



Fiscal Year 2014 Performance Highlights

Office of Performance Evaluations

October 2014

Joint Legislative Oversight Committee

Senators

Dean Mortimer, cochair
Clifford Bayer
Michelle Stennett
Elliot Werk

Representatives

Shirley Ringo, cochair
Maxine Bell
Gayle Batt
Elaine Smith

OPE Staff

Director
Rakesh Mohan

Admin. Coordinator
Margaret Campbell

Principal Evaluators
Lance McCleve
Bryon Welch

Senior Evaluators
Amanda Bartlett
Hannah Crumrine
Tony Grange

Evaluators
Ryan Langrill
Jennifer Tomlinson

We released four evaluation reports in fiscal year 2014. We were assigned these projects by and released the reports to the equally bipartisan Joint Legislative Oversight Committee.

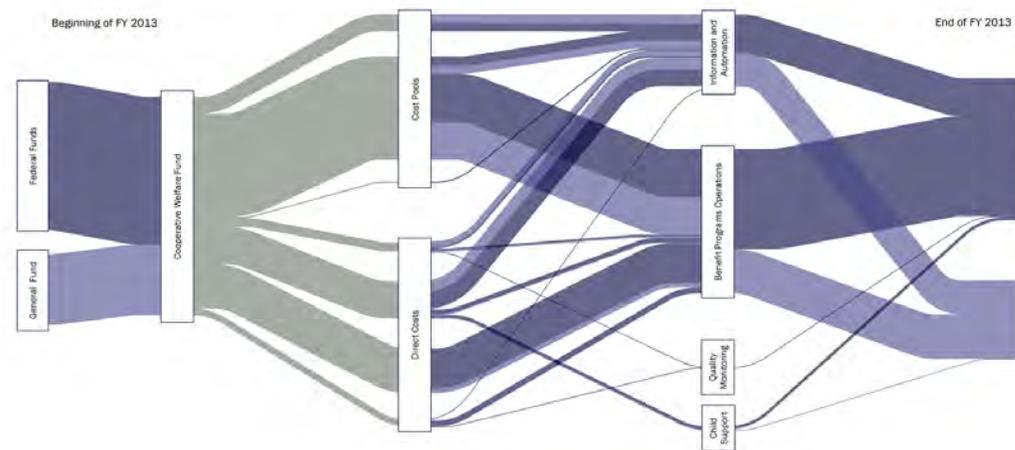
DHW's Flow of Appropriated Funds Is Complex But Understandable

The complexity of the Department of Health and Welfare's funds was driven by federal reporting requirements, data systems' limitations, and the cooperative welfare fund.

The cooperative welfare fund gives the department flexibility to efficiently process payments and receipts. After reviewing more than 2 million transactions, we found no evidence that the

department took advantage of that flexibility.

We recommended the department increase automation of its year-end reporting processes.



Death Penalty Costs in Idaho Are Largely Unknown

We concluded that Idaho's financial costs of the death penalty were largely unavailable; criminal justice stakeholders varied in their ability to provide cost data because most staff do not track how they

spend their time. Other findings indicated capital cases are more time consuming than noncapital cases—findings similar to those of national and other states' studies.

Parts of the guilt and penalty phase and parts of the appeal and post-conviction phase take longer to complete for death penalty cases.

“The report offers a thoughtful review of Idaho’s juvenile justice system and demonstrates the benefits of collaboration between juvenile justice system partners.”

Gov. Butch Otter

Confinement of Juvenile Offenders Has Declined

The average daily count of juvenile offenders committed to state custody has declined from a high of 490 offenders in 2000 to 337 offenders in 2012. This contrasts what the Annie E. Casey reported in 2012—a dramatic increase in daily counts. The source of the Annie E. Casey Foundation’s report—the Census of Juveniles in Residential Placement—contained incomplete data

for Idaho, which inflated the numbers.

We found diversion programs designed to keep juveniles out of the formal juvenile justice system vary considerably across counties in their design and eligibility, which called into question whether enough of the appropriate diversions take place.

In addition, we found that many committed juvenile

offenders had received child protection and mental health services or had substance abuse issues. This led us to draw policymakers’ attention on the importance of prevention and early intervention programs and services.

Senior Evaluator Tony Grange was invited to present this information to the Idaho Criminal Justice Commission.

Improved Data Collection Can Inform Idaho’s Need for Taxpayer Advocacy in the Future

We found that the Tax Commission did not maintain readily available, consistent and uniform trend data on garnishments, liens, write offs, and complaints. As a result, we were unable to determine for the Legislature whether Idaho

could benefit from a taxpayer advocacy office.

A review of the 2012 individual tax return data showed that 69 percent of tax returns reported a taxable income of \$25,000 or less and nearly 50 percent of tax returns were

filed without the assistance of a paid preparer.

We recommended the commission improve its current data management system as well as create more comprehensive, clear, and accessible publications.

IPTV Seeks OPE Input on Measuring Tax Incentive Success

In February 2014, Idaho Public Television interviewed Principal Evaluator Lance McCleve for the work he did on business tax policies and included the interview in a one-hour show dedicated to measuring tax incentive success. The interview was

based on the report “Guide to Comparing Business Tax Policies” (June 2013), which allows policymakers to navigate complex tax policy issues by asking the right kinds of questions early in the legislative process and more thoroughly understand the

part nontax factors play in comparing appropriate tax policy alternatives. Also introduced at the report’s release was our first interactive **web-based tool**. The tool helps policymakers evaluate the link between tax policy proposals and tax policy goals.



IPTV interviewed Lance McCleve for his expertise in business tax policy.

Evaluation Findings Are a Catalyst for Legislation

The Legislature passed **Senate Bill 1326** in 2014 to develop an accurate database of information for determining the actual student-teacher ratio in every Idaho school district by requiring the Department of Education to collect specific data elements. The bill addressed findings from our report “Workforce Issues Affecting Public

School Teachers” (January 2013).

In “Strengthening Contract Management in Idaho” (January 2013), we found a lack of clear language describing the contracting process and no requirements for contract monitoring in statute or administrative rule. In 2014 the Legislature passed **House Bill 647** that

directed the Department of Administration to develop a best practices checklist and statewide monitoring system, as described in the evaluation.

The Legislature also passed **House Bill 408** clarifying that the Division of Purchasing is authorized and empowered to formulate rules for purchasing.

Presentations to Legislative Committees Help Promote Accountability

Bryon Welch provided an overview of the 2013 report “State Employee Compensation and Turnover” to the Change in Employee Compensation Committee.

Lance McCleve presented the 2014 report “The Department of Health and Welfare’s Management of Appropriated Funds” to the Joint Finance-Appropriations Committee and the Senate Health and Welfare Committee.

Amy Lorenzo presented the 2014 report “Assessing the Need for Taxpayer Advocacy” to the Senate Local Government and Taxation Committee and the House Revenue and Taxation Committee.

Bryon Welch reported on the findings of the 2013 follow-up report “Reducing Barriers to Postsecondary Education” to the Senate Education Committee.

OPE Receives Awards for Its Evaluation Work

Impact Award from the National Legislative Program Evaluation Society for the report “Reducing Barriers to Postsecondary Education”

Notable Document Award from the Legislative Research Librarians for the report “Confinement of Juvenile Offenders”



Findings and recommendations have **improved** programs and **informed** policy and budget decisions.



Outreach Efforts Promote Confidence in Government

In 2014 we promoted our work through presentations to the following organizations:

Idaho Criminal Justice Commission
American Evaluation Association
National Legislative Program Evaluation Society
Eastern Evaluation Research Society
Pacific Northwest Intergovernmental Audit Forum

Also, we showcased our work through guest blogs:

Sankey Diagrams: A Cool Tool for Explaining the Complex Flow of Resources
Fitting Reporting Methods to Evaluation Findings—and Audiences

Staff News



Amanda Bartlett joined us with 11 years of experience as a researcher

and program evaluator for Ada County. She has an undergraduate degree in clinical psychology from Liberty University and a master's degree in public administration from Boise State University.



Ryan Langrill came to us from Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia,

where he taught courses on international economic policy, political economy of the city, and history of political economy. He received a BA in economics and history at Gonzaga University and a PhD in economics at George Mason University.



Jennifer Tomlinson joined us with 10 years of experience in urban and regional

planning, most recently as an associate comprehensive planner for the City of Boise. She received a BA in political science from the University of Texas, a BA in applied sociology from Hawaii Pacific University, and a master of urban and regional planning and a graduate certificate in GIS from the University of Colorado.

Margaret Campbell was recognized in a JLOC meeting for 20 years of service with OPE. Margaret developed foundational administrative procedures for OPE when it was established in 1994 and is copyeditor and desktop publisher for OPE reports.

Photo: Senator Dean Mortimer, Representative Shirley Ringo, Margaret Campbell, and Rakesh Mohan



During the past 10 years, we have identified opportunities for cost savings totaling at least **\$74 million.**

Office of
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