



World Class. Face to Face.

2007 County Governance Survey



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Survey Methodology

- **Sample: 2007 County Officials Directory**
- **Email with a link to survey web site and personal access code. Also included a link to another web site where respondent could print a paper version of the questionnaire**
- **Telephone contacts**
- **Email reminder with link to survey web site and personal access code.**

Response Rate

a.	Starting sample size	747
	Completed Mail Questionnaires	14
	Completed Phone Questionnaires	93
	Completed Web Questionnaires	362
	Partially Completed Web Questionnaire	52
b.	Total completes	521
c.	Contacted, but survey not completed	194
d.	Refusals	18
e.	Ineligible (no longer employed with County)	12
f.	Unable to contact (non-working phone and email)	2
	Raw Response Rate (Completes/Sample Size) [b/a]	69.7%
	Completion Rate (Completes/Eligible Sample)	71.1%

Response Rate by County

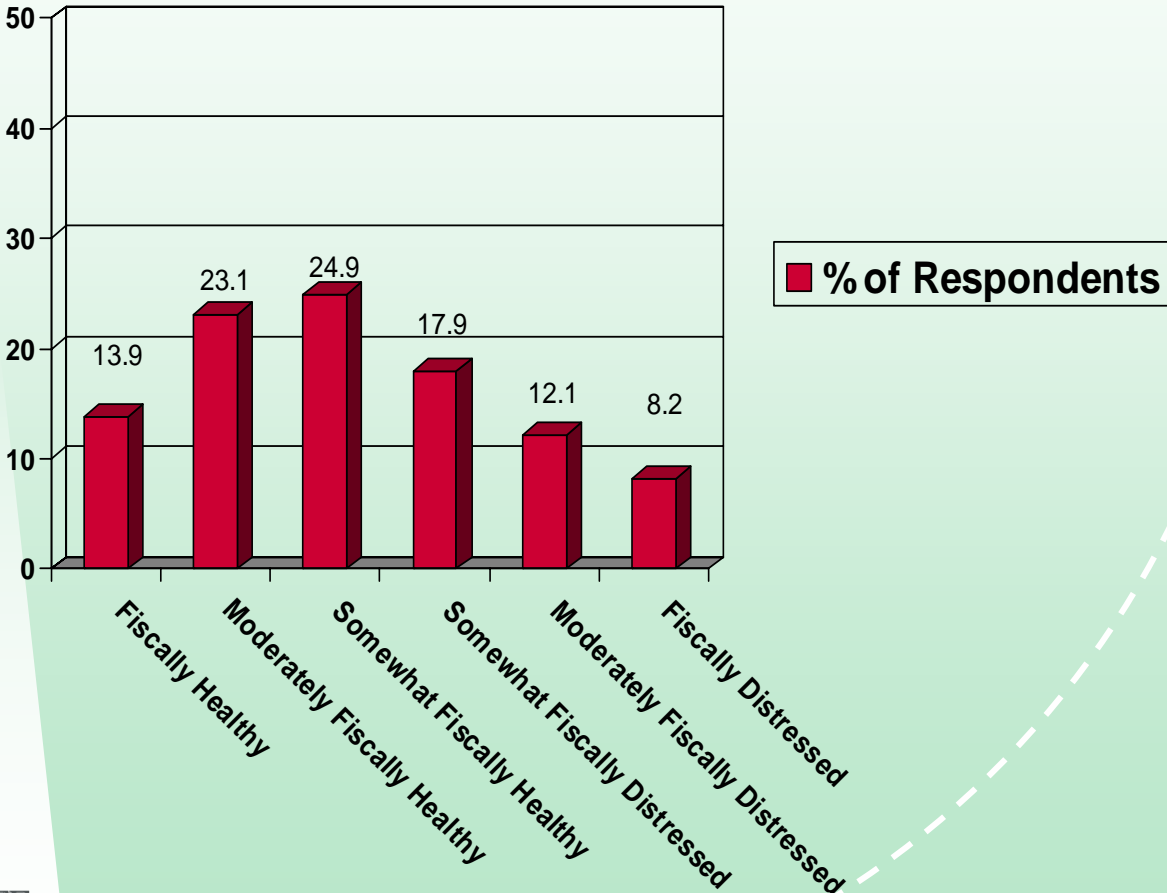
County	Sample	Completes	Response rate		County	Sample	Completes	Response rate
Adams	16	12	75.00%		Lewis	19	12	63.16%
Asotin	17	12	70.59%		Lincoln	17	15	88.24%
Benton	17	13	76.47%		Mason	19	13	68.42%
Chelan	17	13	76.47%		Okanogan	20	12	60.00%
Clallam	21	14	66.67%		Pacific	19	15	78.95%
Clark	23	16	69.57%		Pend Oreille	14	11	78.57%
Columbia	14	12	85.71%		Pierce	25	6	24.00%
Cowlitz	20	15	75.00%		San Juan	20	15	75.00%
Douglas	14	8	57.14%		Skagit	21	14	66.67%
Ferry	14	12	85.71%		Skamania	17	10	58.82%
Franklin	15	15	100.00%		Snohomish	24	15	62.50%
Garfield	15	11	73.33%		Spokane	20	16	80.00%
Grant	21	12	57.14%		Stevens	16	12	75.00%
Grays Harbor	17	16	94.12%		Thurston	17	10	58.82%
Island	19	16	84.21%		Wahkiakum	16	14	87.50%
Jefferson	19	13	68.42%		Walla Walla	18	13	72.22%
King	29	15	51.72%		Whatcom	25	10	40.00%
Kitsap	22	16	72.73%		Whitman	20	17	85.00%

Response Rate by Group

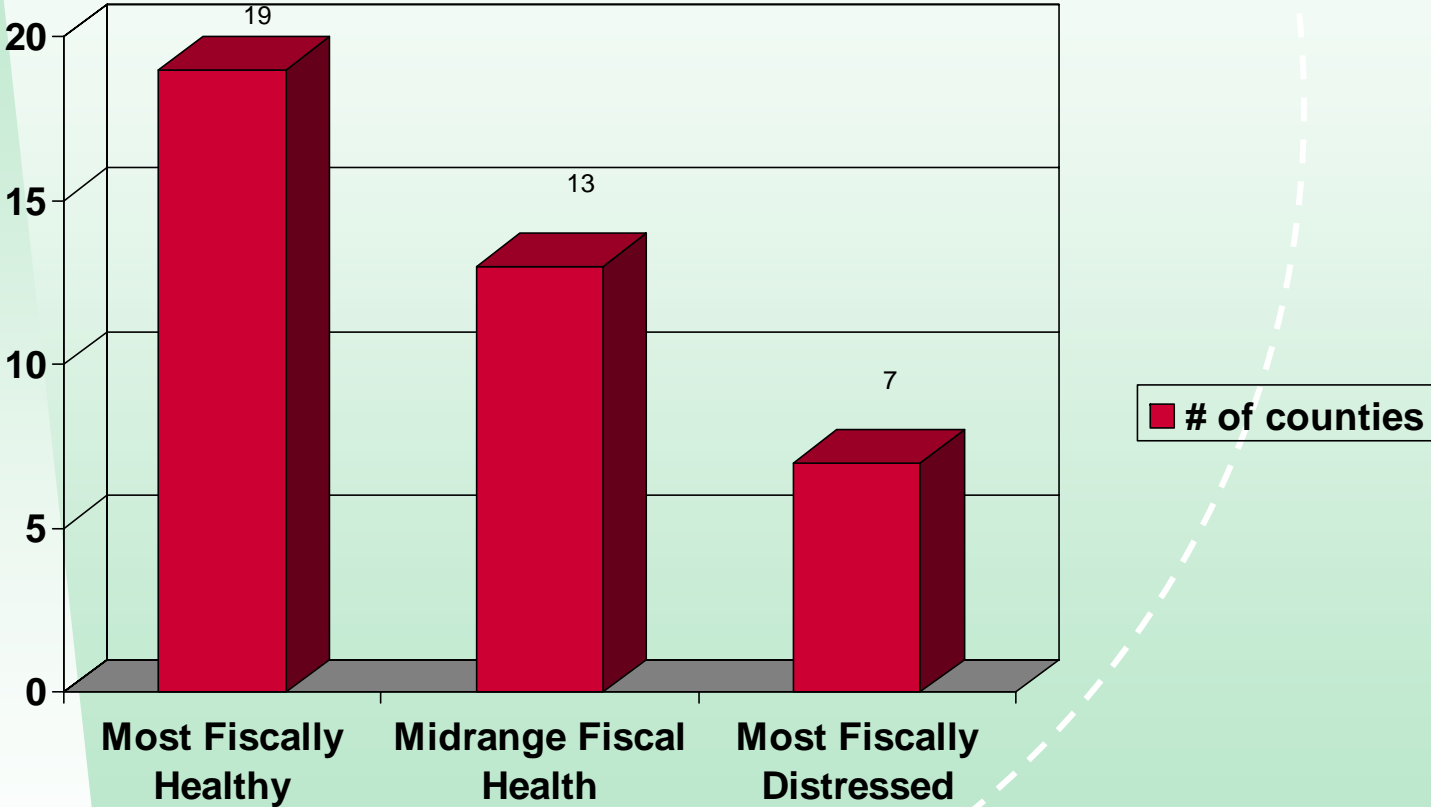
Office	sample	mail	phone	Web completes	Partial web completes	Response rate
Assessor	39	1	7	25	1	87.18%
Auditor	40	1	3	32	2	95.00%
Clerk	39	0	3	26	3	82.05%
Commissioner/Council	136	2	16	50	11	58.09%
Prosecuting Attorney	39	2	5	25	1	84.62%
Coroner	21	1	3	11	1	76.19%
Sheriff	39	0	6	23	2	79.49%
Treasurer	37	3	2	30	1	97.30%
Executive/Administrator/ Budget	44	0	3	26	5	77.27%
Public works	37	1	5	18	2	70.27%
Human Services	48	1	8	16	3	58.33%
Public Health	27	0	7	10	4	77.78%
Parks and recreation	18	0	2	3	3	44.44%
Planning	38	1	5	15	2	60.53%
Extension	37	0	6	19	4	78.38%
Superior Court Administrator	35	0	4	11	2	48.57%
Superior and District Court Judges	73	1	8	22	5	49.31%
totals	747	14	93	362	52	69.74%

County Fiscal Health

All respondents



County Fiscal Health By County



Counties in Fiscal Health Categories

Most Fiscally Healthy

- **Benton**
- Chelan
- **Clark**
- **Cowlitz**
- Garfield
- Grant
- Grays Harbor
- Island
- Jefferson
- King
- **Kittitas**
- Klickitat
- Okanogan
- Pierce
- Skagit
- Snohomish
- Spokane
- **Walla Walla**
- **Whatcom**

Midrange Fiscal Health

- Adams
- Asotin
- Clallam
- Douglas
- Franklin
- Lincoln
- Mason
- Pacific
- San Juan
- Skamania
- Stevens
- Thurston
- Whitman

Most Fiscally Distressed

- Columbia
- **Ferry**
- Kitsap
- Lewis
- **Pend Oreille**
- Wahkiakum
- Yakima

Q9. For each of the following options, please indicate how much it would increase the effectiveness and cost efficiency of your county government.

	A lot, Moderate amount, Not at all		
• Changing state policy	67.7%	28.2%	4.1%
• Reallocating service delivery to the STATE	30.2%	39.1%	30.7%
• Creating regional or multi-county services.....	22.8%	44.5%	32.7%
• Establishing more shared services WITHIN your county	14.4%	51.7%	33.9%
• Changing county employee labor laws or contracts.....	18.2%	44.6%	37.2%
• Consolidating county services with cities	11.9%	44.6%	43.5%
• Combining business processes to cross county departments.....	10.9%	44.9%	44.2%
• Creating regional or multi-county services	10.2%	41.7%	48.0%
• Transitioning unincorporated urban growth areas to cities.....	9.7%	37.9%	52.4%
• Reallocating service delivery to CITIES	8.8%	37.7%	53.5%
• Reallocating service delivery to SPECIAL DISTRICTS	6.7%	36.8%	56.5%

Q9. For each of the following options, please indicate how much it would increase the effectiveness and cost efficiency of your county government?

Sample of “Other” answers

- Full funding of State Mandated Services
- we are already doing many of these things.
- Through maximizing internet services.
- Eliminating the prevailing wage requirements from construction projects
- sales tax equalization
- Need to have some kind of economic development and increase property taxes.

Q10. Which ONE of the following county government service areas could be modified to increase the effectiveness and cost efficiency of your county government the most?

- Criminal Justice..... 50.6%
- Technology Infrastructure.....11.0%
- Economic Development..... 6.5%
- General Government Services..... 5.8%
- Other area (please describe).....5.0%
- Management practices or processes.... 4.5%
- Human Services..... 3.4%
- Planning and Building..... 3.4%
- Transportation..... 3.2%
- Internal service provision..... 3.0%
- Tools for employees..... 1.7%
- Parks and Recreation..... 1.1%
- Solid Waste..... 0.6%

Q10. In your view, which ONE of the following county government service areas could be modified to increase the effectiveness and cost efficiency of your county government the most?

Sample of “Other” answers

- Most of them, criminal justice infrastructure.
- e government-- a real "reinventing government initiative to get past our historic silos
- The increase services required by STATE law without adequate funding, is the problem
- Criminal Justice consumes over 75% of our General Fund Budget.
- Mutual regional planning
- Growth Management
- It all depends on how it was modified.
- The increase services required by STATE law without adequate funding, is the problem
- fulfilling public record requests

Q17. In the next 3 years, what are the three main things that could be done to increase the effectiveness and cost efficiency of your county government, whether it is currently authorized by state law or not?

- Reduction of State unfunded mandates. Too numerous to mention.
- Continue improving our technology systems
- State accept its responsibility to prosecute, defend, adjudicate and incarcerate criminals
- For the state to pay all its costs in elections

Q18b. Have you or your county had any active discussions about the proposal of a home rule charter?

26 counties had at least one respondent answer “Yes”.
Of those, only 10 had a majority of respondents answering “Yes”.

•Benton.....1	• Kitsap.....11
•Chelan.....1	• Lewis..... 1
•Clallam..... 7	• Pierce..... 2
•Clark.....13	• San Juan.....14
•Columbia..... 1	• Skagit.....9
•Cowlitz..... 5	• Skamania..... 2
•Ferry..... 2	• Snohomish.... 8
•Garfield..... 2	• Spokane..... 7
•Grant..... 8	• Stevens..... 1
•Grays Harbor.....1	• Thurston..... 2
•Island..... 7	• Whatcom..... 7
•Jefferson..... 1	• Whitman..... 3
•King..... 3	• Yakima..... 1

(Home rule charter result)

Q18B1. Selection of Freeholders

- **12 out of 26 counties had a majority of respondents indicating a “yes” result.**

**Clallam, Clark, Cowlitz, Grant,
Island, King, Kitsap, Pierce,
San Juan, Snohomish, Thurston, Whatcom**

(Home rule charter result)

Q18B2. Successful home rule charter election

- **6 out of 26 counties had a majority of respondents indicating a “yes” result.**

Clallam, King, Pierce, San Juan, Snohomish, Whatcom

(Home rule charter result)

Q18B3. An unsuccessful home rule charter election(s)

- **7 out of 26 counties had a majority of respondents indicating a “yes” result.**

Clark, Cowlitz, Grant, Island, Kitsap, Skagit, Thurston

(Home rule charter result)

Q18B4. Fewer elected offices with adoption of charter

- **Only 2 out of 26 counties had a majority of respondents indicating a “yes” result.**

King, Lewis

(Home rule charter result)

Q18B5. Creation of more elected offices with adoption of charter

- **4 out of 26 counties had a majority of respondents indicating a “yes” result.**

Clallam, Pierce, San Juan, Snohomish

Q18d. Have you or your county had any active discussions about creating the position of appointed county administrator?

33 counties had at least one respondent answer “Yes”.
Of those, 15 had a majority of respondents answering “Yes”.

•Adams.....	1	•Lewis.....	7
•Asotin.....	3	•Mason.....	4
•Benton.....	7	•Okanogan.....	4
•Chelan.....	2	•Pacific.....	4
•Clallam.....	9	•Pend Oreille.....	1
•Clark.....	10	•San Juan.....	13
•Cowlitz.....	3	•Skagit.....	6
•Douglas.....	2	•Snohomish.....	1
•Ferry.....	4	•Spokane.....	1
•Franklin.....	10	•Stevens.....	4
•Grant.....	3	•Thurston.....	4
•Grays Harbor....	2	•Wahkiakum.....	3
•Island.....	3	•Walla Walla.....	3
•Jefferson.....	9	•Whatcom.....	3
•Kitsap.....	10	•Whitman.....	3
•Kittitas.....	9	•Yakima.....	7
•Klickitat.....	3		

(Appointed county administrator result)

Q18D1. Creation of a county administrator position

- **16 out of 33 counties had a majority of respondents indicating a “yes” result.**

Benton, Chelan, Clallam, Clark, Cowlitz, Franklin, Jefferson, Kitsap, Klickitat, Mason, Okanogan, Pacific, San Juan, Skagit, Spokane, Thurston,

(Appointed county administrator result)

Q18D2. An unsuccessful effort to create county administrator position

- **6 out of 33 counties had a majority of respondents indicating a “yes” result.**

Cowlitz, Klickitat, Lewis, Mason, Snohomish, Yakima

(Appointed county administrator result)

Q18D3. Creation of a county position with some of the responsibilities of a county administrator

- **10 out of 33 counties had a majority of respondents indicating a “yes” result.**

**Benton, Chelan, Cowlitz, Grant, Klickitat,
Lewis, Mason, Okanogan, Pacific, Yakima**

Q18e. Have you or your county had any active discussions about creating the position of elected county executive?

16 counties had at least one respondent answer “Yes”. Of those, 4 had a majority of respondents answering “Yes”.

•Clallam.....	5	•Kittitas.....	1
•Clark.....	2	•Lewis.....	2
•Cowlitz.....	2	•Pierce.....	3
•Garfield.....	1	•San Juan.....	4
•Island.....	2	•Skagit.....	2
•Jefferson.....	1	•Snohomish.....	8
•King.....	2	•Spokane.....	1
•Kitsap.....	3	•Whatcom.....	5

(Elected county executive result)

Q18E1. Selection of Freeholders

- **6 out of 16 counties had a majority of respondents indicating a “yes” result.**

Clark, King, Kitsap, Pierce, Snohomish, Whatcom

(Elected county executive result)

Q18E2. A successful charter election

- **4 out of 16 counties had a majority of respondents indicating a “yes” result.**

King, Pierce, Snohomish, Whatcom

(Elected county executive result)

Q18E3. An unsuccessful charter election(s)

- **3 out of 16 counties had a majority of respondents indicating a “yes” result.**

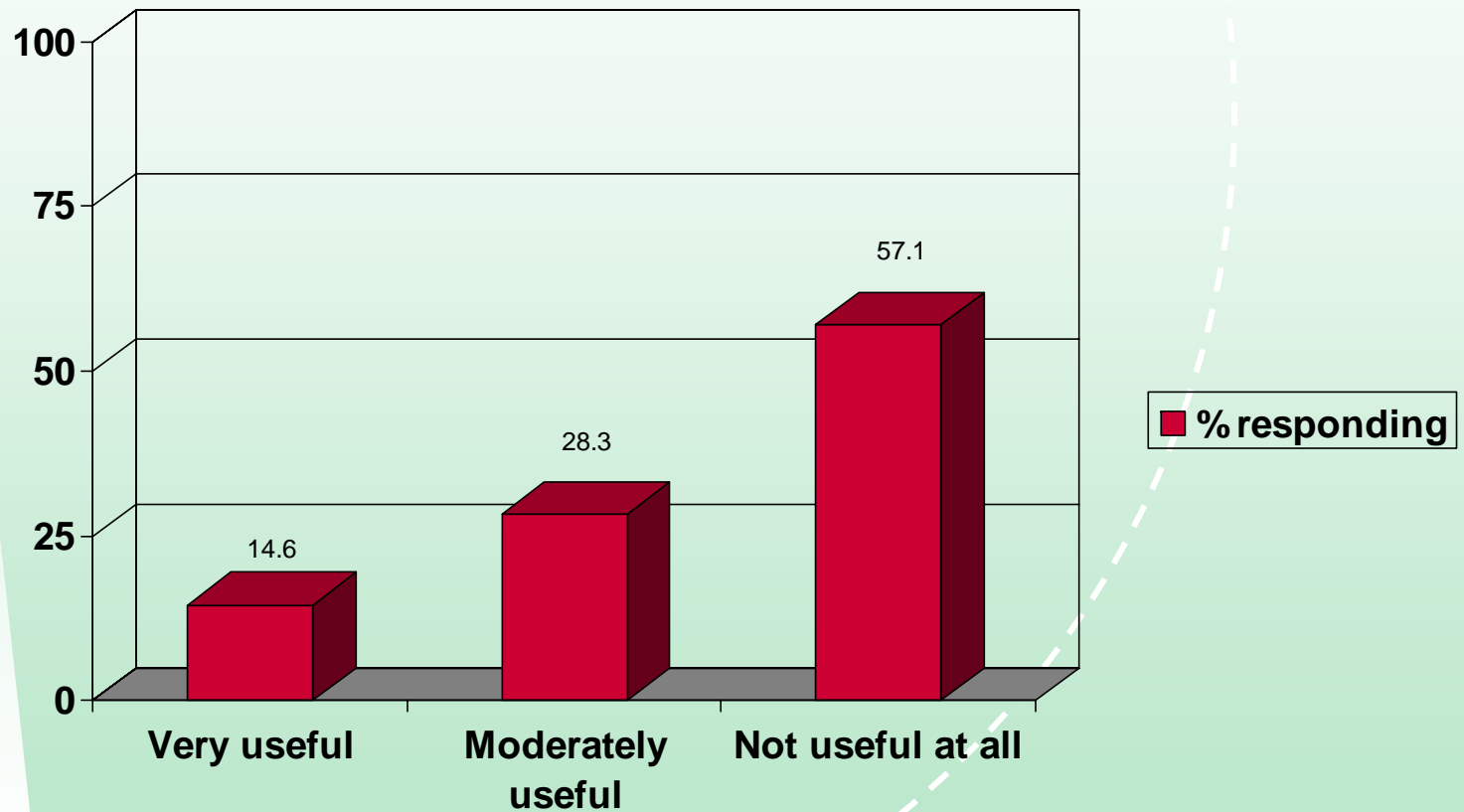
Clark, Cowlitz, Kitsap

Q18h. Has your county had any other types of discussions of modifying your county's governance structure in the last decade?

31 counties had at least one respondent answer "Yes".

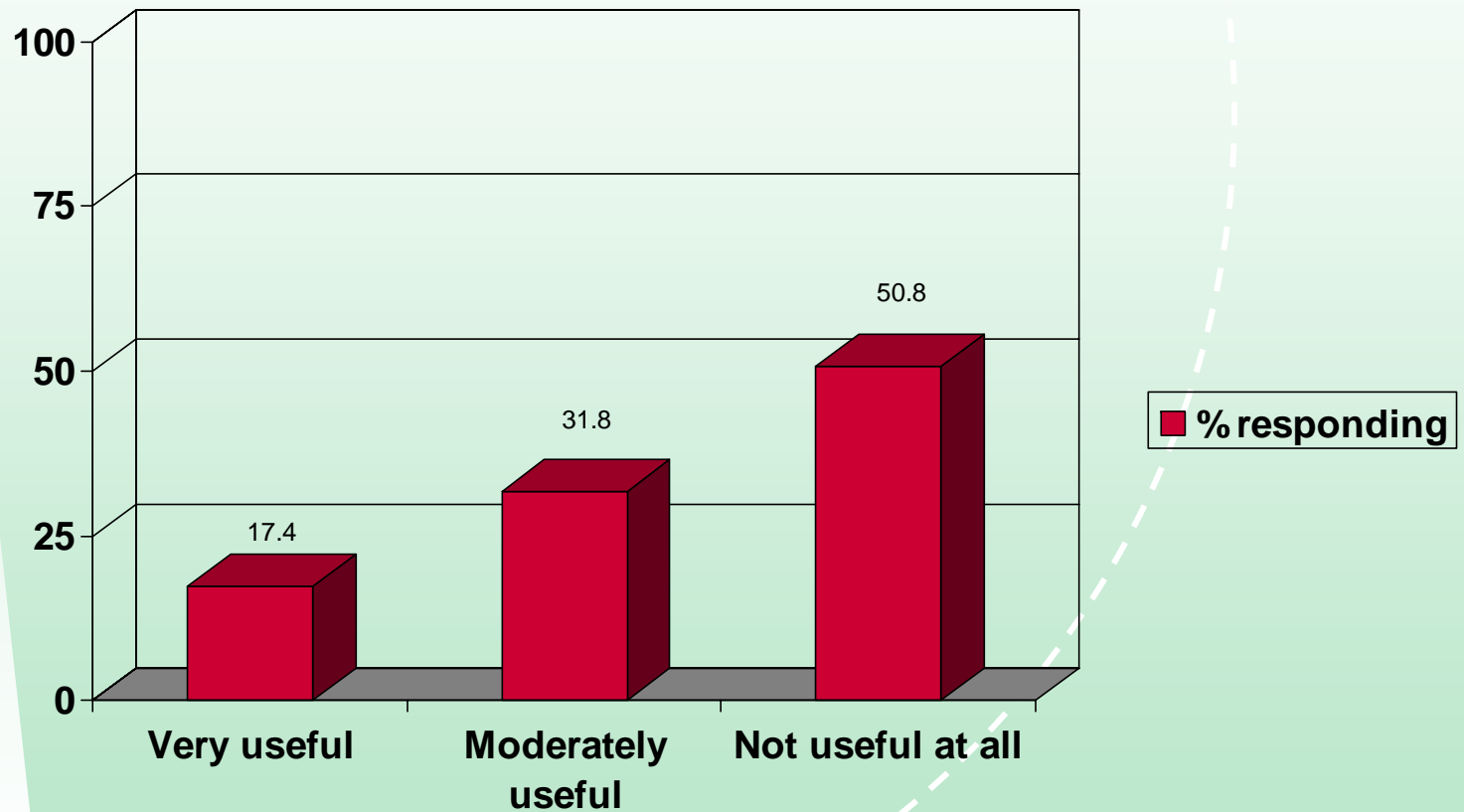
Q19. Which of the following potential NON-FREEHOLDER governance alternatives could be useful to increase the effectiveness and cost efficiency in your county?

A. “Structural Home Rule” which would all a county to determine the number of elected or appointed officials themselves.



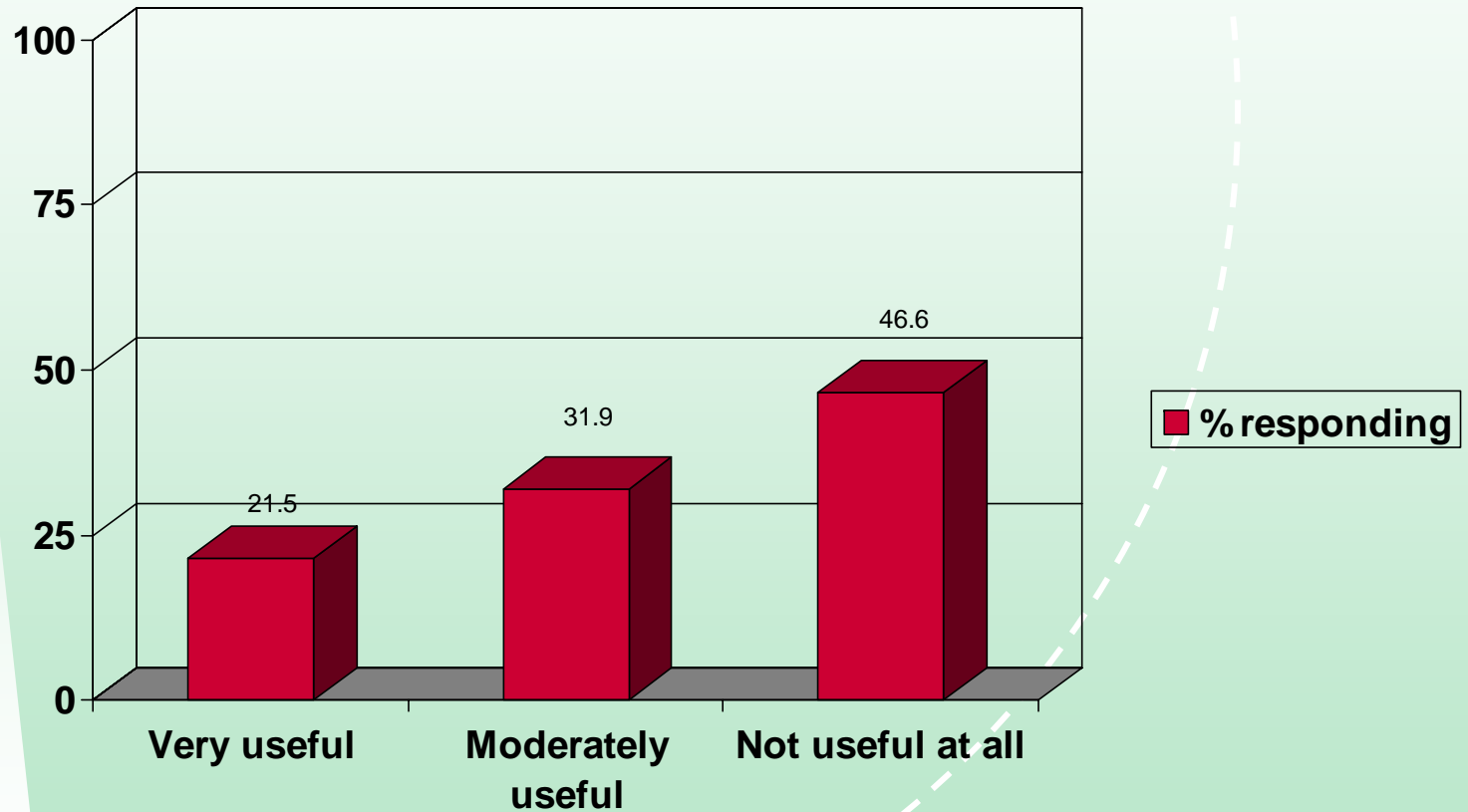
Q19. Which of the following potential NON-FREEHOLDER governance alternatives could be useful to increase the effectiveness and cost efficiency in your county?

B. An option for counties to merge some or all of the functions and positions of auditor, treasurer, assessor, or clerk together or with other county departments.



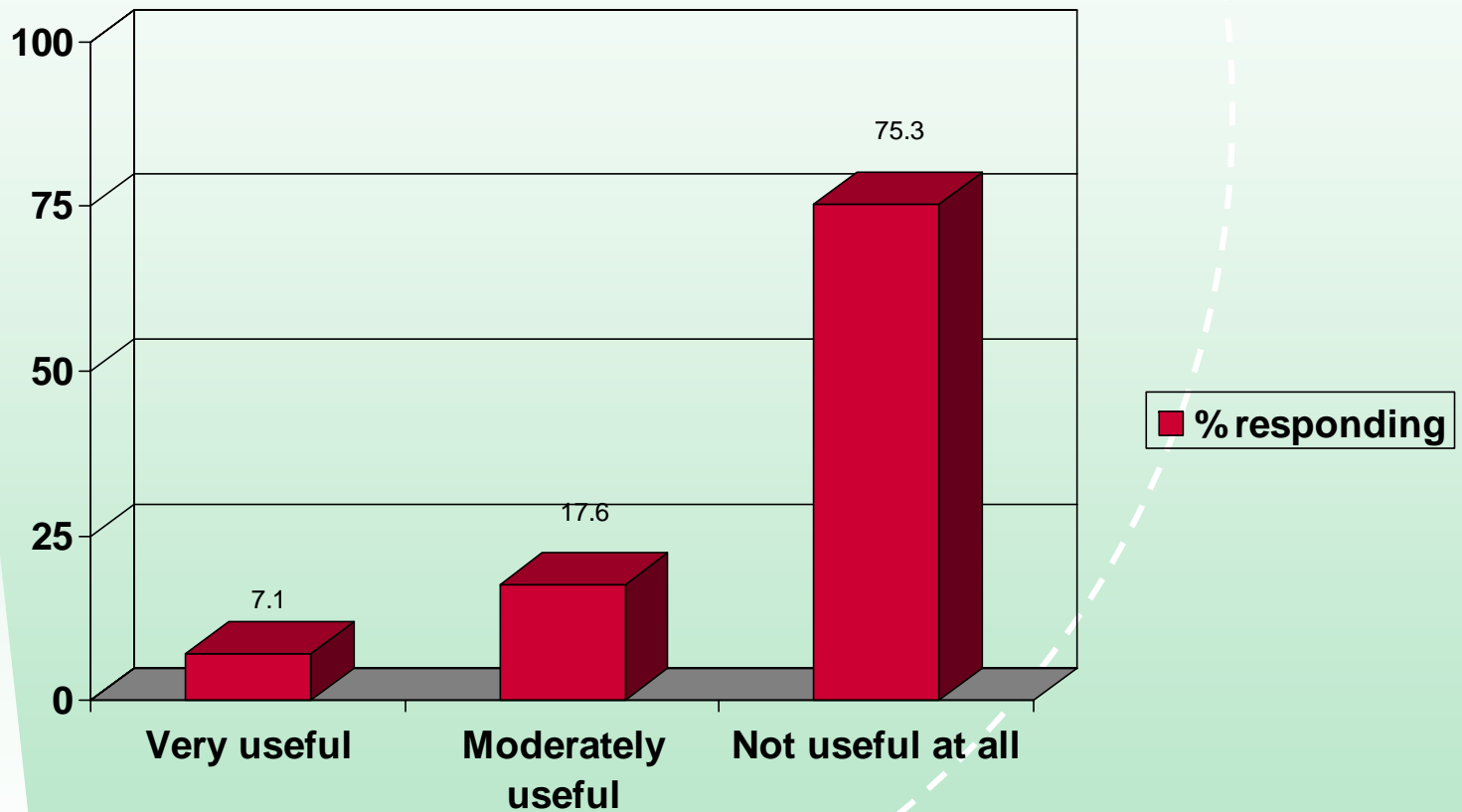
Q19. Which of the following potential NON-FREEHOLDER governance alternatives could be useful to increase the effectiveness and cost efficiency in your county?

C. An option under the current Commission form of governance to appoint a county administrator or elect an executive



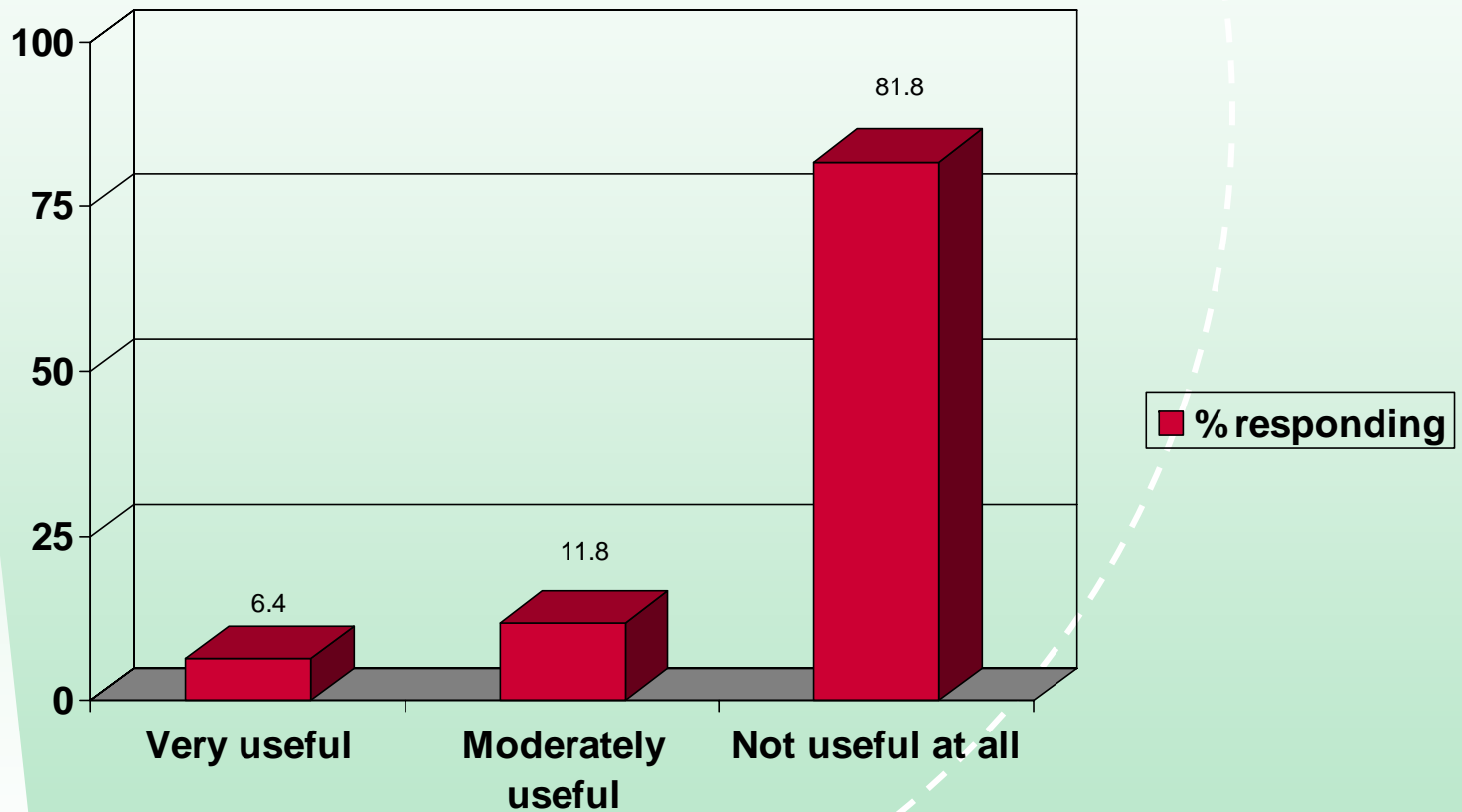
Q19. Which of the following potential NON-FREEHOLDER governance alternatives could be useful to increase the effectiveness and cost efficiency in your county?

D. An option for more than one county to jointly elect and administer the positions and functions of any county department EXCEPT County Commissioners



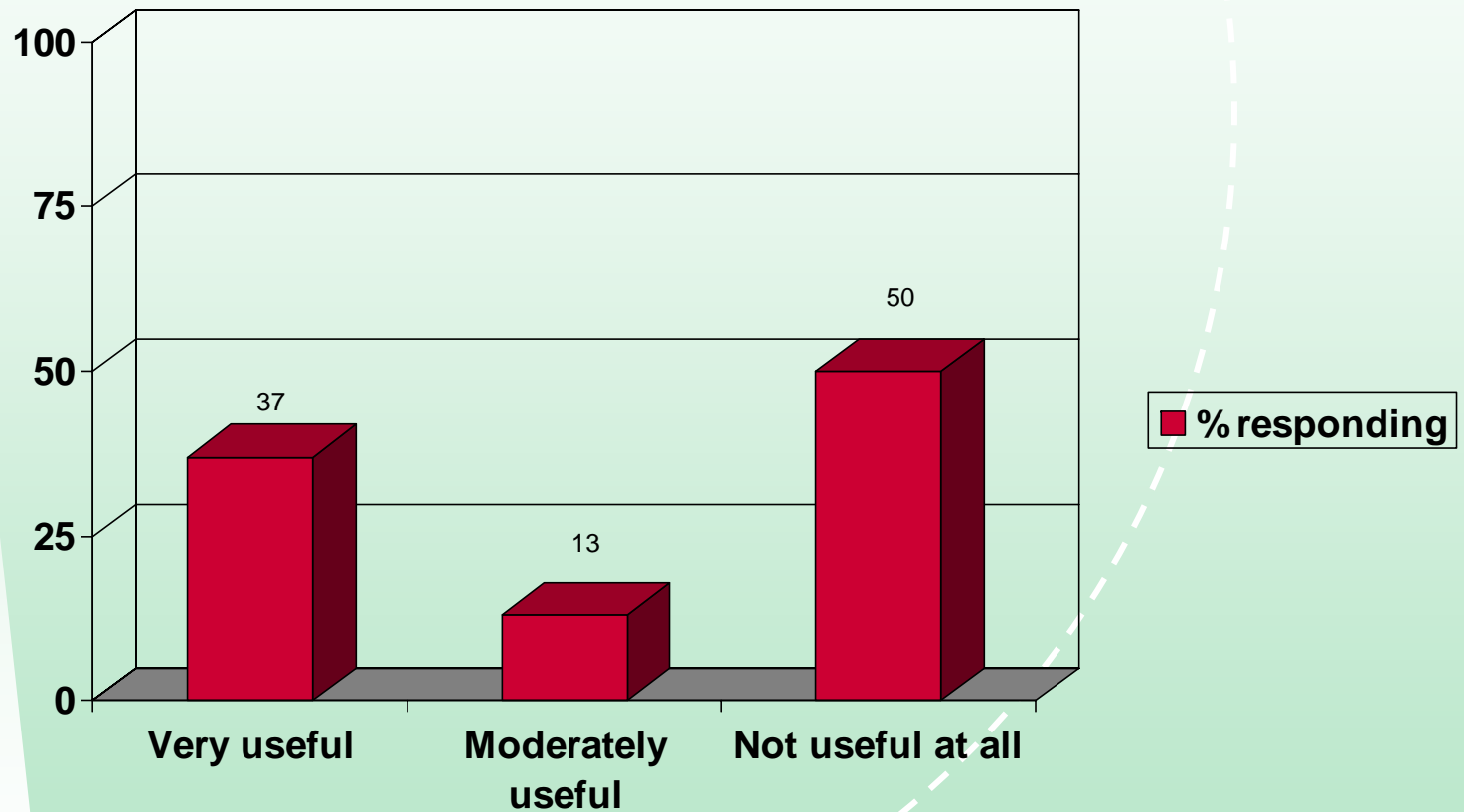
Q19. Which of the following potential NON-FREEHOLDER governance alternatives could be useful to increase the effectiveness and cost efficiency in your county?

E. An option for more than one county to jointly elect and administer the positions and functions of any county department INCLUDING County Commissioners.



Q19. Which of the following potential NON-FREEHOLDER governance alternatives could be useful to increase the effectiveness and cost efficiency in your county?

F. Other (Please describe)



Q19. Which of the following potential NON-FREEHOLDER governance alternatives could be useful to increase the effectiveness and cost efficiency in your county?

F. Other (Please describe)

- Make elected positions appointed so that qualified people run the departments and term limits for county commissioners.
- Merge Counties -- combine all functions under the most efficient
- An option to study home rule counties to see if they indeed are more cost effective.
- none of these promote efficiency...they give away responsibility and accountability that should be retained
- If Ferry Co. Functions combine with others, the jobs usually leave here and go to that large population center.

Conclusions

Thank you!