

AGENCY STRATEGIC PLAN

FISCAL YEARS 2019 TO 2023

by

TEXAS OPTOMETRY BOARD

Board Member	Dates	of	Term	Hometown
John Coble, O.D.	2/2006	-	1/2017	Rockwall
Melvin G. Cleveland, O.D.	5/2007	-	1/2019	Arlington
Larry W. Fields	12/2007	-	1/2017	Carthage
Mario Gutierrez, O.D.	3/2011	-	1/2017	San Antonio
Virginia Sosa, O.D.	5/2007	-	1/2019	Uvalde
Judith Chambers	2/2013	-	1/2019	Austin
Ronald L. Hopping, O.D., M.P.H.	4/2015	-	1/2021	Houston
Carey A. Patrick, O.D.	4/2015	-	1/2021	Allen
Rene D. Peña	4/2015	-	1/2021	El Paso

June 8, 2018

I STRATEGIC PLAN

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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
<p>Manage Quality Program of Examination and Licensure, Enforce Optometry Act. Strategy: 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.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">SPECIFIC ACTION ITEMS TO ACHIEVE YOUR GOAL</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Verify education and fitness of applicants, and through testing, the knowledge, treatment skills and decision making of applicants for license2. 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 Act3. Investigate complaints and discipline licensees and others who are in violation of state law4. Timely and cost effectively issue licenses and conduct investigations5. Provide accurate information to the public, patients, applicants and licensees regarding compliance with the Texas Optometry Act
<p style="text-align: center;">DESCRIBE HOW YOUR GOAL OR ACTION ITEMS SUPPORTS EACH STATEWIDE OBJECTIVE</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Accountable to tax and fee payers of Texas. The agency is funded solely by fees paid by licensees. 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 such that maximum results are produced with a minimum waste of taxpayer funds, and by identifying any function or provision you consider 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 continuing to modify the agency database so that advanced features can be added and utilized.

AGENCY OPERATIONAL GOAL AND ACTION PLAN

3. Effective in 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 website has extensive information for these same groups and 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

The agency licenses doctors of optometry. Optometrists perform a majority of the eye examinations in the United States.¹ The agency's goal will be tested by the general increase in population, including projections that the elderly will comprise a bigger percentage of the population from 2019 to 2023, and thus an increase in the projected number of licensees needed to treat the increased number of patients.²

"Employment of optometrists is projected to grow 18 percent from 2016 to 2026, much 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, predict a future with a significant increase in the number of licensees. Additional optometry schools will allow the number of optometry school graduates to continue to increase each year.⁶

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

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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.

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, Reliable and Secure Services: 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, Reliable and Secure Services Security and 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, Mature IT Resources Management: Cost Optimization. The agency's move to a new modern platform for its website (with capabilities for mobile use) under the direction of the Health Professions Council aligns with Goal 3, Cost Effective and Collaborative Solutions: Legacy Modernization and Shared Services and Goal 5, Mobile and Digital Services: Mobile and Moving to Paperless. Similarly the agency's continued reliance on the shared regulatory database under the direction of the Health Professions Council with a goal of continual improvement. The agency has plans to move to on-line applications which aligns with Goals 3 and 5, and is investigating paperless proof of license renewal.

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. *Texas Population Projections, 2010 to 2050*, Office of the State Demographer, Texas State Data Center, available at: <http://osd.texas.gov/Data/TPEPP/Projections/> (accessed April 23, 2018).
3. *Occupational Outlook Handbook, 2016-17 Edition, Optometrists*, Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, available at: <http://www.bls.gov/ooh/healthcare/optometrists.htm> (accessed April 23, 2018).
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)
6. *Race/Ethnicity of Graduates, Numbers, 2006-2016*, ASCO, available at: <https://optometriceducation.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/Grads-Race-Ethnicity.pdf> (Accessed April 23, 2018).

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 such that maximum results are produced with a minimum waste of taxpayer funds, and by identifying any function or provision you consider 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. Prior to employing the Program, the agency would have been required to investigate, conduct meetings, and approve disciplinary orders in situations where the licensee wanted to obtain treatment and follow treatment requirements. The costs of the treatment are paid for by the licensee and not the agency.

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

The program is relatively new and therefore the number of participants has been below expected levels. 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.

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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 disciplinary action. "Peer assistance programs identify, assist, and monitor individuals experiencing mental health, alcohol, or drug problems 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." 25 T.A.C. §451.102

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 take advantage of extern clinical training provided in Texas. Thus these students cannot receive clinical training in a working facility close to home or close to their preferred area to practice. These students will 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 2017, the agency utilized HUB for 100 percent of professional service contracts, and 84.5 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 2017 the agency's HUB report lists a significant expenditure in this category of \$36,000.00 paid to a vendor for the agency's Peer Assistance Program. 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	\$3,415.00
TOTAL OF EXPENDITURES WITH HUBS		\$3,415.00
TOTAL OF EXPENDITURES WITH NON HUBS		\$0.00
***** OTHER SERVICES:		
TOTAL OF EXPENDITURES WITH HUBS		\$0.00
TOTAL OF EXPENDITURES WITH NON HUBS		\$37,282.75
TOTAL OF EXPENDITURES WITH TERM CONTRACT		228.55
TOTAL OF OTHER SERVICES		\$37,054.20
***** COMMODITY PURCHASING:		
7300	HUB HI	\$1,340.65
7300	HUB WO	\$222.57
7334	HUB HI	\$82.39
7377	HUB WO	\$311.99
7377		\$250.12
7378	HUB WO	1,793.92
7380		\$435.24
7406	TC	\$1,513.93
TOTAL OF EXPENDITURES WITH HUBS		\$3,751.52
TOTAL OF EXPENDITURES WITH NON HUBS		\$2,119.29
TOTAL OF EXPENDITURES WITH TERM CONTRACT		\$1,513.93

Schedule D. Statewide Capital Plan (not applicable)

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

Schedule F. Agency Workforce Plan, & the Texas Workforce System Strategic 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 auditing the required yearly mandatory continuing education for renewal of licenses. 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 as of August 31, 2017. 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 2017 data. The agency's two half-time employees are counted as one-half each.

	Optometry Board	All State Agencies
Gender	Female: 33%	Female: 54%
Age	<40: 6%	< 40: 41%

Over the past few 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.

	Hispanic	Anglo	African-American	Other
Optometry Board (2017)	27%	67%	7%	0%
All State Agencies (2017)	25%	50%	23%	0%

C. Employee Turnover

Of particular importance is the employee tenure at the agency. The tenure of employees at the agency as of August 31, 2017, exceeds that of the average for all state agencies.

Employee Tenure (years)	Agency	All State Agencies
<2	7%	32%
2 to 4	27%	19%
5 to 9	27%	19%
10 to 14	27%	14%
15+	13%	12%

There was no turnover in FY 2015 and no turnover in FY 2016. One employee did transfer to another agency in 2017. 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 also an 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 their skills (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 Steps	Update procedure manuals for each division 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. Report on Customer Service

Introduction

The Texas Optometry Board identified nine types of customers in the agency's strategies "Licensure And Enforcement" and "Peer Assistance," and surveyed the four categories listed below. The agency performed the 2018 customer service survey with these goals: the most important, to gauge current levels of customer service and to examine trends in customer service by comparing survey results obtained in previous years, and also to obtain customer survey information in the most cost effective manner. Many of the constraints on the validity of prior survey results apply to the 2018 survey, but subject to these constraints, the steps taken to improve and maintain the agency's customer service may be evaluated.

Because of the sampling constraints, much of the survey data is not of sufficient validity to represent the entire population of each customer category. However, the data does report the opinions of those responding, and the surveys notified the customers that the agency is interested in their opinion. In addition, detailed comments were solicited and received from customers who would normally not have provided comments. Because of these comments, the agency is planning action in the following main area: increased emphasis promoting newsletter, and procedures to expedite license renewal.

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. Only a small number of applicants completed the survey (20 out of 173 responded).
- Complainants – persons, primarily patients of optometrists, who filed a written complaint with the agency in 2017 concerning an optometrist's office. This category also includes some persons who are not patients (complaints regarding advertising violations, for example).
- Licensees - optometrists currently licensed by the agency.
- Users of the agency's website, including public and patients seeking information, licensees seeking information, and entities that request license verification information. Unfortunately only two users completed the survey posted on the website.

Categories of Customers Not Surveyed

The following external customers were not surveyed. Each category contains a very limited number of customers, and the agency focused limited resources on the customers above. However, some of the following customers will use the agency's website and will have the opportunity to take the posted survey:

- other government agencies
- vendors
- list buyers
- associations and organizations
- patients of licensees that did not use website and did not file complaints

Information Gathering Methods

---Complainants

Forty-three postcards were sent to persons who had filed a complaint with the agency in 2017. The complainants were asked to complete eight survey questions. Each question asked

the respondent to answer “agree,” “disagree” or “not applicable.” 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 paid survey cards in order to receive as high a percentage of responses as possible, but only nine surveys were returned (21 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. Since the postcards were identical to those used in the past several years, trends over a several year period can be assessed (keeping in mind that the small number of responses in both surveys cannot be accurately projected to the customer category as a whole).

---License Applicants

License applicants surveyed in 2018 were sent an e-mail asking them to complete a survey through Survey Monkey. Only 20 of 172 persons licensed in the past year responded to the survey. Additional responses would have been preferred, but this is similar to the response rate in 2016.

---Licensees

The agency first employed an e-mail survey of licensees (optometrists) in 2002 which was used between 2004 and 2010. For the 2012 through 2016 surveys, an e-mail was sent to the e-mail addresses provided by licensees who renewed their license on-line. A similar approach was taken in 2018. Approximately 95 percent of licensees renewed on-line, so the sample is not representative of the entire licensee population. Even though the sample cannot be projected to all licensees with great confidence, the agency chose this method because of significant costs savings, the opportunity to publicize the availability of the agency’s website, and the opportunity to determine whether an e-mail notification system is viable at this time. The agency has 4,599 licensees.

Procedure

- Licensees received an e-mail requesting the licensee to go to the Internet address for Survey Monkey to take a survey designed by the agency (a clickable link was provided). The form asked users to rate several agency activities on a score from 1 to 4. Users could also submit comments.
- The first attempt at e-mailing resulted in 4,306 e-mails being sent. Responses totaled 384. A second e-mail blast was sent to the 3,786 who had not taken the survey and 260 responded.
- Almost 650 (644) licensees completed the survey, many more responses than 2014 and 2016.

---Users of Agency Website Including License Verification Customers

The agency attempts to gather information from a survey that is available to all users of the website. Unfortunately just two of these customers completed the survey in 2018, a result similar to 2016. 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 before filing 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 Interaction with Agency Staff
- CHART 4: Survey of COMPLAINANTS: Complaint Process
- CHART 5: Compact with Texas (from website)
- CHART 6: Survey of LICENSEES: Ratings of Customer Service Categories
- CHART 7: Survey of COMPLAINANTS: Ratings of Customer Service Categories
- CHART 8: Survey of LICENSEES: Reasons for Contacting agency

Cost Effectiveness

The e-mail surveys of licensees, applicants, and website users 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. Only a two month inexpensive subscription to Survey Monkey was required.

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

--2018 Results

Overall results in all categories were favorable to extremely favorable for each customer type and each customer service category, with the exception of complainants (see discussion below). The results were very similar to scores from prior surveys. The lowest scores in each category (least satisfied customers):

- **Licensees – lowest scores:**

- All scores averaged “3” or more based on the following scale: 4 = excellent; 3 = good; 2 = fair, 1 = poor.
- The lowest satisfaction results:
 - Frequency of newsletter publication – average score of 3.22 (also a low score 2006 – 2016)
 - Website: time needed to find information – average score of 3.30
 - Automated telephone distribution system – average score of 3.30

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

- Process Conducted in Timely Manner – 33 percent “agreed”
- Reasons for Decision Adequately Explained – 38 percent “agreed”
- Overall satisfactory complaint filing experience – 22 percent “agreed”

- **Applicants – lowest scores (few responses):**

- Ratings are based on the average responses to the following scale: 4 = excellent; 3 = good; 2 = fair, 1 = poor.

- Telephone distribution system – average score of 2.85
- Time to find information on website – average score of 2.81
- Application instructions – average score of 2.76

• **Users of website:**

- Only two responses.

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, the answers to the overall satisfaction question do not appear to correlate to the questions regarding staff interaction, but instead appear to be based significantly on the complainant’s determination of whether the complaint decision was that requested 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 show less satisfaction in this area, so for the few complainants who responded, this area needed improvement.

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 expressing overall satisfaction w/ services received from staff.....	3.47 *
Number of licenses selecting “poor” overall satisfaction w/ staff.....	11
(out of 644 responses)	
Exam applicants expressing overall satisfaction w/ staff	3.05 *
Number of applicants selecting “poor” overall satisfaction w/ procedure	1
(out of 20 responses)	
Complainants expressing overall satisfaction w/ complaint process.....	22%
*Average score of respondents: 4 = excellent; 3 = good; 2 = fair; 1 = poor	

--Examples of Responses Regarding Customer Service Standards

Licensees rating of timely answers to phone calls	3.45 *
Licensees rating of timely answers to e-mails	3.46 *
Licensees rating of publication of newsletter timely	3.41 *
Licensees rating staff friendly.....	3.48 *
Exam applicants rating that information was provided quickly by staff.....	3.05 *
Complainants stating that complaint form was sent quickly.....	71% **
*Average score of respondents: 4 = excellent; 3 = good; 2 = fair; 1 = poor	
**form is also on the agency’s website	

--Comparison with Previous Years

-----Licensees

Results were similar to the 2016 and earlier surveys. For customer service categories, there was a slight decrease in satisfaction with some of the categories.

-----Complainants

The 2018 results of the complainant survey had such a low number of respondents that results may not be dispositive. However, the overall satisfaction score is too low, and the agency will continue working to increase this score.

Category	2014*	2016*	2018*
Complaint process resolved in timely manner	67%	57%	33%
Reasons for agency's decision adequately explained	44%	57%	38%
Overall satisfactory complaint filing experience	57%	50%	22%

*percent responding "agree"

----Applicants

Only 20 license applicants responded to the 2018 survey. The results, compared to 2016, show a decreased satisfaction in some areas, with some increased satisfaction in other ratings. Some ratings were slightly below a good average score (4 = excellent; 3 = good; 2 = fair; 1 = poor). Four applicants left comments that could be used to examine the application process, which has strict statutory requirements.

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.
- Fewer e-mail addresses this year were undeliverable than in past years (27 bounced).
- About 15 percent of those sent an e-mail responded (higher response rate than past years). This does not mean that only 15 percent saw and/or read the notice (there are many reasons for not completing a survey). However, the figure does raise issues regarding the effectiveness of e-mail notifications
- 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.

Performance Measures

---Outcome Measures

- Percentage of Surveyed Customer Respondents Expressing Overall Satisfaction with Total Services Received: Licensees: 90% excellent or good
- Percentage of Surveyed Customer Respondents Identifying Ways to Improve Service Delivery: Licensees: 16%

---Output Measures

- Total Customers Surveyed: 675
- Total Customers Contacted (plus unknown number looking at website): 4,521

---Efficiency Measures

- Cost per Customer Surveyed: Applicants and Licensees: a few hours of staff time plus \$70 subscription to SurveyMonkey (nine cents per respondent). Complainants: cost of envelopes, letters, postcards, postage, and return postcard postage

---Explanatory Measures

- Total Customers Identified: Nine Groups
- Total Customer Groups Inventoried: Four

Charts

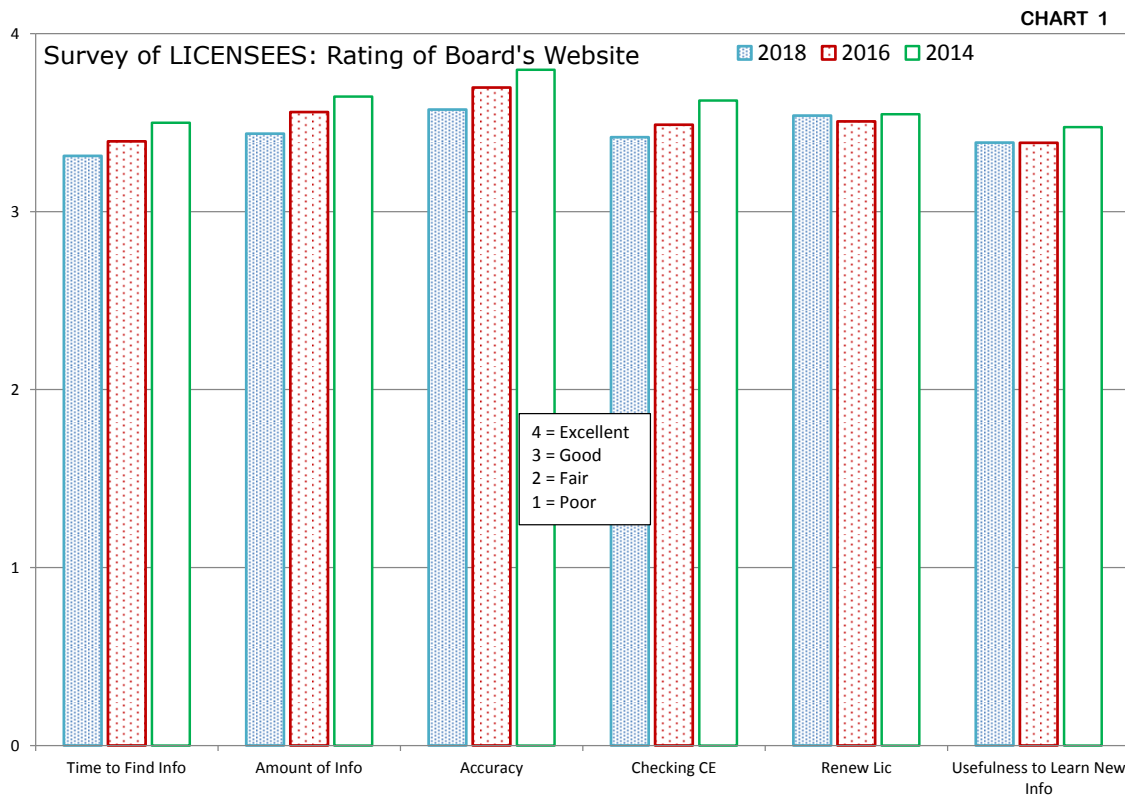


CHART 2

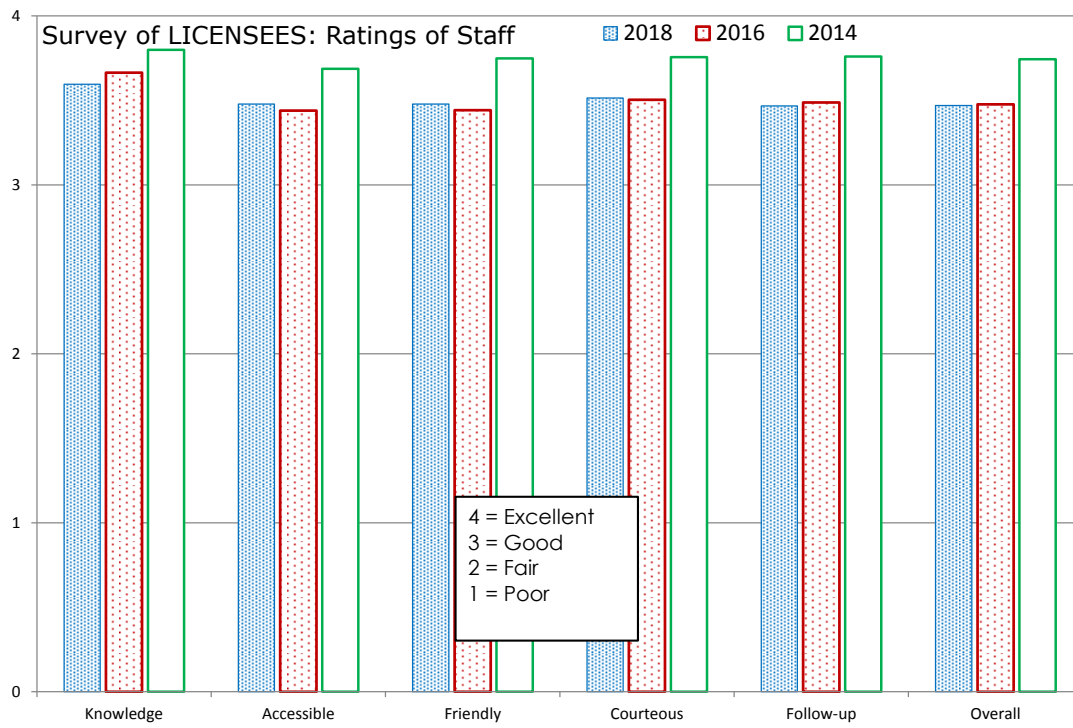
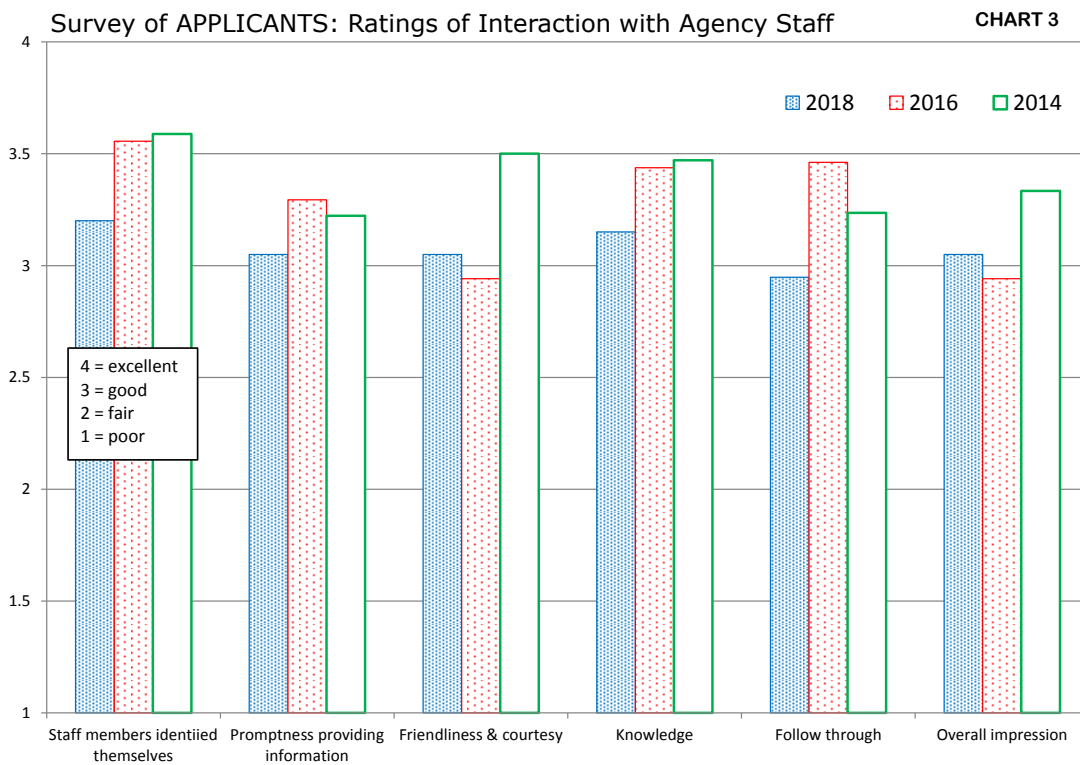
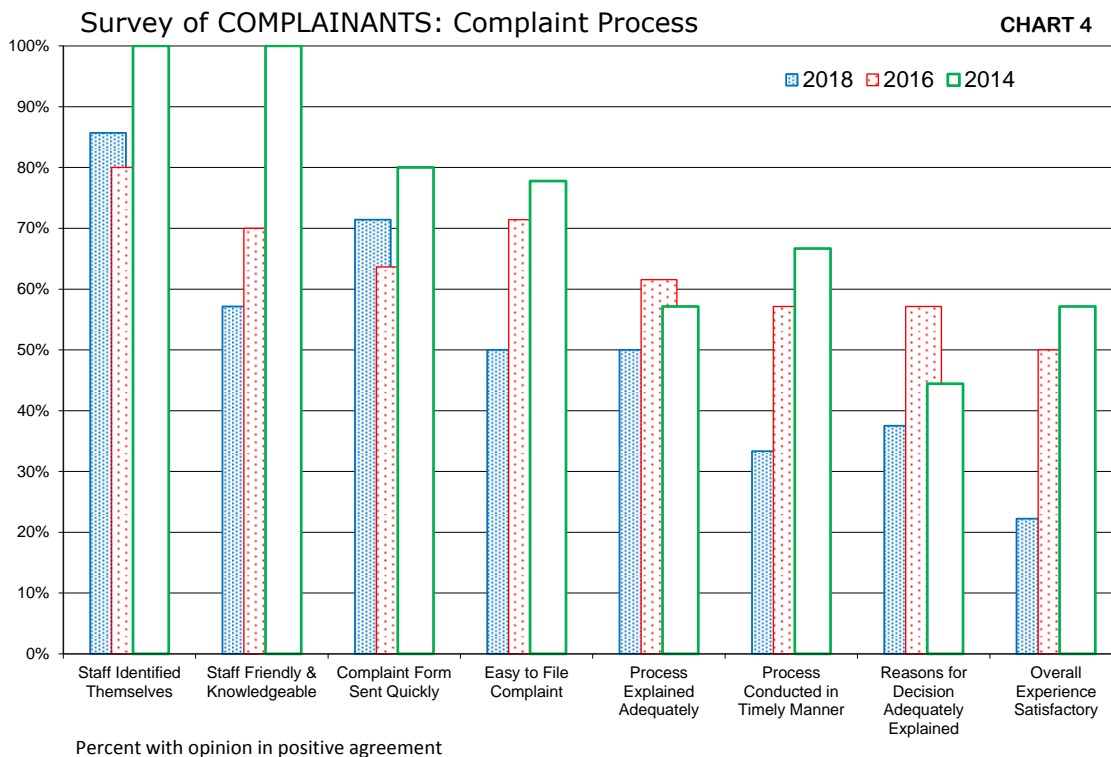


CHART 3





Compact with Texans

CHART 5

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

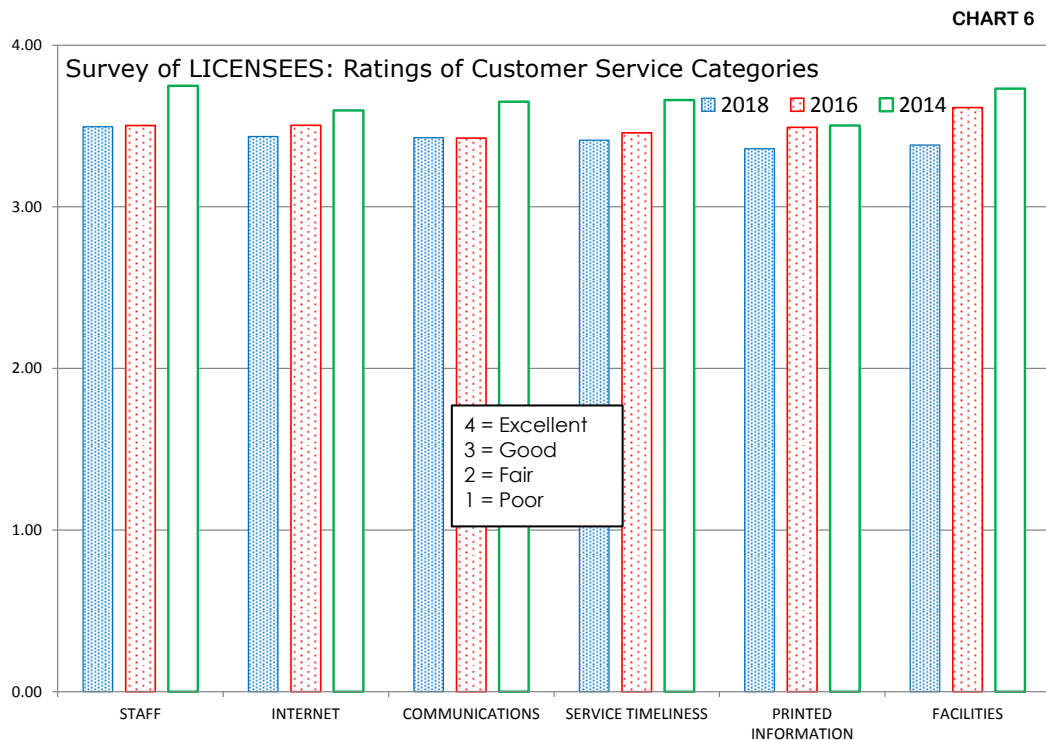
- Conduct the activities of the Texas Optometry Board in a legal, open, professional, efficient, timely, and courteous manner
- Perform the mission of the agency with the best interests of Texas citizens and consumers in mind, including the efficient use of state financial resources
- Provide and maintain 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.

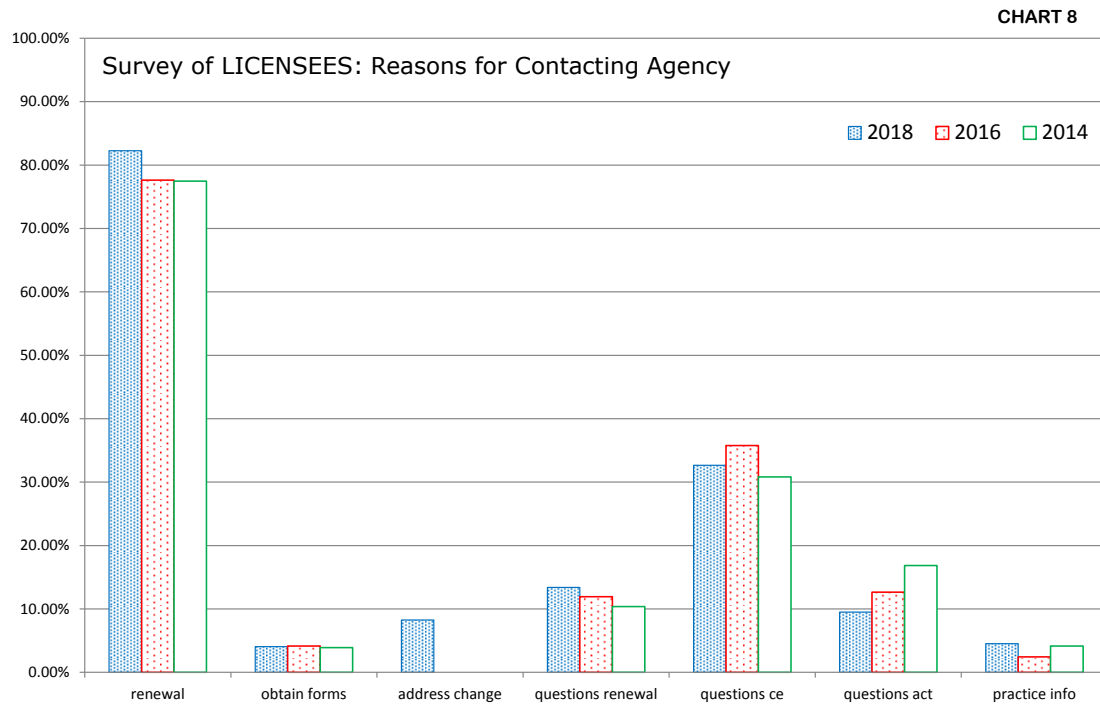
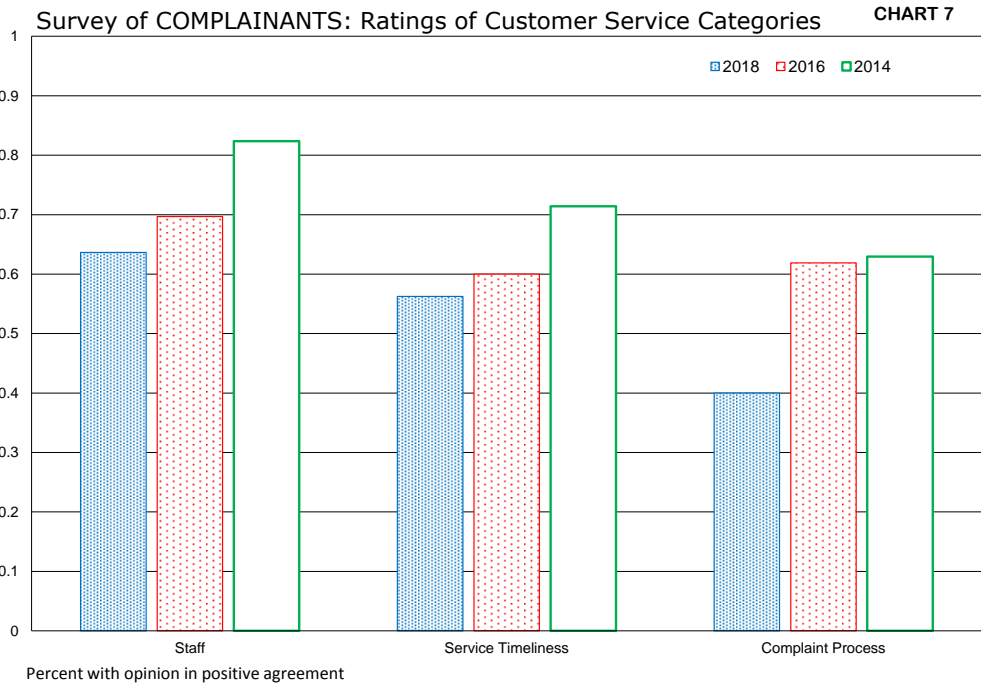
Accessibility

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.





Customer Service Representative: Chris Kloeris, Executive Director: 512-305-8500
 Schedule H. Assessment of Advisory Committees (not applicable)