

**TITLE PAGE
AGENCY STRATEGIC PLAN**

FISCAL YEARS 2021 TO 2025

by

TEXAS OPTOMETRY BOARD

| Board Member | Dates | of | Term | Hometown |
|---------------------------------|--------------|-----------|-------------|-----------------|
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June 1, 2020

SIGNED: _____

APPROVED: _____

I STRATEGIC PLAN

Table of Contents

| | |
|---|----|
| Title Page..... | 1 |
| I STRATEGIC PLAN | 2 |
| AGENCY MISSION..... | 3 |
| AGENCY OPERATIONAL GOAL AND ACTION PLAN..... | 3 |
| Strategy: Licensure & Enforcement including National Practitioner’s Data Bank Inquiry..... | 3 |
| Strategy: Peer Assistance..... | 6 |
| E. Redundancies And Impediments | 7 |
| II. SUPPLEMENTAL SCHEDULES..... | 8 |
| Schedule A. Budget Structure—Goals, Objectives and Outcome Measures, Strategies and Output, Efficiency and Explanatory Measures | 8 |
| Schedule B. List of Measure Definitions | 8 |
| Schedule C. Historically Underutilized Business Plan | 12 |
| Schedule D. Statewide Capital Plan (not applicable)..... | 13 |
| Schedule E. Health and Human Services Strategic Plan (not applicable) | 13 |
| Schedule F. Agency Workforce Plan | 13 |
| Schedule G. Workforce Development System Strategic Plan (not applicable) | 18 |
| Schedule H. Report on Customer Service | 18 |

AGENCY MISSION

The mission of the Texas Optometry Board is to promote, preserve, and protect the health, safety and welfare needs of the people of Texas by fostering the providing of quality optometric care to the citizens of Texas through the regulation of the practice of optometry.

AGENCY OPERATIONAL GOAL AND ACTION PLAN

Manage Quality Program of Examination and Licensure, Enforce Optometry Act.

Strategy: Licensure & Enforcement including National Practitioner's Data Bank Inquiry

To manage a quality program of examination and licensure to ensure the initial and continuing competency of optometrists, and to enforce the optometry statutes to ensure that the public is protected from incompetent services, fraud and misrepresentation.

SPECIFIC ACTION ITEMS TO ACHIEVE YOUR GOAL

1. Verify education and fitness of applicants, and through testing, the knowledge, treatment skills and decision making of applicants for license
2. Verify continued competency and fitness of licensees once licensed, by regulation of continuing education satisfaction, the investigation of a licensee's criminal history, other state disciplinary action, and compliance with basic competency requirements of the Texas Optometry Act
3. Query National Practitioner's Data Bank, investigate complaints and discipline licensees and others who are in violation of state law
4. Timely and cost effectively issue licenses and conduct investigations
5. Provide accurate information to the public, patients, applicants and licensees regarding compliance with the Texas Optometry Act

DESCRIBE HOW YOUR GOAL OR ACTION ITEMS SUPPORTS EACH STATEWIDE OBJECTIVE

1. Accountable to tax and fee payers of Texas. The agency is funded solely by fees paid by licensees which significantly exceeds the appropriated budget of the agency. The agency takes great effort to minimize expenses and maximize efficiency while performing action items required to insure the protection of the public. The number of staff has not increased for many years. The agency continues to employ additional technology when cost efficient in order to effectively regulate an increasing number of licensees and applicants with current resources and limited budget.

2. Efficient by producing maximum results with no waste of taxpayer funds and by identifying any function or provision considered redundant or not cost-effective. The agency regulates one profession and therefore is able to use this expertise to efficiently and accurately assist the public, applicants and licensees. The agency continually evaluates functions of its action items, including the use of technology to increase efficiency. The technology employed must be cost efficient, easy to use and accurate. Examples of recent actions taken to increase efficiency include outsourcing examination administration and utilizing an on-line delivery of license renewal certificates.

3. Effective by successfully fulfilling core functions, achieving performance measures, and implementing plans to continuously improve. To fulfill core functions, the agency

must accurately and timely issue initial licenses and renew existing licenses. The agency has been able to meet performance measures, but is aware that the increased number of applicants and licensees presents challenges that must be continuously met. The agency evaluates, researches, plans and implements plans to meet the challenges, including the increased use of technology. The agency strives to meet and improve performance measures while recognizing that the increased complexity of investigations may make a rapid resolution challenging. The action item providing information to public, patients, applicants and licensees (through the website, newsletters, answering questions, and college presentations) directly affects meeting performance measures regarding investigations and enforcement.

4. Attentive to providing excellent customer service. Trained employees answer telephone calls and e-mails from the public, applicants, complainants and licensees. The agency's website contains information which is available around the clock.

5. Transparent such that agency actions can be understood by any Texan. Information on all new rules, proposed and adopted, is placed on the website and in the newsletter. In addition to general information, the website also has direct links to sections of the Optometry Act. An indexed version of the Optometry Act and Board Rules is available on the website. Disciplinary actions are discussed in the newsletters. A link is provided on the website to each disciplinary order.

DESCRIBE ANY OTHER CONSIDERATIONS RELEVANT TO YOUR GOAL OR ACTION ITEM

External Assessment

The agency licenses doctors of optometry who perform vision and eye health examinations and treatment. Optometrists perform a majority of the eye examinations in the United States.¹ The agency's goal will be tested by the forecasted general increase in population, including projections that the elderly will comprise a bigger percentage of the population in 2025 as compared to 2021.²

"Employment of optometrists is projected to grow 10 percent from 2018 to 2028, faster than the average for all occupations. Because vision problems tend to occur more frequently later in life, an aging population will lead to demand for more optometrists."³ A significant number of older Texas have increased rates of visual defect, disease, or abnormal conditions. One survey tabulated self reported rates of 6.9% for glaucoma, 29% for cataracts, 4.7% for macular degeneration, and 3.9% for diabetic retinopathy in Texas citizens 50 and over.⁴ As an example of the trend, the number of persons with glaucoma is expected to double by 2050.⁵

In Texas, a good economy, with an increasing population of young and old, predicts a significant increase in the number of licensees. In the last ten years additional optometry schools have increased the number of optometry school graduates by 24 percent.⁶

Internal Assessment

Deploying the action items needed to protect the safety of an increased number of Texans will require a competent and engaged workforce. Adequate compensation will be a consideration as the type of employee comfortable with the latest advanced technology and increased performance requirements will be working in a state providing significant competition for competent employees.

Information Resources Planning

An increased reliance on technology also brings concerns, foremost of which are security concerns as the agency's shared database contains confidential information, including protected identifiable health care information (aligning with SSP for Information Resources Management, Goal 1, Secure IT Service Delivery: cost effective security). The agency must also consider and plan for the ability to use the technology when deploying goals in a disaster situation (aligning Goal 1, Secure IT Service Delivery and improve continuity). Thirdly, the agency must keep current with software changes to prevent obsolescence of important technology systems. All these concerns require the ability to employ knowledgeable, experienced and dedicated employees and to be able purchase software updates.

The agency has an information resources initiative to add the electronic importing of continuing education data to the capabilities of the database. This aligns with Strategic Goal 2 of the State Strategic Plan, Advanced Data Management & Digital Services: explore digital methods. The agency's move to a new modern platform for its website (with capabilities for mobile use and electronic license certificate retrieval) under the direction of the Health Professions Council aligns with Goal 2 of the State Strategic Plan, Advanced Data Management & Digital Services: explore mobile and digital services and user-centric design applications. The agency continues to use, improve and expand the shared regulatory database under the direction of the Health Professions Council which aligns with Goal 3: Agile & Automated IT Strategies: leverage shared technology services.

Contract Manager Training

This goal only requires small or routine contracts.

Notes

1. *Eye Care Consumer Survey, February 2013*, American Optometric Association, available at: www.aoa.org/Documents/RIC/2012_Consumer_Survey-Executive_Summary.pdf (accessed April 23, 2017).
2. *Population Projections for the State of Texas*, Office of the State Demographer, Texas State Data Center, available at: https://demographics.texas.gov/Resources/TPEPP/Projections/2018/table2/agegrp/State_of_Texas.zip (accessed March 25, 2020).
3. *Occupational Outlook Handbook, Optometrists*, Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, available at <http://www.bls.gov/ooh/healthcare/optometrists.htm> (accessed March 20, 2020).
4. *Visual Impairment and Eye Care Among Older Adults - Five States, Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report, 2006: 55(49);1321-1325*, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, available at: <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm5549a1.htm> (accessed April 23, 2018).
5. *Glaucoma Awareness Can Help Save Vision for Millions*. 12/25/2015. National Institutes of Health (NIH), National Eye Institute, available at: https://nei.nih.gov/news/briefs/awareness_help_save_millions, (Accessed 4/23/2018); *Shifting Prevalence of Primary Open-Angle Glaucoma: Interactive U.S. Map*. American Academy of Ophthalmology Website, available at: <https://www.aoa.org/interactive-tool/shifting-prevalence-of-primary-open-angle-glaucoma> (accessed March 25, 2020).
6. *Student Data Reports, 2008-2009; 2018-2019* Association of Schools and Colleges of Optometry, available at: <https://optometriceducation.org/student-data-reports/> (Accessed March 25, 2020).

AGENCY OPERATIONAL GOAL AND ACTION PLAN

Manage Quality Program of Examination and Licensure, Enforce Optometry Act.

Strategy: Peer Assistance

Through a Peer Assistance Program provide a path for treatment and supervised accountability of licensees who are subject to the effects of substance abuse or mental illness.

SPECIFIC ACTION ITEMS TO ACHIEVE YOUR GOAL

1. Contract with a qualified provider to operate a Peer Assistance Program for the Board's licensees and Texas optometry students.

DESCRIBE HOW YOUR GOAL OR ACTION ITEMS SUPPORTS EACH STATEWIDE OBJECTIVE

1. Accountable to tax and fee payers of Texas.

This program is funded solely by fees paid by licensees. The fees pay for operating the program which provides initial evaluation and compliance tracking of participants. Expenses of treatment are borne by the participant.

2. Efficient by producing maximum results with no waste of taxpayer funds and by identifying any function or provision considered redundant or not cost-effective. Utilizing a Peer Assistance Program allows the agency to devote resources to incidents where the licensee refuses to acknowledge a problem and will not voluntarily seek treatment in a Peer Assistance Program. Prior to employing the Program, the agency would have been required to investigate, conduct meetings, and approve disciplinary orders in situations where the licensee actually wanted to obtain treatment and follow treatment requirements. The costs of such treatment is paid for by the licensee and not the agency.

3. Effective by successfully fulfilling core functions, achieving performance measures, and implementing plans to continuously improve.

The agency has continued to heavily publicize the program, including annual articles in the newsletter, contacts with students, and outreach at trade association meetings. Program participation is reported in performance measures.

4. Attentive to providing excellent customer service.

The agency website and newsletter have information on this program, including important contact information. These sources are confidential and available around the clock. In addition, all licensees are exposed to details of the program through annual required continuing education.

5. Transparent such that agency actions can be understood by any Texan.

A Request for Proposals to operate the Program was published on the Electronic State Business Daily. The number of participants in the Program and other details are reported in performance measures.

DESCRIBE ANY OTHER CONSIDERATIONS RELEVANT TO YOUR GOAL OR ACTION ITEM

Many health professional licensing agencies provide a Peer Assistant Program. As authorized by the Health and Safety Code, or individual agency enabling statutes, state agencies are able to offer a pathway to obtain help rather than impose disciplinary action. "Peer assistance program--Identifies, assists, and monitors individuals experiencing mental health or substance use conditions that are, or are likely to be, job-impairing, so that the individuals may return to safe practice. Peer assistance programs offer support and assistance and have a rehabilitative emphasis rather than a disciplinary emphasis." 26 T.A.C. §8.105.

Contract Manager Training

This goal requires one contract which is bid by the Comptroller of Public Accounts. The agency uses the expertise of the contract manager employed by the Health Professions Council.

| E. Redundancies And Impediments | |
|---|--|
| Service, statute, rule, or regulation (provide specific citation if applicable) | Tex. Occ. Code §351.005 |
| Describe why the service, statute, rule, or regulation is resulting in inefficient or ineffective agency operations | The Optometry Act does not contain a specific exemption from licensing requirements for optometry school students receiving faculty supervised clinical training on campus or at another supervised facility. By rule the agency has been able to exempt students enrolled in-state. However, approximately half of all new licensees have attended optometry school in another state, and these students are not able to easily take advantage of extern clinical training provided in Texas. Thus these students may not be able to receive clinical training in a working facility close to home or close to their preferred area to practice. These students may miss out on exposure to local issues, local health concerns, and Texas requirements during their clinical training. |
| Provide agency recommendation for modification or elimination | Amend the statute to include an exemption from the license requirement for students receiving clinical training on an accredited school campus or at another facility supervised by a faculty member. |
| Describe the estimated cost savings or other benefit associated with recommended change | The primary benefit will be the ability of future licensees to obtain clinical training in the state -- an advantage difficult to assign a cost savings. A clear statutory definition will also assist responsibilities for clinical training at all schools. |

II. SUPPLEMENTAL SCHEDULES

Schedule A. Budget Structure—Goals, Objectives and Outcome Measures, Strategies and Output, Efficiency and Explanatory Measures

| | |
|-----------|--|
| Agency | Texas Optometry Board |
| Goal | Licensure and Enforcement |
| Objective | Licensure and Enforcement: manage a quality program of examination and licensure to insure the initial and continuing competency of optometrists, and to enforce the optometry statutes to insure that the public is protected from incompetent services, fraud and misrepresentation. |
| Strategy | Operate, each year of the biennium, a licensing and enforcement system for optometrists that will insure that 100% of the optometrists meet minimum compliance standards. |

Outcome Measures

- Percent of Licensees with No Recent Violations
- Number of Licensees Who Renewed On-line

Output Measures:

- * Number of New Licenses Issued to Individuals
- * Number of Licenses Renewed (Individuals)
- * Number of Complaints Resolved
- * Number of Investigations Conducted

Efficiency Measures:

- * Average Time for Complaint Resolution (Days)

| | |
|-----------|---|
| Agency | Texas Optometry Board |
| Goal | Licensure and Enforcement |
| Objective | Peer Assistance Program: provide a path for treatment and supervised accountability of licensees who are subject to the effects of substance abuse or mental illness. |
| Strategy | Contract with and monitor a competent and efficient Peer Assistance Program. |

Output Measures:

- * Number of Licensed Individuals Participating In a Peer Assistance Program

Schedule B. List of Measure Definitions

Outcome Measures

Percent of Licensees with No Recent Violations

Short Definition: The percent of the total number of licensed, registered, or certified individuals at the end of the reporting period who have not incurred a violation within the current and preceding two years (three years total).

Purpose/Importance: Licensing, registered, or certifying individuals helps ensure that practitioners meet legal standards for professional education and practice, which is a primary agency goal. This measure is important because it indicates how effectively the agency's activities deter violations of professional standards established by statute and rule.

Source/Collection of Data: Each disciplinary action is recorded by the Executive Director in a spreadsheet. To determine the total number of licensees, a query to the database is made by the Executive Assistant on the last day of the reporting period.

Method of Calculation: On the spreadsheet, the disciplinary actions for a three-year period are totaled (current and two preceding years). Multiple disciplinary actions for a single licensee are counted as one disciplinary action. This sum is subtracted from the total number of current licensees (from the database query) to determine the number of licensees with no recent violation (numerator). The numerator is divided by the number of current licensees (denominator) and multiplied by 100 to determine the percent of current licensees with no recent violations.

- Data Limitations: None
- Calculation type: Non-cumulative
- New Measure: No
- Desired Performance: Higher than target

Percent of Licensees Who Renew Online

Short Definition: The percent of the total number of licensees who renew their license in a fiscal year who successfully renewed their license using Texas Online.

Purpose/Importance: Renewing through Texas Online can save the agency money (less information to print and mail out and fewer data entry and information checking operations). It also provides licensees the opportunity to use a credit card.

Source/Collection of Data: Texas Online transfers data to the agency that updates the agency's database with the name of each person that has successfully renewed online. A report listing the licensees who successfully renewed is generated by the database and received by the agency via interagency mail from the database managers. This paper report is used to create a spreadsheet that records the number of licensees successfully renewing online for each report received. To determine the total number of licensees who have renewed, a query to the database is made by the Executive Assistant on the last day of the reporting period.

Method of Calculation: The query results are placed in a spreadsheet. The sum of all licensees listed on the reports who renewed using Texas Online during the reporting period (numerator) is divided by the total number of licenses renewed during the reporting period (denominator). The result is multiplied by 100 to achieve a percentage.

- Data Limitations: None
- Calculation type: Non-cumulative
- New Measure: No
- Desired Performance: Higher than target

Output Measures

Number of New Licenses Issued to Individuals

Short Definition: The number of licenses issued to previously unlicensed individuals during the reporting period.

Purpose/Importance: A successful licensing structure must ensure that legal standards for professional education and practice are met prior to licensure. This measure is a primary workload indicator which is intended to show the number of unlicensed persons who were documented to have successfully met all licensure criteria established by statute and rule as verified by the agency during the reporting period.

Source/Collection of Data: All applicants for licensure are entered into the agency's database. When the applicant becomes eligible for a license, an entry is made in the database and the applicant information in the database is automatically transferred to the licensing portion of the database. Another entry is made in the database when the licensee fee is deposited, and the license is then issued. A queried report is generated indicating all licenses issued for the reporting period.

Method of Calculation: The list of licensees on the queried report generated from the database is counted to obtain the number of new licenses issued to individuals for the reporting period.

- **Data Limitations:** The Board has no control over the number of examination applicants and subsequent license holders.
- **Calculation Type:** Cumulative
- **New Measure:** No
- **Desired Performance:** Higher than target.

Number of Licenses Renewed (Individuals)

Short Definition: The number of licensed individuals who held licenses previously and renewed their license during the current reporting period.

Purpose/Importance: Licensure renewal is intended to ensure that persons who want to continue to practice in their respective profession satisfy current legal standards established by statute and rule for professional education and practice. This measure is intended to show the number of licenses renewed during the reporting period for licensees holding a valid license prior to renewals.

Source/Collection of Data: The deposit of the license renewal fee placed a renewed code in the database. Queried reports are generated listing the names of licensees renewed during the reporting period. This list is used for calculation of the performance measure.

Method of Calculation: The measure is calculated by querying a report in the database to give the total number of licensees renewed to previously licensed individuals during the reporting period. The number of expired licenses who re-obtained a license (listed on a spreadsheet maintained by licensing technician) is subtracted so that only renewed licenses are counted.

- **Data Limitations:** The Board has no control over the number of individuals choosing to renew a license.
- **Calculation Type:** Cumulative
- **New Measure:** No
- **Desired Performance:** Higher than target.

Number of Complaints Resolved

Short Description: The total number of complaints resolved during the reporting period.

Purpose/Importance: The measure shows the workload associated with resolving complaints.

Source/Collection of Data: Resolved or closed complaints are maintained on the complaint tracking system in-house. Using the closed complaint data, the legal counsel in the Complaints/ Enforcement department records the number on paper form and gives to the Executive Assistant for purposes of performance measure reporting.

Method of Calculation: The total number of complaints during the reporting period upon which final action was taken by the board or for which a determination was made that a violation did not occur. A complaint that, after preliminary investigation is determined to be non-jurisdictional is not a resolved complaint.

- Data Limitations: The complexity of some complaints may require further investigation and action by the Board, which meets on a quarterly basis. Such infrequent meetings will affect the number of complaints resolved within the target resolution date.
- Calculation Type: Cumulative
- New Measure: No
- Desired Performance: Higher than target.

Number of Investigations Conducted

Short Definition: The total number of investigations conducted during the reporting period by agency staff and contract personnel on-site and in the field.

Purpose/Importance: The measure shows the workload associated with conducting investigations. The measure is important in order to investigate major complaints and to determine if the basic competence examinations are being met by the licensees.

Source/Collection of Data: The investigations are manually maintained in hardcopy list. The legal counsel in the Complaints/Enforcement department maintains the information and once final action is taken in regard to the investigations, the result is placed in the agency's database.

Method of Calculation: The total number of investigations conducted during the reporting period.

- Data Limitations: None.
- Calculation Type: Cumulative
- New Measure: No.
- Desired Performance: Higher than target.

Efficiency Measures

Average Time for Complaint Resolution

Short Definition: The average length of time to resolve a complaint, for all complaints resolved during the reporting period.

Purpose/Importance: The measure shows the agency's efficiency in resolving complaints.

Source/Collection of Data: The date a complaint is received and the date the complaint is closed is entered into the HPC shared regulatory database. A queried report is generated to find all complaints closed during the reporting period in the database. The report is placed in a spreadsheet which is used to calculate the number of days each complaint was open. The closing date is the date that the closing letter is sent to the complainant (actual date of mailing stamped on letter) or the date of final board action in a disciplinary matter.

Method of Calculation: Using the queried report, the number of days open for each complaint is totaled (numerator). This total is divided by the number of complaints closed (from the query) during the reporting period (denominator).

- Data limitations: While most complaints can be resolved in the targeted time for resolution, some may require investigation and input from the Board, which meets on a quarterly basis resulting in a delay for resolution.
- Calculation Type: Non-cumulative
- New Measure: No
- Desired Performance: Lower than target.

Output Measures

Number of Licensed Individuals Participating In a Peer Assistance Program

Short Definition: The number of licensed individuals who participated in a Peer Assistance Program sponsored by the agency during the fiscal year.

Purpose/Importance: This measure shows licensed individuals who continue to practice in their respective field who are participating in a substance abuse program.

Source/Collection of Data: The Peer Assistance Program (Program) manually reviews records and reports to the Optometry Board (Board) the total number of licensees who have a signed contract with the Program and are being monitored by the Program during the reporting period (minus the number of program participants monitored by the Board). The Board manually reviews records to determine the number of licensees subject to a Disciplinary Order requiring participation in the Program, and/or that includes allegations or findings of one or more counts of impairment and are being monitored by the Board during the reporting period. The term “licensees” refers to optometrists licensed by the Board (including optometrists who have been subject to an order reinstating their license) and includes licensure status of: active, inactive, suspended, probation, or restricted. It does not include expired optometrists, applicants for licensure, or potential applicants for licensure.

Method of Calculation: The 1st quarter’s report will include all licensees participating in the Program carried forward from the prior fiscal year plus licensees who have had Disciplinary Orders entered/signed contracts during the quarter. Reports for the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th quarters will include only the number of licensees who have had Disciplinary Orders entered/signed contracts during the respective quarter, for the cumulative year-to-date number to be the total number of licensees who participated in the Program during the current fiscal year.

An individual who is licensed as of September 1 of the current fiscal year will be counted as being licensed for the purpose of this measure.

- Data Limitations: the Optometry Board has no control over the number of licensed individuals who develop a physical, mental, or chemical impairment. In addition, the agency has no control over the number of licensed individuals reported to and monitored by Peer Assistance Program.
- Calculation Type: Cumulative
- New Measure: No.
- Desired Performance: Higher than target.

Schedule C. Historically Underutilized Business Plan

The agency will continue to make a good-faith effort to include historically underutilized businesses (HUB) in the categories of professional service contracts, other service contracts, and commodities contracts. The objective of the Texas Optometry Board is to utilize HUB as vendors for 24 percent of professional service contracts, 26 percent of other services contracts, and 21 percent of commodity contracts.

In FY 2019, the agency utilized HUB for 100 percent of professional service contracts,

and 48 percent of the agency's commodity purchases (non term contract) were through HUB vendors. The agency will continue to contact historically underutilized businesses through the use of the web site of the Comptroller of Public Accounts. When three bids are required, the agency will contact at least two HUB businesses, one woman-owned and another minority-owned. The agency follows the guidelines of the Comptroller and accepts the lowest and best bid as well as consideration of availability of the purchase.

The agency's goal for Other Services is 26 percent HUB purchases. In FY 2019, two purchases accounted for 92 percent of the expenditures in this category. The vendor for the agency's Peer Assistance Program was paid \$36,000.00. When the contract for the program was bid by the Comptroller, only one bid was received, and the vendor is not a HUB. Because of this expenditure, the agency was not able to meet the goal for this type of purchase. The agency will continue to attempt to award contracts to vendors qualifying as a HUB, whenever possible.

| | | |
|--|--------|--------------------|
| ***** PROFESSIONAL SERVICES: | | |
| 7245 | HUB WO | \$2,789.50 |
| TOTAL OF EXPENDITURES WITH HUBS | | <u>\$2,789.50</u> |
| TOTAL OF EXPENDITURES WITH NON HUBS | | <u>\$0.00</u> |
| ***** OTHER SERVICES: | | |
| TOTAL OF EXPENDITURES WITH HUBS | | <u>\$0.00</u> |
| TOTAL OF EXPENDITURES WITH NON HUBS | | <u>\$38,569.23</u> |
| TOTAL OF EXPENDITURES WITH TERM CONTRACT | | <u>260.76</u> |
| TOTAL OF OTHER SERVICES | | <u>\$38,829.99</u> |
| ***** COMMODITY PURCHASING: | | |
| 7300 | HUB HI | \$666.61 |
| 7300 | HUB WO | \$1,309.34 |
| 7300 | | \$10.97 |
| 7334 | HUB HI | \$101.75 |
| 7334 | HUB WO | \$22.21 |
| 7334 | TC | \$620.13 |
| 7377 | HUB WO | \$4,271.01 |
| 7377 | HUB AS | \$493.00 |
| 7377 | | \$689.09 |
| 7380 | HUB HI | 1,438.00 |
| 7380 | | \$6,057.99 |
| 7380 | | \$648.00 |
| 7406 | | \$1,523.69 |
| TOTAL OF EXPENDITURES WITH HUBS | | <u>\$9,545.92</u> |
| TOTAL OF EXPENDITURES WITH NON HUBS | | <u>\$9,549.87</u> |
| TOTAL OF EXPENDITURES WITH TERM CONTRACT | | <u>\$620.13</u> |
| TOTAL OF COMMODITY PURCHASING | | <u>\$18,475.66</u> |

Schedule D. Statewide Capital Plan (not applicable)

Schedule E. Health and Human Services Strategic Plan
(not applicable)

Schedule F. Agency Workforce Plan

I. AGENCY OVERVIEW

The agency was created in 1921 by the 37th Legislature under the name Texas State Board of Examiners in Optometry. The 61st Legislature in 1969 changed the agency's name

to Texas Optometry Board. Sunset legislation in 2017 extended the agency until 2029.

The agency implements and enforces the Texas Optometry Act. This includes promulgating rules to interpret and clarify the provisions of the Act. The agency also provides and disseminates consumer information regarding the role of the agency.

Primary functions of the agency are the examination and determination of the fitness of applicants for licensure, the licensing of successful applicants, and the permanent monitoring of that license, including insuring that the required continuing education for renewal of licenses is completed. In addition, the agency resolves complaints received against its licensees, conducts investigations, and issues remedial sanctions in accordance with the Act and promulgated rules.

As a state agency, the Texas Optometry Board must comply with all requirements of record keeping and reports required of a state agency.

A. Agency Mission

The mission of the agency is to promote, preserve, and protect the health, safety and economic welfare of the people of Texas through the regulation of the practice of optometry.

B. Strategic Goals and Objectives

The agency has one goal with two strategies:

| | |
|-------------|---|
| <i>GOAL</i> | Manage Quality Program of Examination and Licensure, Enforce Optometry Act. |
| Objective | Licensure And Enforcement: To manage a quality program of examination and licensure to ensure the initial and continuing competency of optometrists, and to enforce the optometry statutes to ensure that the public is protected from incompetent services, fraud and misrepresentation. |
| Strategies | Participate in training, both in-house, state-wide and national in scope Develop additional methods of automation and on-line renewal and licensure Continue to resolve complaints in a short period of time |
| Objective | Peer Assistance: Through a Peer Assistance Program provide a path for treatment and supervised accountability of licensees who are subject to the effects of substance abuse or mental illness. |
| Strategies | Oversee operation of a Peer Assistance Program referring participants as required. |

C. Anticipated Changes in Strategies

The agency does not anticipate changes in strategy. The agency will continue to search for organizational efficiencies, especially through greater use of information technology and Health Profession Council initiatives, such as the sharing of information technology systems and employees.

II. CURRENT WORKFORCE PROFILE (SUPPLY ANALYSIS)

A. Critical Workforce Skills

Currently the agency requires these critical skills to adequately perform its mission:

- Investigation
- Customer service
- Interpretation of laws and rules
- Human resources and management
- Accounting

- Information technology
- Administration of programs

B. Workforce Demographics

The following tables depict the Agency’s workforce demographics in fiscal year 2019. Since the agency has seven FTE’s (two employees are part-time), each employee has a significant impact on any statistical analysis of the workforce. The "All State Agencies" entries reflect 2019 data. For this data, the agency's two half-time employees are each counted as a full employee.

| | Optometry Board | All State Agencies |
|--------|-----------------|--------------------|
| Gender | Female: 37.5% | Female: 53.3% |
| Age | 16-29: 0.0% | 16-29: 18.19% |
| | 30-39: 12.5% | 30-39: 24.08% |
| | 40-49: 50.0% | 40-49: 24.28% |
| | 50-59: 0.0% | 50-59: 22.39% |
| | 60-69: 37.5% | 60-69: 9.86% |
| | 70+: 0.0% | 70+: 1.20% |

Over the past several years, the gender distribution has varied from a majority female to now a majority male, all dependent on the best quality candidate available for the job. The agency will continue to work toward a gender and racial makeup that reflects the citizens of Texas, while hiring the best qualified candidate for each position.

| Ethnicity | Hispanic | Anglo | African-American |
|--------------------|----------|--------|------------------|
| Optometry Board | 25.00% | 62.50% | 12.50% |
| All State Agencies | 24.36% | 50.35% | 22.25% |

The Texas Government Code, Section 657.004, sets an agency goal of 20 percent of employees having served in the military. In fiscal years 2018 and 2019 the agency’s veteran workforce equaled 11.1 percent. This is below the statutory goal but higher than the FY 2018 state wide average of 6.8 percent.

C. Employee Turnover

Of particular importance is the employee tenure at the agency. The tenure of employees at the agency for fiscal year 2019, exceeds that of the average for all state agencies.

| Employee Tenure (years) | Optometry Board | All State Agencies |
|-------------------------|-----------------|--------------------|
| <2 | 25.00% | 37.81% |
| 2 to 4.99 | 9.38% | 23.71% |
| 5 to 9.99 | 18.75% | 15.58% |
| 10 to 14.99 | 31.25% | 11.65% |
| 15 TO 19.99 | 15.63% | 5.73% |

There was no turnover in FY 2019. Turnover at the agency is less than the state agency average. Turnover is a significant issue at an agency with seven FTE's, and is discussed in the Gap Analysis below.

D. Retirement Eligibility

Two employees are currently eligible for retirement. A half-time employee has retired and returned to work. Thus retirement may be an issue for the agency in the relative near future.

E. Essential Skills

Almost all positions have historically required excellent customer relations skills. Beginning about twenty years ago, computer skills became necessary, and today the skills are essential for the efficient operation of the agency. This includes the ability to competently operate a complex database as well as word processing and spreadsheets. Most positions require additional knowledge of additional software, including web browsers, document storage and retrieval packages, and software used by other agencies to interface with that agency.

III. FUTURE WORKFORCE PROFILE (DEMAND ANALYSIS)

The Agency's future workforce profile should closely match the current profile, but perhaps with even more emphasis on the ability to use automated systems. The ability to share agency functions with other members of the Health Professions Council may allow the agency to more accurately employ the type of person needed by the agency the majority of the time. For example, the agency shares its System Analyst with all the smaller Health Professions Council agencies, none of which could afford to hire a full-time employee for this essential task. The agency has also shared employees with larger agencies on a short term basis when the larger agency was hiring and training new employees.

Future workforce skills required should match the current skills required by the agency. Increased health needs for an aging population, and additional Texas citizens will set the table for increased numbers of license applicants, with a corresponding increase in the number of licensees to regulate. This increased workload will require employees with high information technology skills and a strong dedication to the work of the agency. Although the increased efficiencies enjoyed by the increased use of technology will continue, at some point the continued growth of the licensee base will require additional employees. Those employees will need excellent computer skills and the ability to employ new systems whenever necessary.

Any significant budget reduction would require the agency to create vacancies or not fill vacancies that develop. Each and every employee is necessary to efficiently operate the agency, and the agency will have difficulty meeting its goals strategies without the necessary staff as the number of licensees regulated by the agency continue to increase. Compensation levels are a significant issue as fewer applicants have come forward for recent postings of administrative technician positions.

IV. GAP ANALYSIS

A. Gaps Do Exist with Current Staffing or Future Staffing

The agency's current workforce is qualified and competent to undertake the tasks required by the agency. Employees will leave in the future, creating vacancies that make it difficult to timely accomplish needed tasks. Provided that employee salaries increase, the agency should be able to select well qualified individuals to fill the vacancies. Most current employees are not only experienced in the critical areas, but they also have either sufficient experience with information technology or the ability to acquire the necessary information technology skills. New employees will need to possess such skills in order for the agency to operate efficiently. As the job market in Austin becomes more competitive, the agency may face smaller applicant pools. Continued limiting of benefits and a continued falling behind on

compensation may make state agency employment a less attractive option for applicants.

B. Gaps

At present the agency faces a time gap between the creation of a vacancy and the filling of the vacancy. This gap is a significant hardship as vacancies will occur in the future. A period of at least a month and a-half is required to replace an employee where the agency has only a two week notice of a vacancy creation, and no matter how qualified the new employee is, additional training is always required. Therefore the Agency's strategies will concentrate on reducing turnover, and recognizing the inevitable, coping with vacancies as they occur. Because many agencies operate similarly, the agency is able to quickly utilize the skills of employees with other state agency experience (training is still provided in the specific procedures and laws of the agency).

A gap also exists and may exist into the future regarding the information technology skills of future employees. Although almost all persons must have some knowledge in the area, proven knowledge with the ability to easily acquire additional knowledge is in limited supply, especially at the compensation level available to the agency.

V. STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT

The agency has created the following plan to address gaps, including the time gap (the time between the creation of a vacancy and the filling of that vacancy) and to insure that valuable information possessed by long time employees is transmitted to the agency should that employee leave:

| | |
|--------------|---|
| Gap | The time between the creation of a vacancy and the filling of that vacancy |
| Rationale | In a small agency, the time period that a job vacancy exists (and the training period after the job is filled) is a burden on the agency, since one or more employees must execute at least a substantial portion of the duties usually performed by the person in the vacant position. This creates almost a domino effect with other employees in-turn assisting the assisting employees with their regular duties. |
| Action Steps | Limit turnover by making the agency a good place to work (recognizing contribution of employees, creating a team approach to accomplishing the tasks of the agency, etc.) Update procedure manuals for each division Cross train additional employees Be prepared to immediately seek replacements for every employee |
| Gap | Work deadlines more difficult to meet as more deadlines imposed without additional employees |
| Rationale | Additional work may not justify a new position, but will require each staff member to accomplish more tasks, made possible primarily by the expanding use of information technology |
| Action Steps | Continue to explore methods to accomplish work with less staff input |
| Gap | Information gap created by the retirement or leaving of a long time employee |
| Rationale | Unless procedures are in place to record the information possessed by long time employees, the agency will suffer great inefficiencies and possibly make costly mistakes |
| Action | Update procedure manuals for each division |

| | |
|-------|---|
| Steps | Cross train additional employees Establish permanent lines of communication that survive termination Continue relationships with other agencies and Health Professions Council Establish organized record system |
|-------|---|

Schedule G. Workforce Development System Strategic Plan (not applicable)

Schedule H. Report on Customer Service

The Texas Optometry Board identified thirteen types of customers in the agency's strategies "Licensure And Enforcement" and "Peer Assistance," and surveyed the three categories listed below. The agency performed the 2020 customer service survey with these goals: the most important, to gauge current levels of customer service, and secondly to obtain customer survey information in the most cost effective manner.

In addition to survey questions, detailed comments were solicited and received from customers who would normally may not have provided comments. Because of these comments, the agency is planning action in the following main area: increased emphasis promoting newsletter and developing an efficient system to acknowledge email submissions.

Categories of Customers Surveyed

The following external customers were surveyed:

- Exam Applicants - optometrists who have applied to the agency for licensure and were licensed by the agency within the last year.
- Complainants – persons, primarily patients of optometrists, who filed a written complaint with the agency in 2019 or 2018 concerning an optometrist’s office. This category may also include some persons who are not patients (complaints regarding advertising violations, for example).
- Licensees - optometrists currently licensed by the agency.

Not surveyed but previously surveyed: users of the agency’s website who are not recent applicants, complainants or licensees due to very low responses to such surveys in the past. In 2018 only two users completed the survey posted for months on the website. The agency has not been successful in surveying these customers, in part because frequent users bookmark a page and spend as little time as possible accessing the information they need, or simply do not participate in a survey.

Categories of Customers Not Surveyed

Some external customers were not surveyed. Each category of the following contains a very small number of customers: other government agencies, vendors, list buyers, schools of optometry, optometry boards of other states, continuing education providers, and associations and organizations. Other categories not surveyed contain customers the agency is not able to identify: public who view the website or contact the agency for information via telephone or e-mail. These individuals are either not identified or their identity is not maintained, and therefore cannot be surveyed.

Information Gathering Methods

---Unique Survey Period

All surveys were conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic. During this period, licensees were advised to postpone regular eye examinations. Thus many offices were operating at a very reduced capacity, possibly giving licensees and recent applicants more time to answer a survey from the agency.

---Complainants

Sixty postcards were sent to persons who had filed a complaint investigated by the agency in 2018 or 2019. The complainants were asked to complete eight survey questions. Because of the small number of individuals in this category, anything less than a hundred percent return makes it difficult to project the survey results. The agency provided postage for the postcards in order to receive as high a percentage of responses as possible, but only 20 surveys were returned (33 percent). The agency considers this to be a random sample but attaches a high error factor to a projection of the answers to the entire population of complainants because of the small response.

---License Applicants

Recent license applicants were sent an e-mail asking them to complete a survey through Survey Monkey. Forty-six of 200 persons licensed in the past year responded to the survey. The number of responses is much larger than the response rate in 2018.

---Licensees

The agency first employed an e-mail survey of licensees (optometrists) in 2002. Previously an e-mail was sent to the e-mail addresses provided by licensees who renewed their license on-line. Two years ago SurveyMonkey was used as the platform for the survey. A similar approach was taken in 2020. Approximately 95 percent of licensees renewed on-line, so the sample is not representative of the entire licensee population. The agency chose this method because of significant costs savings and the opportunity to determine whether an e-mail notification system is viable at this time. The agency licenses approximately 4,800 optometrists.

Procedure

- Licensees received an e-mail requesting the licensee to go to the Internet address for SurveyMonkey to take a survey designed by the agency (a clickable link was provided). Survey takers could also submit comments.
- Survey Monkey sent e-mails to 4,586 licensees
- 1,092 licensees completed the survey, a significant increase over the 644 who completed the survey in 2018 (see “Unique Survey Period” above).

---Users of Agency Website Including License Verification Customers

The agency is aware that the website is used to verify licenses, a service primarily performed by health insurance providers and companies contracting with insurance providers. Potential complainants frequently use the website but may not file a complaint. The agency has not been successful in surveying these customers, in part because frequent users bookmark a page and spend as little time as possible accessing the information they need.

Charts & Information Attached

- CHART 1: Survey of LICENSEES: Ratings of Website
- CHART 2: Survey of LICENSEES: Ratings of Agency Staff
- CHART 3: Survey of APPLICANTS: Ratings of Agency Staff
- CHART 4: Survey of COMPLAINANTS: Complete Survey
- CHART 5: Compact with Texas (from website)
- CHART 6: Survey of APPLICANTS: Ratings of Agency Website
- CHART 7: Survey of LICENSEES: Ratings of Agency Newsletter
- CHART 8: Survey of LICENSEES: Reasons for Contacting agency

Cost Effectiveness

The e-mail surveys of licensees and applicants were very cost effective. The agency did not expend any printing, supplies or postage costs surveying these groups. The e-mail survey, once configured, required no further staff input other than moving data from one application to another (the survey responses were stored in a format that could be imported into a spreadsheet). Regular staff performed the setup and compiling. The surveys were completed using a one month \$99 subscription to SurveyMonkey (plus \$20 in overage fees).

The complainant survey was the least cost effective. This survey required postage and envelopes outgoing and prepaid postage on the postcard incoming to encourage returning of the survey. The agency will continue to evaluate more cost effective methods, as well as more thorough methods, to survey its customers.

As additional funds become available, the agency will be able to work with professionals on construction of survey questions and analysis of results.

Analysis

--Results

Overall results in almost all categories showed a majority of survey takers were either “Satisfied” or “Very Satisfied” in each customer service category, with the exception of complainants (see discussion below).

Exceptions to a majority of “Satisfied” or “Very Satisfied” scores:

- **Licensees:**

- “How satisfied are you with the agency’s office building?” Forty percent answered “Satisfied” or “Very Satisfied” (Only 3 percent rated the building “Unsatisfied” or “Very Unsatisfied). The majority of the responses were “Not Applicable” and “Neutral).”

- **Complainants – lowest scores** (few responses, percentage of those with opinion):

- Staff members were friendly, knowledgeable, and courteous – almost 60 percent answered “Very Unsatisfied” or “Unsatisfied”

- **Applicants:**

- “How satisfied are you with the automated telephone distribution system and voice mail?” 36.59 percent rated this survey question “Satisfied” or “Very Satisfied” (29.27 percent were “Neutral”)
- “How satisfied are you with the promptness of providing information by staff?” 45.00 percent rated this survey question “Unsatisfied” or “Very Unsatisfied” (27.50 percent were “Neutral”)

A complainant’s overall satisfaction with complaint process appears to be affected by the end result of the complaint process, which is a matter that must be decided on a legal basis

and thus may not satisfy the needs of the complainant. For example, those providing a “Very Unsatisfied” or “Unsatisfied” answer to the overall satisfaction question, for the most part, provided the very same answer to every question. Thus the answers appear to be based on whether the agency’s decision regarding the validity of the complaint was the decision sought by the complainant. This survey should be expanded to determine whether the final decision itself is driving the responses of the complainants.

Of course the process, other than being legally sufficient, should provide the complainant with an opportunity to provide information, and additionally give the complainant an explanation of the reasons for the agency’s decision. The agency, in response to earlier surveys, has added additional information in the closing letters to more fully explain the reasons that a complaint was closed. The survey results appear to show more satisfaction in this area than 2018.

Acknowledging the fact that not all complaint investigations will be resolved in a manner favorable to the complainant, the agency must continue to search for methods that allow the complainant to feel that their complaint was adequately investigated and that the public puts their trust in the complaint process.

--Overall Satisfaction Scores*

Licensees: Overall impression of Board staff

Satisfied/Very Satisfied: 75% | Neutral: 19% | Unsatisfied/Very Unsatisfied: 6%

Applicants: Overall impression of Board staff

Satisfied/Very Satisfied: 56% | Neutral: 12% | Unsatisfied/Very Unsatisfied: 32%

Applicants: Overall experience of applying for license:

Satisfied/Very Satisfied: 54% | Neutral: 22% | Unsatisfied/Very Unsatisfied: 24%

Complainants: Over-all experience of filing a complaint

Satisfied/Very Satisfied: 32% | Neutral: 21% | Unsatisfied/Very Unsatisfied: 47%

--Examples of Responses Regarding Customer Service Standards*

Licensees: Accessibility of the Board’s Office (62% Not Applicable):

Satisfied/Very Satisfied: 53% | Neutral: 39% | Unsatisfied/Very Unsatisfied: 8%

Licensees: Knowledge of agency staff:

Satisfied/Very Satisfied: 77% | Neutral: 20% | Unsatisfied/Very Unsatisfied: 4%

Licensees: Ease of contacting agency:

Satisfied/Very Satisfied: 75% | Neutral: 15% | Unsatisfied/Very Unsatisfied: 10%

Applicants: Whether staff identified themselves when answering the telephone?

Satisfied/Very Satisfied: 56% | Neutral: 26% | Unsatisfied/Very Unsatisfied: 18%

Applicants: Licensing exam schedule

Satisfied/Very Satisfied: 64% | Neutral: 14% | Unsatisfied/Very Unsatisfied: 23%

Licensees: Time needed to locate information on website (very satisfied rating means information could be found quickly)

Satisfied/Very Satisfied: 80% | Neutral: 13% | Unsatisfied/Very Unsatisfied: 7%

Licensees: Timeliness of the Newsletter, including information regarding new and amended rules?

Satisfied/Very Satisfied: 79% | Neutral: 18% | Unsatisfied/Very Unsatisfied: 3%

Complainants: Easy to contact the Board and file a complaint

Satisfied/Very Satisfied: 58% | Neutral: 16% | Unsatisfied/Very Unsatisfied: 26%

*percentages of survey takers responding other than “Not Applicable”

Use of E-Mail as a Notification System

As in years past, the agency has used the survey process as a test for using e-mail as the prime notification method to contact licensees. Again, the survey has raised issues regarding this notification method:

- The agency has obtained almost 95 percent of the licensees' e-mail addresses. This means that 5 percent of e-mail addresses may not be available for communication with licensees.
- While it is not possible to determine how many licensees read the e-mails, the unique circumstances of this survey show that there is at least a significant increase in the response rate if licensees are less professionally occupied than normal.
- The agency has been using e-mails to notify licensees regarding information on the COVID-19 situation.
- Significant time and cost savings are available if the agency could use an e-mail notification system.

The results from the survey are more support for an e-mail notification system than at any other time in the past. Although e-mail has its advantages, the proliferation of spam and other useless messages makes it difficult for important e-mails to stand out from the crowd, and recipients are becoming more suspect of the veracity of e-mail notices. However, the advantages are attractive, and the agency will continue to evaluate this method of communication.

Other Information Obtained

The survey of licensees also obtained information on the number of times licensees had contacted the agency, the method(s) used to contact the agency, and the reason(s) for contacting the agency. Survey takers could also leave comments which have been provided to the Board Members. The survey of applicants obtained information on the procedure of taking the Jurisprudence Examination. Applicants could also submit comments.

Performance Measures

---Outcome Measures

- Percentage of Surveyed Customer Respondents Expressing Overall Satisfaction with Total Services Received: 76 percent

---Output Measures

- Total Customers Surveyed: 4,846
- Response Rate: 24 percent
- Total Customers Served by Agency: 5,500

---Efficiency Measures

- Cost per Customer Surveyed: \$0.04

---Explanatory Measures

- Total Customers Identified: 5,503
- Total Customer Groups Inventoried: 13

Chart 1

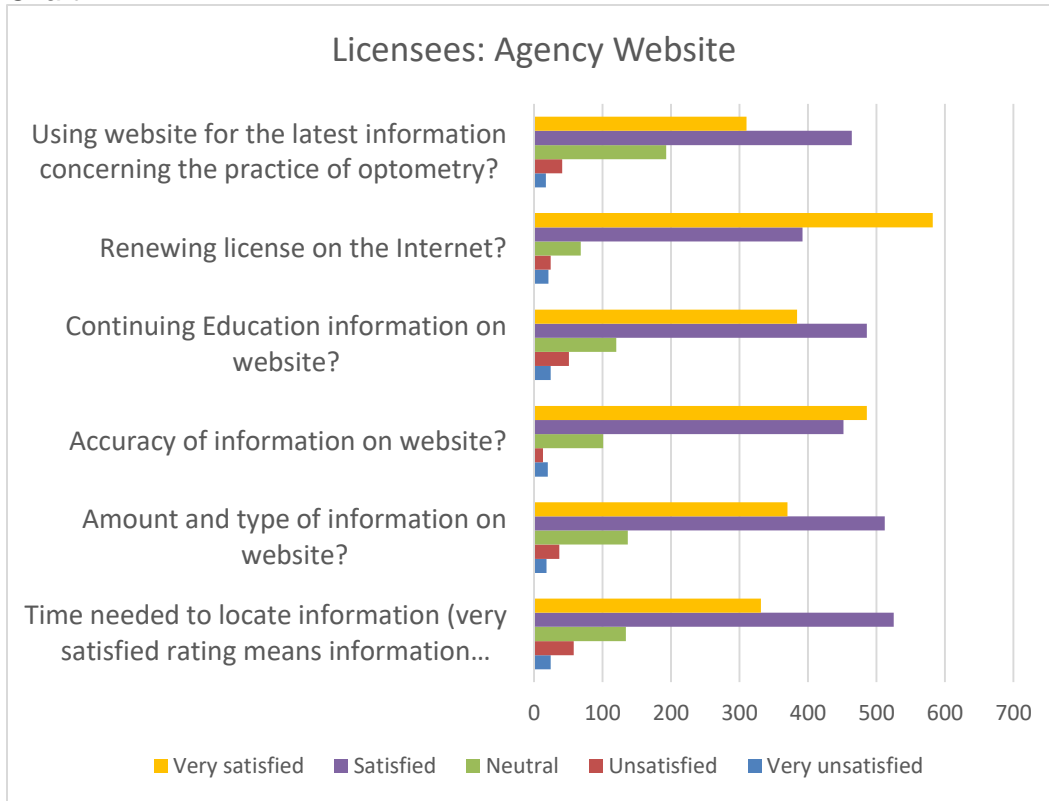


Chart 2

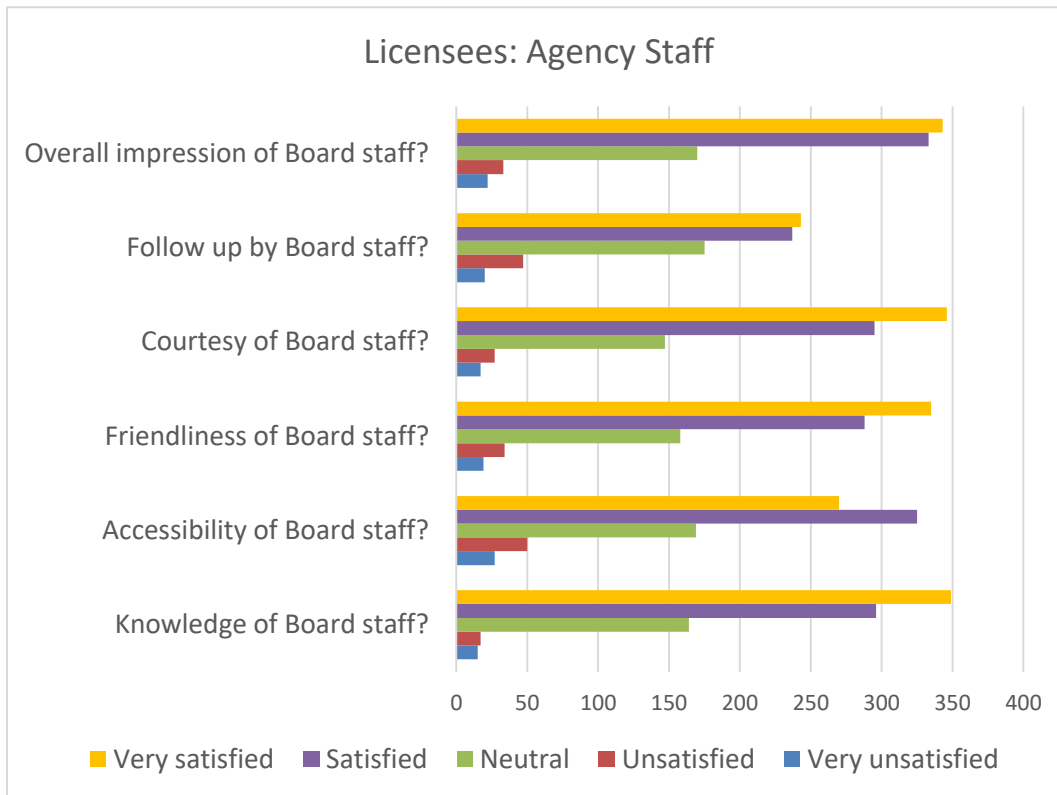


Chart 3

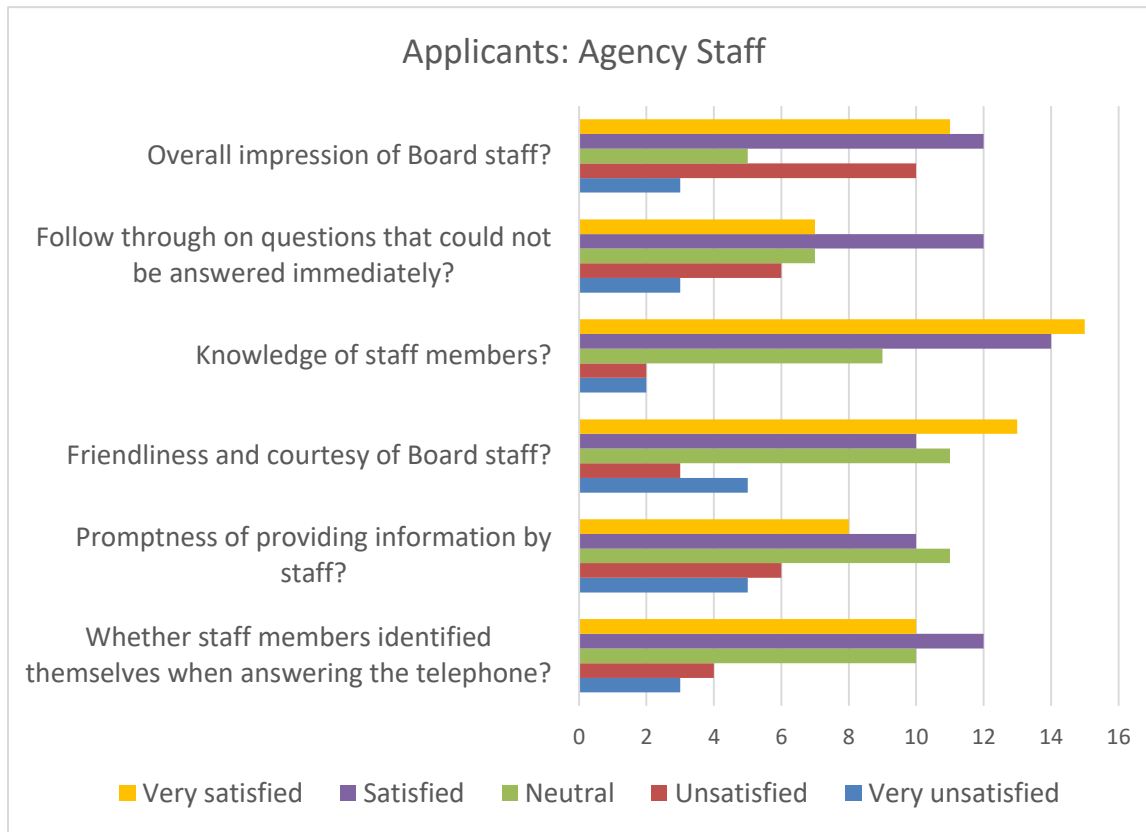


Chart 4

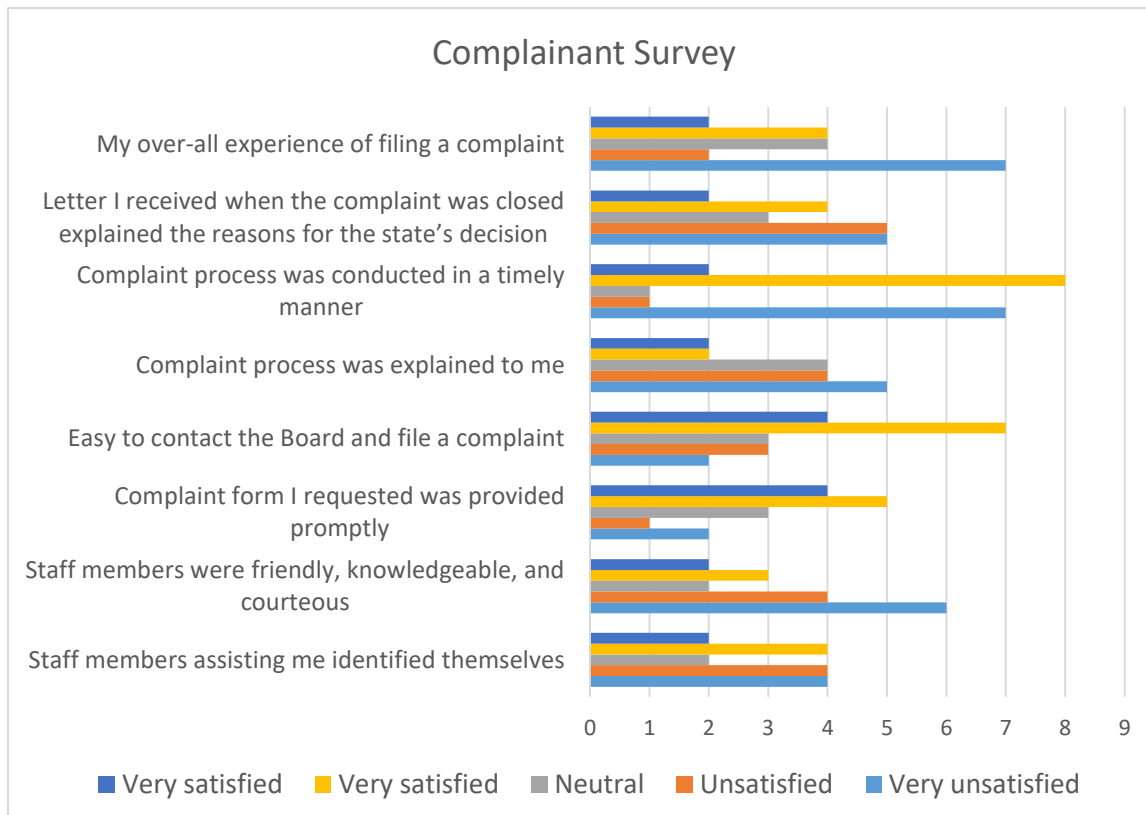


Chart 5

Compact with Texans

The Texas Optometry Board is a state regulatory agency, charged with implementing and administering the Texas Optometry Act (Chapter 351, Texas Occupations Code). The Act not only provides for the regulation of optometrists, but also contains provisions regarding ophthalmic dispensing.

Mission

The mission of the Texas Optometry Board is to promote, preserve, and protect the health, safety and economic welfare of the people of Texas through the regulation of the practice of optometry.

Services Provided By The Agency

- Review applications for licensure, administer licensure examinations, and subsequently license doctors of optometry
- Monitor continuing education of licensed doctors of optometry on an annual basis
- Monitor activities of licensed doctors of optometry for compliance with the Act, including disciplinary measures for violations of the Act
- Handle consumer complaints within the jurisdiction of the Act
- Provide information to the public including licensee verifications and general optometric information.

Service Principles Regarding License Holders

The licensing and license renewal functions are of paramount concern to the agency and the citizens of Texas. It is the goal of the agency to ensure that all legal requirements for licensure are met by each applicant and renewing license holders. The agency will continue to provide prompt and accurate responses to questions from applicants and license holders. The agency will also continue to conduct regular reviews of the application and renewal process to make it as easy and efficient as possible while maintaining a high level of accuracy regarding compliance with the Texas

Optometry

Act.

The agency works diligently to process all applications for licensure within 45 days of submission and to license individuals within two weeks following completion of all test requirements. For those individuals renewing a license, a renewal certificate is normally mailed within seven working days from receipt of the completed renewal form.

Complaints Concerning the Services of an Optometrist

Complaint forms are provided to consumers and patients upon request. The agency addresses each and every written complaint and notifies the complainant as the complaint process progresses. The average time for complaint resolution is 77 calendar days. Consumer information pamphlets detailing the process for filing a complaint are available to the general public and to the optometric offices. The agency also requires each optometric office to display a consumer complaint sign or pamphlet with the address and phone number of the Texas Optometry Board.

General Service Principles

- Conduct the activities of the Texas Optometry Board in a legal, open, professional, efficient, timely, and courteous manner
- Perform the mission of the agency with the best interests of Texas citizens and consumers in mind, including the efficient use of state financial resources
- Provide and maintain an internet site address that contains information regarding the agency and its activities, including the complaint process
- Respond to requests for written information within five working days
- Return telephone calls as soon as possible within one working day
- Provide and maintain publications and pamphlets on agency activities
- Maintain a well-trained, conscientious and courteous staff.

Accessibility

It is the goal of the agency to be not only accessible to the profession it licenses but to the general public via email, telephone, or written communication and to provide customer service in a friendly and useful manner. Foremost in its customer service is a complete and timely response to all questions and concerns about the Board and optometric practice and consumer interest questions. The Board encourages and welcomes suggestions, requests and feedback from all citizens. All communications and any concerns should be submitted in writing and the communications will be acknowledged within five working days.

Website

In addition to providing information by correspondence and telephone, the agency maintains a web page that contains information on how to file a complaint with the Texas Optometry Board as well as how to become licensed. Optometry Board Website. Or you may access the website through the Official State of Texas Site.

Chart 6

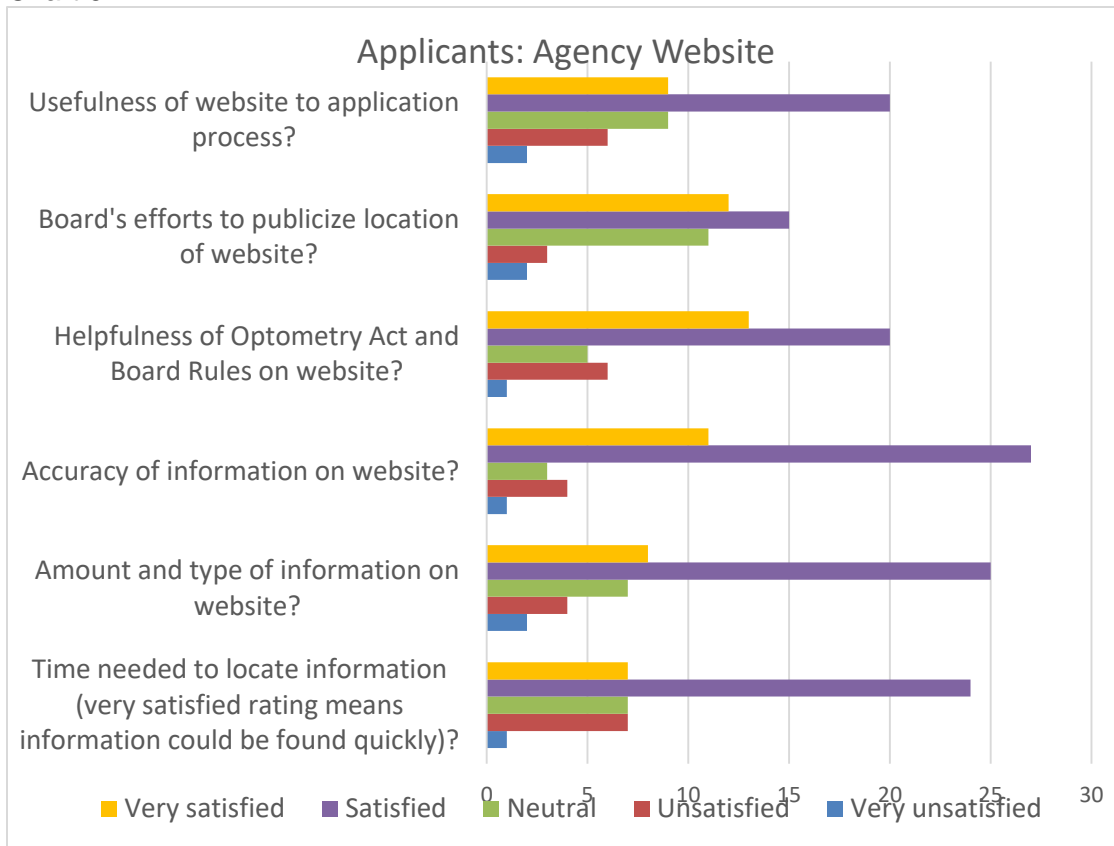


Chart 7

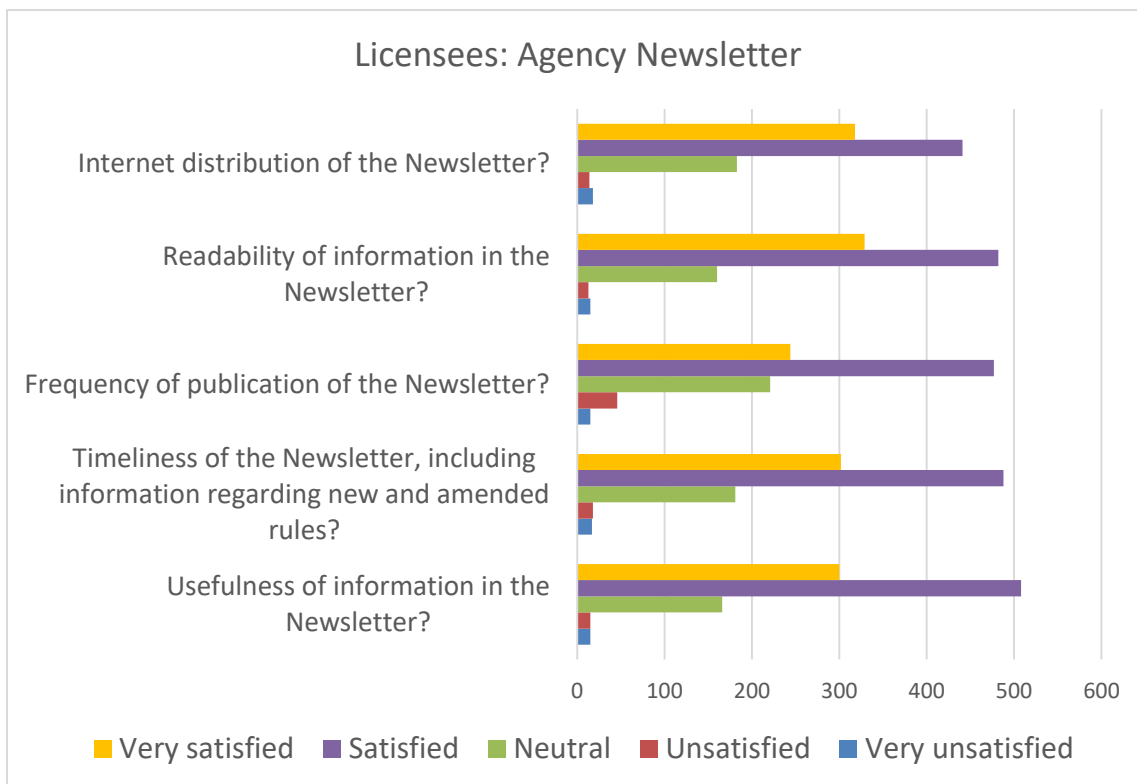
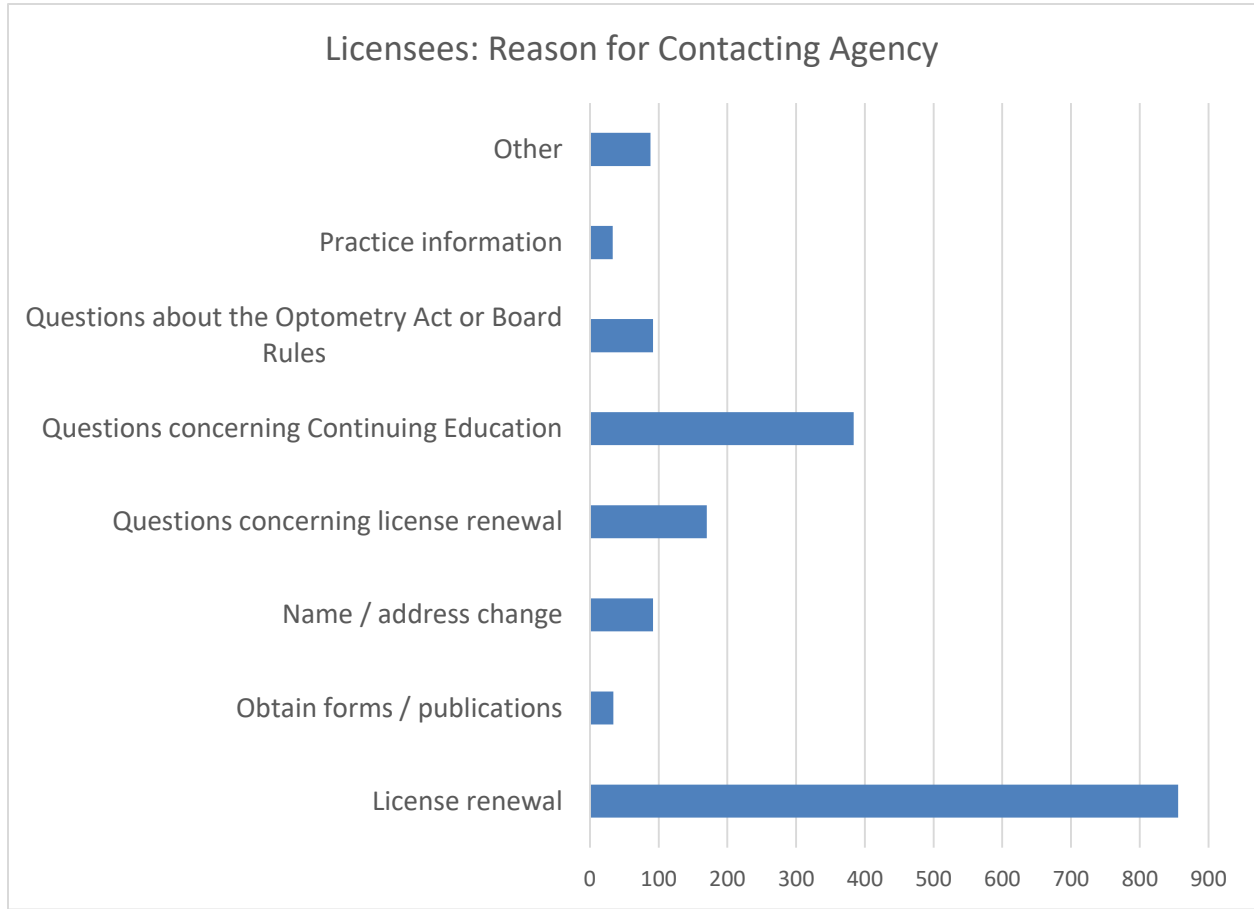


Chart 8



Customer Service Representative: Chris Kloeris, Executive Director: 512-305-8500