was received and an estimated response time.

- **Theme:** The effectiveness of COG publications, announcements, and information and the usefulness of the meetings customers attend at COG are rated well. However, over one-third of the responses rated the above as “Average.”
- **Recommendation:** Focus on these areas to make certain the customer is getting the most useful information. A survey sent to customers to rate the types of information they feel are most useful might prove beneficial. In addition, the Program Director for staff will continue to focus on technical writing, meeting facilitation, and graphic designs (for publications).

- **Theme:** Some customers surveyed advised they were dissatisfied with the customer service by EP staff.
- **Recommendation:** Focus on consistent and positive customer service throughout all conversations and customer interactions.

- **Theme:** Informative emails and information received on listserv are rated very highly.
- **Recommendation:** Continue current practices to focus on information dissemination. Develop innovative funding support to continue in tough budget times.

- **Theme:** Communications and notices customers receive about meetings at NCTCOG are informative and timely.
- **Recommendation:** Continue current practices and maintain lines of communication with customers.

- **Theme:** While attendance at the Rural Emergency Preparedness Forums was rated as low, those that did attend the forums felt they were worthwhile and would attend again.
- **Recommendation:** Focus on more advertising for increased attendance at the forums as ratings show they were worthwhile events.
Special Note: due to budgetary restraints, we must now charge a cost recovery fee for non-members.

- **Theme:** When customers contact EP staff they receive timely and appropriate replies and generally speak with someone in a timely fashion. Communication over the past year has stayed the same.
- **Recommendation:** Annual continuous improvement from year to year and maintain the lines of communication with customers. While flexible schedules are great for the employees, customers still need to be able to contact staff throughout the week.

- **Theme:** The majority of customers that have used Video Conferencing (VTC) do feel it was helpful and accommodating. Customers rated their feelings that COG provides adequate alternatives to attending meetings with 97% “Yes” and just 3% “No”.

- **Recommendation:** Continue to focus on finding ways to make VTC more accommodating and reinforcing that this option is available to customers.
*This is a goal for the department to enhance in 2012.
- **Theme:** The majority of customers are able to access the COG website, feel it is useful and informative, and that it is easy to use.
- **Recommendation:** Continue finding ways to make the website and user experience better for customers. Continue maintaining pertinent and useful information via the main communication device, the website.
- **Theme:** The majority of respondents are currently members of the COG Emergency Preparedness Department and the majority of those that were not currently active members intended on becoming so in the near future.
- **Recommendation:** Focus on making the customer experience great to help grow the customer base.
*Departmental refocus on needs of members and will include member meetings, EM workshops, etc.
- **Theme:** The majority of customers are either indifferent or disagree that they feel their membership dues are well worth what the EP Department provides and that they have a good understanding of what their membership fees are paying for.
- **Recommendation:** Focus on providing the best experience for the customers and information regarding activities supported with member dues.
- **Theme:** Many respondents would like their jurisdictions to be better represented and have a greater voice in the decisions made for the region.
- **Recommendation:** Take action to make sure everyone has a voice, while also providing rationale behind the decisions.
- **Theme:** Improvements need to be made to the EP Training and Exercise Program and the EP Regional Training Website.
- **Recommendation:** More focus will be given on improving the EP Training and Exercise Program and the EP Regional Training Website because both were rated around "Average."