

Research & Planning

Proposal: Identifying a Comparative Evaluation Framework

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Date: September 5, , 2012

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Overview:

The purpose of this report is to identify a peer county on the state and national levels for Palm Beach County. This study was completed as a result of the June 11, 2012 workshop with the Palm Beach County Board of County Commissioners and County Administration on performance measures. At the workshop the County Administrator committed to developing performance measures that compared various county services with other counties within Florida. In anticipation of this approach, the Criminal Justice Commission Executive Director requested that staff prepare a report identifying comparative counties for the Criminal Justice Commission's consideration. The selection of the following counties was based upon key demographic and socio-economic characteristics with the ultimate goal of using these counties for further comparative analysis. Based upon the indicators selected for this report, Pinellas County, Florida and Cuyahoga, Ohio were identified as the peer counties most comparable to Palm Beach County.

Methodology:

Several approaches were considered in determining the methodology that would be used for this report. A review of literature indicated that the majority of counties selected peers based upon those similar in population size and proximity. In addition, staff identified tools utilized by the medical community including the Community Health Status Indicators (CHSI) and Health Resources County Comparison Tool (HRCCT). Counties are categorized by the CHSI into strata by using factors including the population composition of the county (frontier status, size, and density) and demographics (age and poverty) (CHSI, 2009). CHSI strata are further grouped by the HRCCT into income, minority, and percent of population over 65 years (HRSA, 2000). A similar method was utilized by the Indiana Business Research Center for a benchmarking study prepared for Orange County, California (IBRC, 2011).

The IBRC ranking method was selected to identify peer counties for this analysis. Staff determined that this method was an effective tool in making comparisons of counties by standardizing scores. In the Orange County study, counties with a population of 5,000 +/- the 2000 population of the study county were selected as the initial comparison set (IBRC, 2011). Economic indicators including per capita income and employment in key industries were compared for this analysis. Each indicator was divided by the corresponding value for the study county (IBRC, 2011). "To standardize these values, the absolute value of each county's mark minus one (one represents Orange County) was calculated. Finally, a composite score was created by summing the county's absolute values for each indicator. The lower the composite score, the

more similar the county is to Orange County with regard to these indicators.” (IBRC, 2011, pg. 6).

Peer County Selection Process:

The IBRC method was modified as follows to identify a state and national peer county for Palm Beach County:

- 1) Six Florida counties were selected as these counties are often compared to Palm Beach County and they are similar in size and close in proximity.
- 2) The United States Census Bureau’s *Resident Population Estimates for the 100 Largest U.S. Counties Based on July 1, 2011 Population Estimates: April 1, 2010 to July 1, 2011* chart was used to select ten counties on a national level. Five counties were selected above and below Palm Beach County’s population.
- 3) Counties were compared using the U.S. Census Bureau’s data from the *Resident Population Estimates for the 100 Largest U.S. Counties Based on July 1, 2011 Population Estimates: April 1, 2010 to July 1, 2011, DP-1-Geography-Florida: Profile of General Population and Housing Characteristics, and DP03: Selected Economic Characteristics* for the following indicators:
 - Population size (Total population)
 - Median age (Years)
 - Population aged 65 years and over (Percent, %)
 - Minority population (Percent, %)
 - Per capita income (\$)
 - Poverty Level (Percent, % below poverty level threshold)

The demographic and socioeconomic indicators above are commonly used in benchmarking and comparative studies, with population size being the key indicator. In terms of population composition, population of residents 65 years and older and minority population were included as Palm Beach County has been a popular retirement destination, and because of its growing minority population, respectively. Per capita income and poverty level were also included as important socioeconomic indicators.

- 4) Percent of minority population was derived by deducting Non-Hispanic White from 100 percent.
- 5) The preceding 2010 indicators for each county were divided by the corresponding value for the study county.
- 6) Values were standardized by subtracting 1 for the study county and converting these figures to absolute values.

- 7) Values for each indicator were added to determine a total score for each county.
- 8) Counties with the lowest total score were selected as peer counties.

The United States Census Bureau's *Resident Population Estimates for the 100 Largest U.S. Counties Based on July 1, 2011 Population Estimates: April 1, 2010 to July 1, 2011* chart was used to select Florida counties for this analysis. In addition to Palm Beach County, seven other Florida Counties (Miami-Dade, Broward, Hillsborough, Orange, Pinellas, Duval, and Lee) were included on the list of most populous counties. Populations for these counties ranged from a high of 2,496,435 for Miami-Dade County #7 to a low of 618,754 for Lee County #97. Palm Beach County ranked #28 with a population of 1,320,134. The following six counties listed in ascending order based upon their rank were selected as they are often used in comparisons with Palm Beach County. Lee County was excluded as its population is almost half the size of Palm Beach County.

County	State	Rank	Population
Miami-Dade	FL	7	2,496,435
Broward	FL	18	1,748,066
Palm Beach	FL	28	1,320,134
Hillsborough	FL	30	1,229,226
Orange	FL	34	1,145,956
Pinellas	FL	54	916,542
Duval	FL	59	864,263

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, *100 Largest US Counties based on July 1, 2011 Population Estimates: April 1, 2010 to July 1, 2011*

In comparison to the other states, Florida had the fourth highest number of counties with eight included on the *U.S. Census Bureau's Resident Population Estimates for the 100 Largest U.S. Counties Based on July 1, 2011 Population Estimates: April 1, 2010 to July 1, 2011 list*. California had the highest number with fifteen of the most populous counties while New York and Texas both had nine counties. Populations ranged from a high of 9,818,605 for Los Angeles County, California #1 to a low of 626,667 for Providence County, Rhode Island #100. Ten counties were selected for comparison on the national level as they are closest in population to Palm Beach County. Counties are listed in ascending order based upon the rank designated by the U.S. Census Bureau report.

County	State	Rank	Population
Middlesex	MA	23	1,503,085
Suffolk	NY	24	1,493,350
Sacramento	CA	25	1,418,788
Bronx	NY	26	1,385,108
Nassau	NY	27	1,339,532
Palm Beach	FL	28	1,320,134
Cuyahoga	OH	29	1,280,122
Allegheny	PA	31	1,223,348
Oakland	MI	32	1,202,362
Franklin	OH	33	1,163,414
Hennepin	MN	35	1,152,425

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 100 Largest US Counties based on July 1, 2011
Population Estimates: April 1, 2010 to July 1, 2011.

Peer County Selection - Florida:

The following table lists the six Florida Counties selected for comparison in ascending order by their combined score for each of the indicators. Information is also provided concerning the State of Florida as a reference point. As indicated in the table, Palm Beach County has a significantly higher percentage of population aged 65 and over at 21.6% in comparison with the State of Florida at 17.3%. In contrast, Orange County's population for this same demographic is 9.7%. The median age for Palm Beach County is also older at 43.5 years than the state at 40.7 years. In addition, Palm Beach County has a slightly lower minority population of 39.9% in comparison to 42.1% for the state.

In terms of economic conditions, Palm Beach County has a higher per capita than the state and comparison counties. Palm Beach County's per capita is at \$30,735 while the state's per capita is \$24,272. There is almost a \$10,000 difference between Palm Beach County and Miami-Dade County's per capita of \$20,970. Palm Beach County also has a lower poverty level with 14.2%, while the state is at 16.5%. Miami-Dade County's poverty level is significantly higher than Palm Beach County at 20.4%. Based on the indicators selected for this report, Pinellas County was identified as the peer county with the lowest total score.

Total Score	County	State	Rank	Population	Median Age	Age 65 and over (%)	Minority Pop. (%)	Per capita (\$)	Poverty Level (%)
-	Palm Beach	FL	28	1,320,134	43.5	21.6	39.9	30,735	14.2
-	Florida	FL	-	18,801,310	40.7	17.3	42.1	24,272	16.5
0.95	Pinellas	FL	54	916,542	46.3	21.2	23.1	26,926	14.0
1.20	Hillsborough	FL	30	1,229,226	36.1	11.8	46.3	25,169	16.6
1.33	Broward	FL	18	1,748,066	39.7	14.3	56.5	26,373	14.6
1.48	Duval	FL	59	864,263	35.8	11.1	43.4	24,137	16.6
1.65	Orange	FL	34	1,145,956	33.7	9.7	54.0	23,160	16.3
3.23	Miami-Dade	FL	7	2,496,435	38.2	14.1	84.6	20,970	20.4

Source: U. S. Census Bureau, 2010 Census. (2011). DP-1-Geography-Florida: Profile of General Population and Housing Characteristics (DEC_10_DP_DPDP1) and American Community Survey (2011) DP03: Selected Economic Characteristics (ACS_10_1YR_DP03).

Peer County Selection – United States:

The following table lists the ten counties selected on a national basis for comparison with Palm Beach County. Counties are listed in ascending order by their combined score for each of the indicators. Information is also provided for the United States as a reference point. As indicated in the table, Palm Beach County has a significantly higher percentage of population aged 65 and over at 21.6% in comparison with the United States at 13.0%. Franklin, OH has the lowest percentage for the same indicator at 9.9%. The median age for Palm Beach County is also higher at 43.5 years than the nation at 37.2 years. Palm Beach County's minority population at 39.9% is slightly higher than the nation at 36.3%, while Bronx County, NY is significantly higher at 89.1%.

Economic conditions are slightly better for Palm Beach County in comparison to the nation. The per capita is \$30,735 for Palm Beach County while the nation is at \$26,059. In contrast, five of the ten comparison counties exceeded Palm Beach County's per capita. Palm Beach County also has a lower poverty level at 14.2% than the nation at 15.3%. While there is a 16% difference between the poverty level in Palm Beach County and Bronx County, NY at 30.2%. Based on the indicators selected for this report, Cuyahoga County, OH was identified as the peer county with the lowest combined score.

Total Score	County	State	Rank	Population	Median Age	Age 65 and over (%)	Minority Pop. (%)	Per capita (\$)	Poverty Level (%)
-	Palm Beach	FL	28	1,320,134	43.5	21.6	39.9	30,735	14.2
-	United States	US	-	308,745,538	37.2	13.0	36.3	26,059	15.3
0.87	Cuyahoga	OH	29	1,280,122	40.2	15.5	38.6	24,951	17.9
1.06	Allegheny	PA	31	1,223,348	41.3	16.8	19.4	29,469	12.0
1.21	Hennepin	MN	35	1,152,425	35.9	11.4	22.9	34,322	13.8
1.29	Oakland	MI	32	1,202,362	40.2	13.2	24.9	32,984	10.2
1.38	Nassau	NY	27	1,339,532	41.1	15.3	34.5	39,935	5.9
1.42	Sacramento	CA	25	1,418,788	34.8	11.2	51.6	25,011	16.8
1.54	Franklin	OH	33	1,163,414	33.4	9.9	32.7	25,820	18.6
1.57	Suffolk	NY	24	1,493,350	39.8	13.5	28.4	34,582	6.2
1.76	Middlesex	MA	23	1,503,085	38.5	13.1	23.5	39,194	8.1
3.62	Bronx	NY	26	1,385,108	32.8	10.5	89.1	16,671	30.2

Source: U. S. Census Bureau, 2010 Census. (2011). DP-1-Geography-Florida: Profile of General Population and Housing Characteristics (DEC_10_DP_DPDP1) and American Community Survey (2011) DP03: Selected Economic Characteristics (ACS_10_1YR_DP03).

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