

United Community Action Network Douglas and Josephine County

2021 Community Needs Assessment

Accepted by Board of Director's September 29th, 2021

Purpose and Scope of Needs Assessment

The purpose of this needs assessment is to provide an understanding of the community needs and assets in United Community Action Network's (UCAN) service area: Douglas and Josephine County, Oregon. The assessment begins with a description of UCAN and its programs. The assessment then provides an overview of Douglas and Josephine County, Oregon, and the regions and communities within the counties. The assessment continues by focusing on Douglas County and Josephine County needs and assets. The assessment then turns to an analysis of data discussed in the previous sections. The assessment ends by prioritizing actions to take in the region.

Approach/General Data Sources

The scope of this assessment is primarily limited to Douglas County and Josephine County. In a few cases, where county communities are located near to major service centers outside the county, information regarding those communities is included. County data is often compared with comparable Oregon data. Much of the assessment's data comes from the United States Census Bureau and state agencies. As available, local community data is included to better understand differences between county communities. Because small community data derived from the Census has a larger margin of error than countywide data, wherever possible, estimates are based on five years of data. Because most data included in this assessment was collected prior to 2020, much of it does not reflect the impact of either the COVID-19 Pandemic nor the Archie Creek Wildfire (which devastated portions of eastern Douglas County).

United Community Action Network: An Overview

UCAN is a 501(c) (3) non-profit that provides comprehensive human services in both Douglas and Josephine Counties. UCAN has provided services for 51 years. UCAN's mission is: *Creating solutions to poverty, improving lives in our community*. UCAN's vision is that every Douglas and Josephine County resident has the resources and opportunities needed to reach their full social, civic, and economic potential, to be secure in their own lives and to be vital participants in their communities. UCAN's board, staff and volunteers embrace the following values when working to create solutions and improve lives:

Respect, Dignity, Compassion and Equity:

UCAN's board, staff and volunteers embrace these qualities in their interactions with people using UCAN's services, the staff and the community.

Accountability:

UCAN provides services in a manner that is effective, efficient and meaningful to the community and people's lives. UCAN uses public and private funds in a prudent manner and has fiscal controls that assure superior accountability.

Making a Positive Difference:

UCAN makes a positive difference in our communities by providing needed, meaningful and quality services.

Quality and Excellence:

UCAN is committed to performing all its functions to the highest caliber and strives for "best practices" in all aspects of its operations. UCAN is a "learning organization" that values creativity and flexibility, and embraces the concept of continuously improving the quality of its services throughout the agency.

Partnering:

UCAN is an active partner with the people using UCAN's services, other agencies and the community.

Courage:

UCAN is willing to take risks, try new things, and encourages staff ideas for new projects.

Honesty/Integrity:

UCAN is committed to honesty and integrity in all aspects of its operations.

While many of UCAN's programs target low-income individuals, UCAN also has programs that benefit all area residents, strengthening communities throughout the region. UCAN improves the lives of large numbers of residents, provides a wide array of services, and implements solutions rapidly. UCAN currently serves approximately 30% of residents in its service area with a staff of around 200, a cohort of National Service members, and additional dedicated volunteers. UCAN expands its work in the region by partnering with hundreds of local agencies and organizations. UCAN staff represent the agency and the region on many local and statewide boards and coalitions.

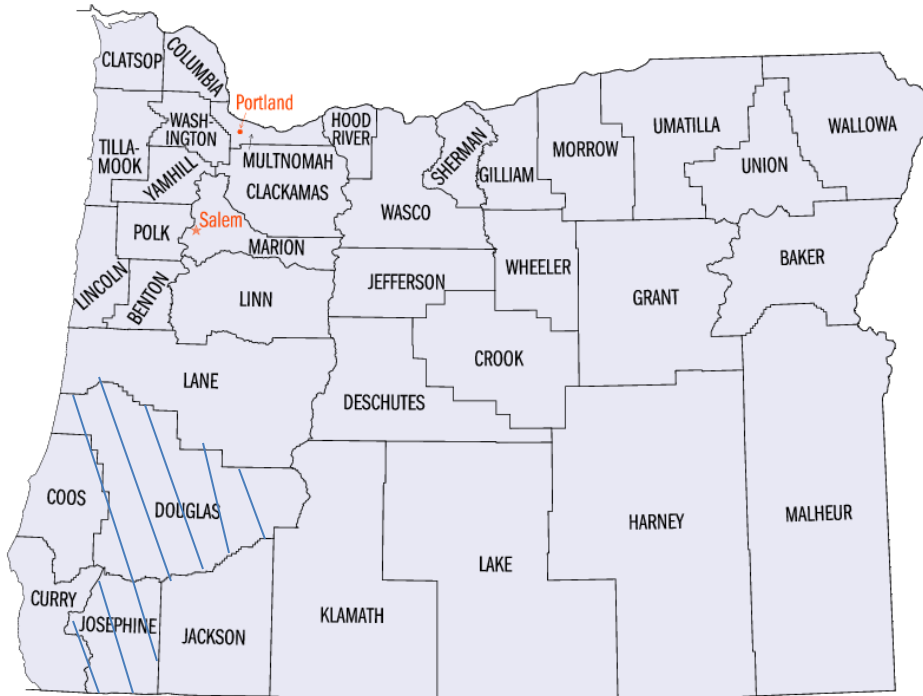
UCAN operates a number of different programs including:

- Head Start and Early Head Start,
- Healthy Families, Healthy Start, Nurse Home Visiting and WIC
- Emergency food distribution,
- Nutrition,
- Affordable housing,
- Rental and housing assistance,
- Supportive housing services,
- Non-emergency medical transportation,
- Money management,
- Health insurance education and enrollment,
- Tax assistance, and
- Energy assistance and weatherization programs.

UCAN maintains regional National Service programs, including AmeriCorps and AmeriCorps Senior Corps. AmeriCorps members serve in Douglas, Josephine, Coos, Curry and Jackson County.

Oregon/Douglas/Josephine County Overview

Oregon



(U.S. Census American Community Survey map)

Douglas and Josephine County are located in the southwest portion of Oregon. Oregon is the 9th largest state in the United States.¹ The state is split into distinctive portions in the west and east by the Cascade Mountains, which rise to over 11,000 feet in elevation.² The Willamette River, the United States 19th largest by volume³, creates a unique region in the northwestern portion of the state. Most of the original settlers who migrated along the Oregon Trail settled in the Willamette River basin. Over the years, much of Oregon's population has remained concentrated in this valley. Of Oregon's 4,268,055 residents, a little over two-thirds (2,937,230) reside in counties found here (Lane, Linn, Benton, Marion, Yamhill, Clackamas, Washington and Multnomah).⁴ The Valley contains Oregon's three largest metropolitan areas, Portland, the state capital Salem, and Eugene-Springfield. Much of the state's economic activity, its academic research centers (University of Oregon and Oregon State University), and major government offices are headquartered in the Willamette Valley.

¹ United States Census Bureau.

² United States Geological Survey.

³ United States Geological Survey.

⁴ Portland State University, Population Research Center, 2020 estimate.

Douglas County

General Description



(Douglas County Planning Department)

Douglas County lies just south of the Willamette Valley, and encompasses 5,036 square miles (an area larger than Connecticut)⁵. The County extends from the Cascade Mountains at elevations of over 9,000 feet to sea level at the Pacific Ocean.⁶ Most of the County is covered by rugged mountains that are heavily forested. The County encompasses the Umpqua River watershed, much of which flows through dramatic canyons and narrow valleys. Both the County's rugged terrain and federal landholdings limit development. The United States Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management administer more than 50% of the County's land.⁷ These lands are not subject to local property taxes, greatly diminishing the local government's tax base.

⁵ US Census Bureau.

⁶United States Geological Survey.

⁷ Douglas County website: <https://www.co.douglas.or.us/overview.asp>.

Though Douglas County is larger than Connecticut, it only has 112,530 residents.⁸ With few residents and a large area, Douglas County's population density is only 22 people per square mile.⁹ Unlike the State of Oregon, which is experiencing fast growth in population (11.4% increase between 2010-2020), Douglas County is growing at a much slower rate (4.5% for the same period).¹⁰

Roseburg, the Douglas County seat, is located approximately 70 miles south of the edge of the greater Eugene area (a drive of over one hour). The next closest major urban area is Medford, a drive of over 1 ½ hours south. Douglas County residents generally conduct their daily activities within the County, rarely traveling to Oregon's metropolitan areas. Residents living near the County borders may travel to Eugene, Grants Pass, and North Bend/Coos Bay to obtain some services.

Many of Douglas County's residents live along the I-5 corridor which bisects the County from north to south. Central Douglas County is the region's most densely populated area, and includes the County's three most populous communities: Roseburg (24,915), Sutherlin (8,260) and Winston (5,620).¹¹ The most populous communities in southern Douglas County are Myrtle Creek, Riddle, Canyonville and Glendale with a combined population of 7,635.¹² Eastern Douglas County has no incorporated communities, but has a number of residents in unincorporated areas such as Glide. Drain and Yoncalla, with a combined 2,240 residents, are found in north Douglas County.¹³ Reedsport is the single incorporated community in western Douglas County, with 4,230 residents.¹⁴ A little over half of Douglas County's population lives in unincorporated areas.¹⁵ Such areas are found adjacent to Roseburg as well as in the more rural portions of the County. The population of Douglas County is stable, and estimates are that it will continue to grow slowly in the near future.

⁸ Portland State University (PSU), Population Research Center, 2020 estimate.

⁹ Calculated by dividing PSU 2020 population data into square mileage provided by US Census Bureau.

¹⁰ PSU, Population Research Center, 2010-2020 estimates.

¹¹ PSU, Population Research Center, 2020 estimate.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Calculated using numbers from PSU, Population Research Center, 2020 estimates.

Demographics

Like many rural regions in Oregon, the County is not very racially or ethnically diverse.

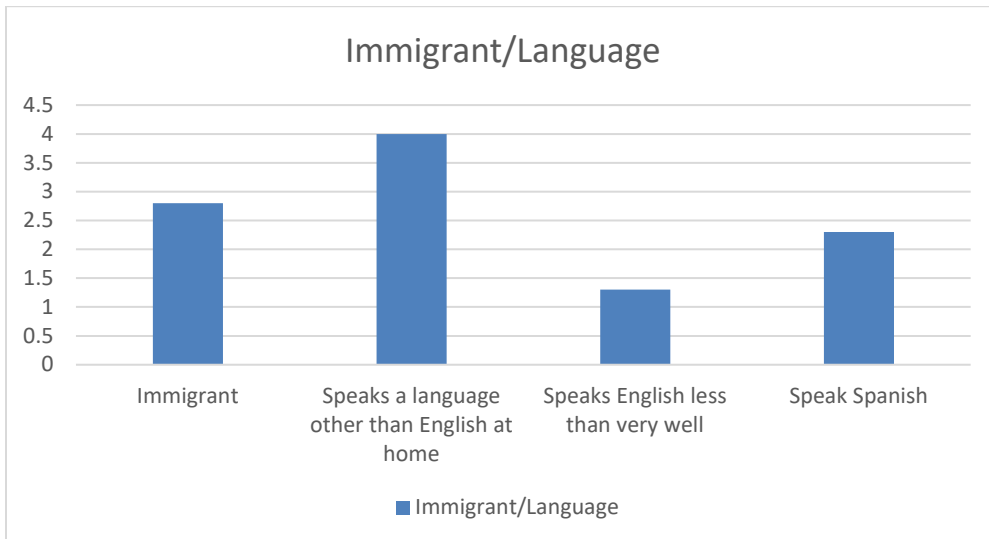
Racial Diversity¹⁶

Race	Percentage of Population
White	92.4%
African American	0.4%
Native American	1%
Asian	1%
Hawaiian/Native Islander	0.1%
Multi-Race	4.3%
Other	0.6%

Ethnic Diversity¹⁷

Ethnicity	Percentage of Population
Non-Latino	94%
Latino	6%

Douglas County has few immigrants, few residents speak a language other than English at home, and fewer have difficulty speaking English.¹⁸ The most common language spoken other than English is Spanish.¹⁹



¹⁶ US Census, American Community Survey, 2015-2019 Estimate.

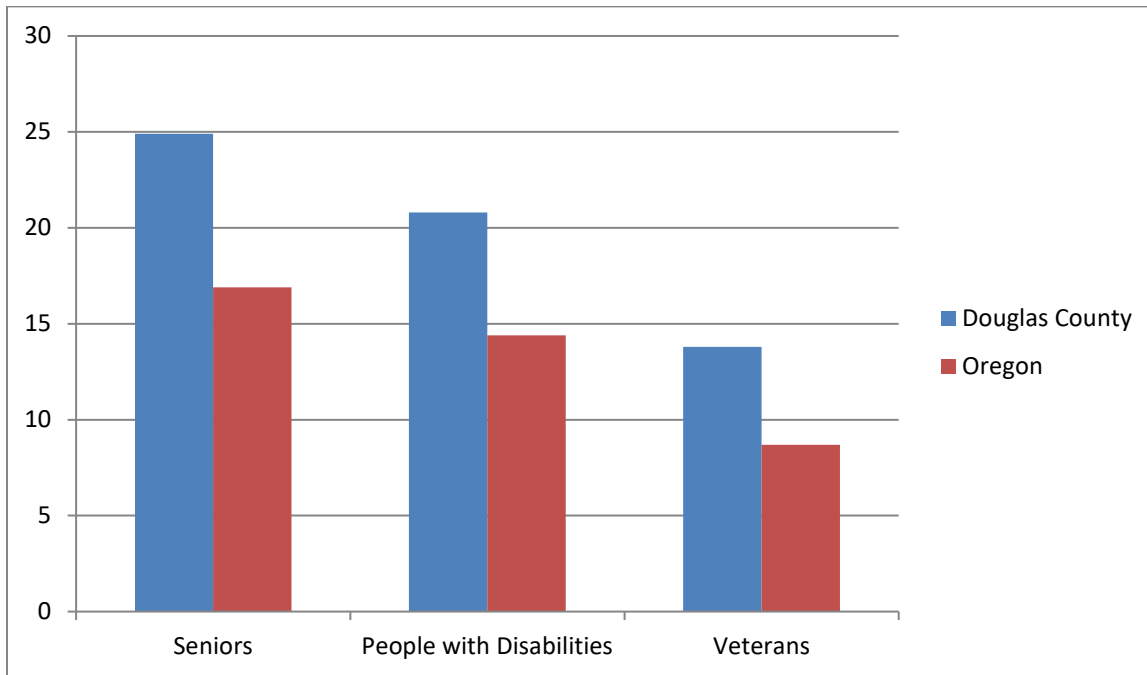
¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid.

While Douglas County lacks racial/ethnic diversity, its population is overrepresented by three groups that create unique, significant demands on the area’s social service system. The three groups of people are seniors, people with disabilities and veterans. The chart below captures this:

Percentage of Seniors, People with Disabilities and Veterans²⁰



Though many of these individuals, particularly veterans, do not face additional life challenges, a number do. The disproportionate numbers of these three populations adds pressure in the region for such services as:

- Medical/dental,
- Case management and life skill support,
- Food,
- Affordable housing

But these needs may differ from the general population’s needs for such services. For example, seniors and people with disabilities needing affordable housing are also more likely to require home modifications. Veterans with health needs are more likely to have incidences of brain trauma and post-traumatic stress disorder. The resources available to address these needs may also differ from those available to the general population. Douglas County has medical facilities specifically addressing veterans’ needs, and has

²⁰ US Census, American Community Survey, 2015-2019 estimate.

special programs only offered to veterans, seniors and people with disabilities. In general, these special programs do not fully meet the many needs of these populations.

Not only does Douglas County have a disproportionate number of seniors, Douglas County's median age is rising faster than in many parts of the state. The area is experiencing an influx of older residents attracted by low property prices and low property tax rates. Some of these households, referred to as "equity migrants," are able to use the equity they built up owning property elsewhere to purchase lower priced houses locally. At the same time, the County also has many seniors who formerly worked in the timber industry who lack resources to move out of the area. Overall, the median age of County residents is almost eight years older than residents statewide (47.1 as opposed to 39.3 years of age).²¹

Despite Douglas County's increasing median age, many families with children make their homes in the County. 23.9% of County households are families with children ages 0-18.²² 21,162 children ages 0-17 live in the County.²³ The average family size is about the same both county-wide and state-wide, with approximately three members per family.

Economy

Douglas County's economy has long relied on logging and the manufacture of wood products. These industries have regularly witnessed periods of boom and bust. In recent years, however, wood manufacturing jobs have steadily decreased. Areas worst hit by this decline are the more isolated, rural towns. Many of these towns have had difficulty developing jobs in other industries. One highlight for the region is the beginnings of an economy based on the production of wine. The healthcare sector is also growing rapidly.

The County's unemployment rate has fluctuated wildly in the past year due to COVID-19's impact on the local economy. Though the rate has dropped significantly from its high at the onset of the pandemic, it continues to exceed the state rate. Median income is far below the state, with poverty rates far higher than state averages. Many people without college degrees have lost or are at risk of losing higher paying logging and wood product manufacturing jobs. These jobs are generally being replaced by lower paying service sector jobs. It is currently unclear what long-term impact the pandemic will have on other sectors of the economy, such as those that employ restaurant workers and childcare workers.

²¹ US Census, American Community Survey, 2015-2019 estimate.

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid.

Health

Douglas County has consistently been ranked as one of the least healthy counties in Oregon by County Health Rankings, a program of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. For the most recent year's data, the Foundation reports, "Douglas (DO) is ranked among the least healthy counties in Oregon."²⁴ Two areas of persistent concern are quality of life and health behaviors. Access to health care is also a major problem within the County, especially for low-income individuals.

Education

Children struggle in Douglas County's school system. The County has some of the state's lowest graduation rates. Poor rates of graduation lead to low levels of educational attainment for adults living in the County. The area has a particular shortage of individuals who have baccalaureate and advanced degrees. County communities have difficulty keeping better students from leaving the area. Those who desire a 4-year degree or graduate education must leave the County to obtain their degree (unless they take on-line degree programs). The area's high unemployment and low median wages are disincentives to returning to the area after completion of college.

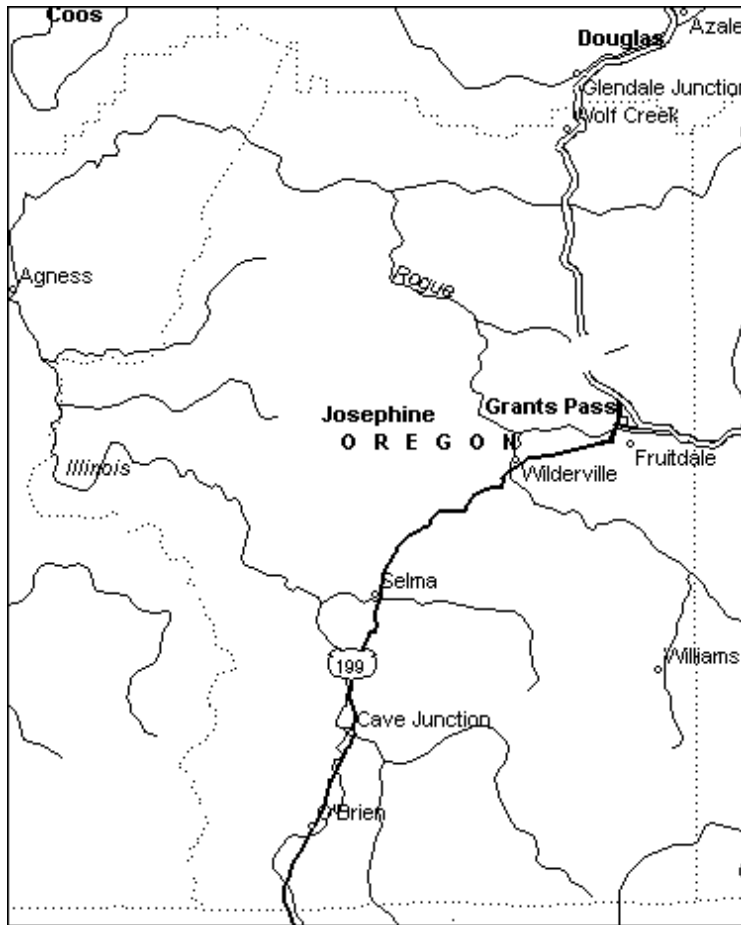
Summary

A number of Douglas County residents struggle with various aspects of life, oftentimes as a result of a depressed local economy. Despite these challenges, the County continues to attract new residents. Families living in the County can enjoy a more laidback lifestyle than those living in bigger cities, and there are many beautiful areas to explore.

²⁴<https://www.countyhealthrankings.org/app/oregon/2021/rankings/douglas/county/outcomes/overall/snapshot>

Josephine County

General Description



Josephine County has an area of 1,639 square miles.²⁵ Though much smaller than Douglas County, it is still larger than Rhode Island. Josephine County encompasses the Rogue River watershed, which like the Umpqua, is comprised of steep canyons and rugged, forest clad mountains. Like Douglas County, federal landholdings limit development and local tax receipts, with United States agencies administering more than 50% of the county's land.

Grants Pass, the Josephine County seat, is located 69 miles south of Roseburg. Drivers heading north from Grants Pass must cross several passes between 1,500 and 2,000 feet. Driving is occasionally treacherous when winter snow storms impact the passes. In contrast, Medford is more easily accessed on I-5 only 30 miles to the south. Grants Pass residents are much more likely to access resources and services in Medford than in Roseburg.

²⁵ US Census.

Josephine County has a total population of 85,560,²⁶ with 52.2 residents per square mile.²⁷ Many residents live in Grants Pass at the junction of I-5 and US highway 199. The only other population center of note is in the Illinois Valley, traversed by highway 199. Though not nearly as large as Douglas County, residents in more rural areas of Josephine County still have fairly long drives to access services and resources available in Grants Pass, with estimated driving times of:

- 40 minutes from Cave Junction in the southwest,
- 27 minutes from Williams in the southeast,
- 24 minutes from Wolf Creek in far northern Josephine County

Grants Pass has a population of 37,725²⁸. Cave Junction to the southwest on highway 199 is the only other incorporated community in the County, with a population of 1,935²⁹. More than half of Josephine County's population live in unincorporated areas. Such areas are found along I-5, highway 199, and in the southeast part of the County.

²⁶ PSU, Population Research Center, 2020 estimate.

²⁷ Calculated by dividing PSU 2020 population data into square mileage provided by US Census Bureau.

²⁸ PSU, Population Research Center, 2020 estimate.

²⁹ Ibid.

Demographics

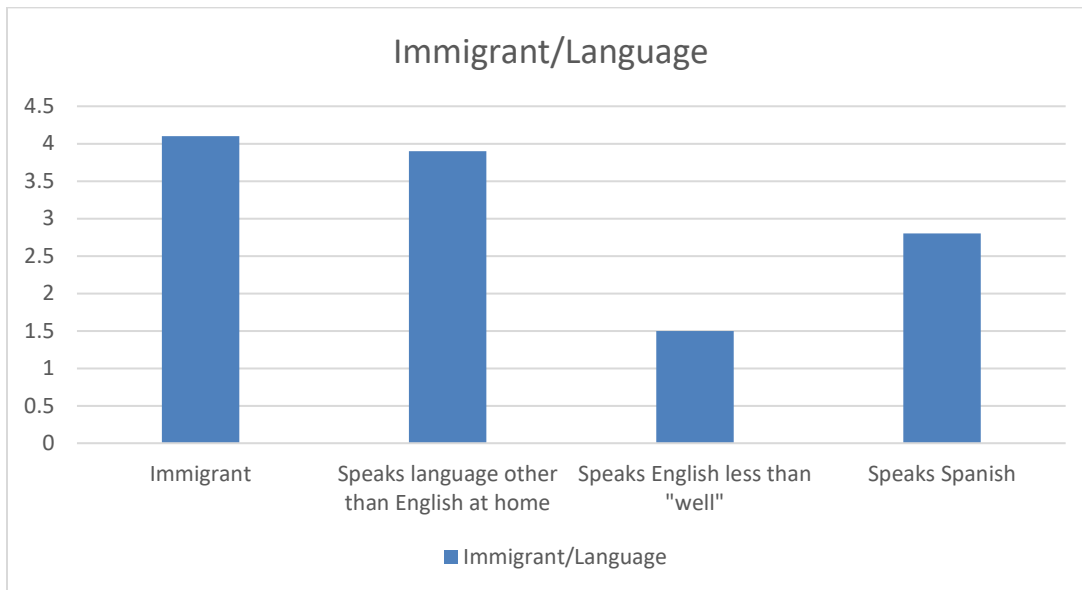
Josephine County has virtually the identical percentage of White residents as the percentage in Douglas County, but the County has a slightly higher percentage of Latino residents than Douglas County.³⁰

Race	Percentage of Population
White	92.4%
African American	0.5%
Native American	1.2%
Asian	1.0%
Hawaiian/Native Islander	0.1%
More than one race	3.6%
Other	1.3%

Ethnic Diversity³¹

Ethnicity	Percentage of Population
Non-Latino	92.6%
Latino	7.4%

As with Douglas County, few residents are foreign born, speak a language other than English at home, have difficulty speaking English, or speak Spanish.³²

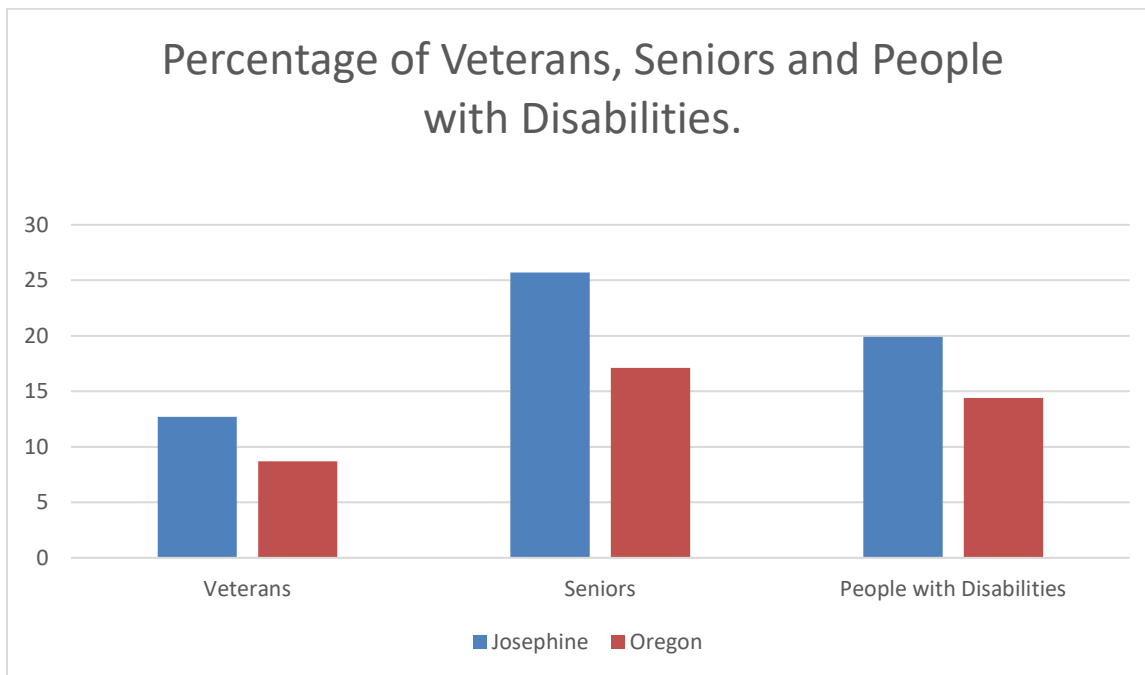


³⁰ US Census, American Community Survey, 2015-2019 estimate.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid.

Like Douglas County, while Josephine County lacks racial/ethnic diversity, its population has relatively high percentages of veterans, seniors and people with disabilities³³



As mentioned earlier, though many members of these groups, particularly veterans, do not necessarily face additional life challenges, a disproportionate number do, which further strains resources available in the County.

With a climate that is even drier and warmer than Douglas County, Josephine County is seeing an even greater influx of older “equity” migrants. At the same time, the area has a higher percentage of people living in poverty than Douglas County. Many seniors living in poverty do not have funds to move out of the area. Josephine County’s median age of 47.7³⁴ years of age exceeds that of Douglas County, and far exceeds the statewide median age.

But the County also has many households with children. Approximately 1/4th of county households are families with children ages 0-18.³⁵ 16,895 children ages 0-17 live in the County.³⁶ Unlike Douglas County or Oregon, average family size in Josephine County is closer to two people.³⁷

³³ US Census, American Community Survey, 2015-2019 estimate.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Ibid.

Economy

Josephine County has had a long history of reliance on timber for its economy. Josephine County has arguably been hit even harder by the turndown in this industry than most counties. The last mill in the County permanently closed in 2017. An increase in wine production is raising hopes of a new economic base. Tourism plays a large role in local economies, as many visitors enjoy recreational opportunities available along the Rogue River, and others travel on highway 199 headed for California's redwood country. But most jobs associated with tourism pay poorly. Like Douglas County, the County's unemployment rate regularly exceeds the state rate. COVID-19 has had a similar impact on Josephine County's economy as it has on Douglas County's. The County experienced a very high loss of jobs at the pandemic's onset, and while somewhat recovered, unemployment still is in excess of the rate statewide. Median wages are even lower than Douglas County's. More so than in Douglas County, lower paying service sector jobs are now the norm.

Health

Like Douglas County, County Health Rankings reports that "Josephine County is ranked among the least healthy counties in Oregon."³⁸ Not only is the County ranked as one of the worst for health outcomes such as premature death, the County is also ranked as one of the worst for health factors, like obesity.³⁹ The County currently ranks 31st for Health Outcomes and 28th for Health Factors⁴⁰. Access to health care is also a major problem within the County, especially for those living outside of Grants Pass.

Education

The graduation rate is somewhat better in Josephine County than in Douglas County, as is overall educational attainment, but the County still lags in these areas when compared to the overall State. Like Douglas County, the County has a shortage of individuals who have baccalaureate and advanced degrees. County communities have difficulty keeping better students from leaving the area. The closest four-year college is Southern Oregon University in Ashland, about 45 minutes to the south of Grants Pass. The area's high unemployment and low median wages are disincentives to returning to the area after completion of college.

Summary

In spite of its challenges, the number of people living in Josephine County continues to nudge upward. With an even warmer, dryer climate than Douglas County, the area is particularly attractive to retirees. But outside of Grants Pass, rates of poverty are high, and opportunities for economic growth are currently dim.

³⁸<https://www.countyhealthrankings.org/app/oregon/2021/rankings/josephine/county/outcomes/overall/~snapshot>

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

Community Challenges

Introduction

As a community action agency, United Community Action Network focuses its work primarily on issues related to poverty. The federal poverty level is still the most common measure used to determine poverty in communities. The government developed the formula to calculate this standard in the 1960s, and based the calculation on the percentage of income roughly needed to meet the cost of food. Since that time, other basic needs costs, such as housing, have risen more rapidly than food, so food costs now make up a much smaller portion of daily expenses. Another major issue with using the federal poverty levels as the sole measure of poverty is that the levels do not take into account differences in the cost of living in different areas of the country. The median cost of housing in Oregon, for example, is around three times that of Mississippi, and has been rising much more quickly than other areas of the country.⁴¹ Federal poverty rates also fail to include income supplements provided by the government, like TANF (formerly known as welfare). In general, many believe the federal poverty rate significantly undercounts those who cannot meet their basic needs, and alternative approaches are being developed.

One approach is the use of living wage calculations, which take into account geographic differences and a variety of basic needs expenses. A living wage calculator developed by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) provides living hourly wages required by families to meet their needs, based on family size.⁴² Data from MIT shows how inadequate the federal poverty rate is as a measure of poverty. For example, MIT's living wage calculator indicates that in Douglas County, Oregon, a family with one adult and two children would need to earn \$38.36/hr. to meet basic needs.⁴³ The hourly rate based on the federal poverty standard for this family is only \$10.44/hr. So if this household earned \$10.45/hr., they would earn more than the federal poverty level. One of the major reasons for the large discrepancy between the living wage and the poverty wage in this case is the assumption that such a family would need to pay for child care for both children, a cost not taken into account by the federal poverty measure.

Unfortunately, data for the percentages of people living below living wage in a community are not readily available. To best analyze poverty within a community, a recent report suggests looking at poverty multi-dimensionally.⁴⁴ UCAN is moving toward incorporating this approach. Dimensions of poverty addressed in this assessment include: General Poverty Information, Housing, Home Comfort, Health, Food/Nutrition, Transportation, Children and Family Well-Being, Education and Economic Well-Being/Jobs.

⁴¹ US Census, American Community Survey, 2015-2019 estimate.

⁴² <http://www.livingwage.mit.edu>

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Torgerson, M. *Measuring Community Action Program Impacts on Multi-Dimensional Poverty*, Oregon State University, March 2017.

General Poverty Information

Poverty Rates

Until a better measure of poverty is made available, the federal poverty level remains the primary measure of poverty. This portion of the report looks both at poverty levels and the use of income supplements in the region. This report includes federal poverty rates by:

- Overall population,
- Gender,
- Household type,
- Race,
- Ethnicity,
- Overall change,
- Seniors

Child poverty rates will be analyzed in the section examining child and family well-being.

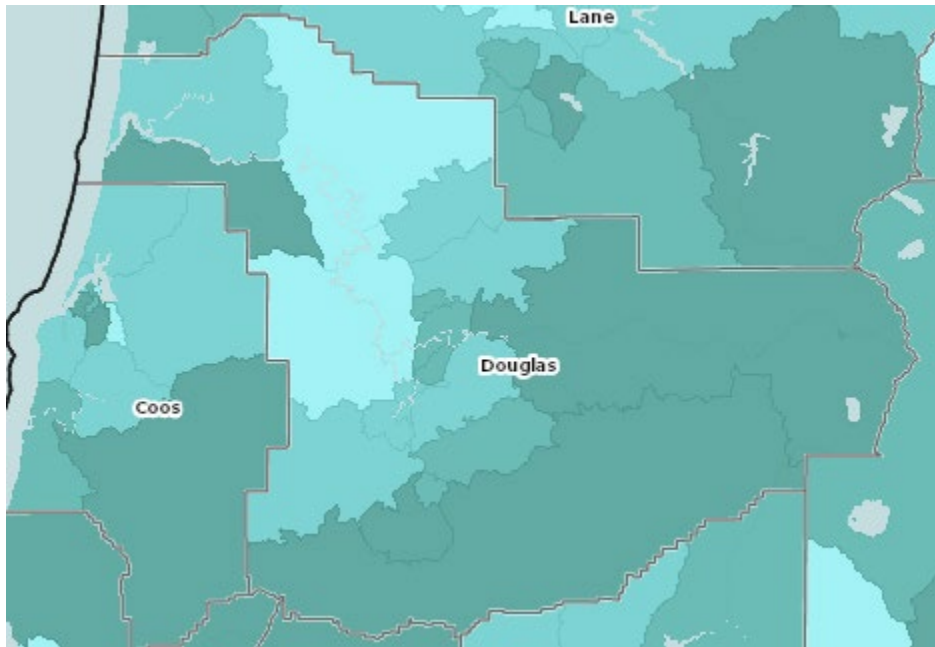
The Census Bureau collects poverty data from both Small Area Income Poverty Estimates and from the American Community Survey five year estimates (ACS). The two sets of figures differ. As the ACS estimate is based on five year's data, it will be used in this report. The table below depicts the poverty rate estimates and estimated number of people living in poverty for the year 2019 for Douglas County, Josephine County, the State of Oregon and the U.S.⁴⁵

Report Area	Total Population (2019)	Population in Poverty (2019)	Percent Population in Poverty
Douglas County, OR	107,837	15,801	14.65%
Josephine County, OR	84,901	15,384	18.12%
Oregon	4,052,019	533,527	13.17%
United States	316,715,051	42,510,843	13.42%

⁴⁵ US Census, American Community Survey, 2015-2019 estimate.

As can be seen, both Counties have much higher poverty rates than the State or the U.S., with the poverty rate higher in Josephine County. The good news is that as of the onset of the pandemic, poverty rates had been dropping over the last few years. But the pandemic has undoubtedly increased rates to levels above those shown, though the data is not yet available for 2020.

By examining poverty rates by census tract, one can determine particular County areas with particularly high household poverty rates. Below, household poverty rates are mapped by Douglas County census tract (the County's boundaries are in red).⁴⁶ The darker blue areas have higher poverty rates.



Portions of the County with higher poverty rates (15-20% and over) include all of eastern Douglas County, all of southern Douglas County, the area around Reedsport, and portions of Roseburg.

⁴⁶ US Census, American Community Survey, 2015-2019 estimate..

The census tract poverty map for Josephine County is:⁴⁷



Poverty over 20% is concentrated in the southern and northern portion of the County, including Cave Junction and other Illinois Valley communities, Applegate Valley communities and Wolf Creek near the border with Douglas County.

Poverty rates differ by gender in the two counties. This can be seen in the table below:⁴⁸

Report Area	Total Male	Total Female	Percent Male	Percent Female
Douglas County, OR	6,997	8,824	13.13%	17.03%
Josephine County, OR	7,488	7,896	18.04%	18.2%
Oregon	243,867	289,660	12.18%	14.13%
United States	18,909,451	23,601,392	12.19%	14.61%

In all locations, women are more likely to be living in poverty than men, though the percentages of the two genders are fairly close in Josephine County.

⁴⁷ US Census, American Community Survey, 2015-2019 estimate.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

Both counties have far more families led by single women living in poverty than those led by single men. ⁴⁹ Though poverty rates have generally fallen in years leading up to the pandemic, the percentage of households led by single women living in poverty actually increased in Douglas County during this time.

Report Area	Poverty Rate All Types	Percent of Poverty Married Couples	Percent of Poverty Male Householder	Percent of Poverty Female Householder
Douglas County, OR	10.3%	34.8%	13%	52.2%
Josephine County, OR	12.4%	44.2%	14.3%	41.5%
Oregon	8.4%	41.2%	10.7%	48.1%
United States	9.5%	36.7%	10.7%	52.7%

Josephine County differs from Douglas County in one respect in this data set: a higher rate of married couples live in poverty than families led by women in Josephine County. The data below reflect the 2019 US Census' five-year estimate for poverty rate by race.⁵⁰ This data should be taken with a grain of salt, as the large margins of error for the small numbers of non-White residents leads to some odd numbers, such as the 0% poverty rate for Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islanders in Josephine County.

Report Area	White	Black or African American	Native American / Alaska Native	Asian	Native Hawaiian / Pacific Islander	Some Other Race	Multiple Race
Douglas County	14.29%	17.43%	20%	2.88%	51.76%	12.85%	22.9%
Josephine County	17.54%	27.52%	17.58%	9.47%	0%	22.84%	33.09%

⁴⁹ US Census, American Community Survey, 2015-2019 estimate.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

Given that the demographic and economic status of the two counties are relatively similar, the differences between poverty rates for African American, Asian, Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, Other, and Multiple Race suggests that this data is of questionable value.

With more Latinos living in both counties, the US Census depicts a more accurate picture of poverty regarding Latinos versus non-Latinos.⁵¹

Report Area	Total Hispanic / Latino	Total Not Hispanic / Latino	Percent Hispanic / Latino	Percent Not Hispanic / Latino
Douglas County, OR	1,571	14,230	25.12%	14.01%
Josephine County, OR	1,553	13,831	24.62%	17.6%

Here the numbers more likely accurately reflect that those who identify as Hispanic/Latino in the two county region do experience poverty at significantly higher rates than those who do not.

Poverty rates for the two-county region, as well as those for Oregon and the US have, as mentioned earlier, been dropping over the past five years.⁵² It is very unlikely that this trend will continue, given that jobs have not returned to pre-pandemic levels, and that additional supports made available in the past year will expire in the near future.

Region	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Douglas County, OR	19.3%	18.6%	17%	16.2%	14.7%
Josephine County, OR	20.1%	19.5%	18.6%	18.6%	18.1%
Oregon	16.5%	15.7%	14.9%	14.1%	13.2%
United States	15.5%	15.1%	14.6%	14.1%	13.4%

⁵¹ US Census, American Community Survey, 2015-2019 estimate.

⁵² US Census, American Community Survey, five-year estimates, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018 and 2019.

Seniors in both counties have relatively lower poverty rates than other individuals.⁵³

Region	Overall Poverty Rate	Senior Poverty Rate
Douglas County, OR	14.7%	7.8%
Josephine County, OR	18.1%	9.7%

These figures suggest that seniors are generally doing better financially than other age groups in the region. Both Counties are popular places for both in-state and out-of-state retirees, in part because taxes are very low in the area. So there has been an influx of relatively well-off seniors locally. Nonetheless, both Counties have substantial numbers of seniors who lost jobs during a period of economic contraction, were not able to regain living wage employment, and have not been able to relocate. This is a particular problem in smaller communities whose timber mills have shut down.

⁵³ US Census, American Community Survey, 2015-2019 estimate.

Income Supports

Some residents of Douglas and Josephine County receive several supplements to their income. Common income supplements include Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), and Earned Income Tax Credits (EITC). In addition, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits are considered to be income supplements, as they serve as cash for the purchase of food. This next portion of this section examines the use of these supports and the financial benefits accruing to the region.

In December 2019, Douglas County and Josephine County had 3,659 and 2,896 individuals respectively receiving SSI.⁵⁴ Most of these individuals were either blind or disabled. The total amount of money coming into the region from SSI payments was over \$3,750,000.⁵⁵ From 2019 to November 2020, Douglas County and Josephine County saw decreases in TANF cases.⁵⁶ This may be due to increased unemployment benefits and stimulus payments made during the pandemic.

Douglas and Josephine County had 8,620 and 7,520 tax return filers receiving some amount of Earned Income Tax Credit in 2018, the most current available data.⁵⁷ The total amount of the credit was \$19,439,000 and \$16,362,000 for tax filers in Douglas and Josephine County respectively.⁵⁸

During 2020, with December data not yet in, an average of 24,750 individuals/month benefited from SNAP benefits in Douglas County.⁵⁹ The average monthly dollar of benefits from 2020 was about \$4,175,000.⁶⁰ With December data still to come, an average of 17,840 residents/month in Josephine County received SNAP benefits in 2020.⁶¹ The average monthly benefit to Josephine County in 2020 was just over \$3 million.⁶² Douglas County saw large increases in the number of SNAP recipients and the amount paid out in benefits from April to October, with a large drop in November. Josephine County had a similar rise between April, but the numbers started dropping in August and decreased substantially in November.⁶³ Conversations with DHS staff suggest that the drop is likely to reflect a change in data collection systems, not a drop in need for SNAP.

⁵⁴ United States Social Security Administration, 2019.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Oregon Department of Human Services, TANF Flash Figures, December 2020.

⁵⁷ IRS: Oregon, Selected Income Tax Returns: Selected Income and Tax Items by State, County, and Size of Adjusted Gross Income, Tax Year 2018

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Oregon Department of Human Services, SNAP FIP, 2020.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Ibid.

Summary

Both Douglas and Josephine County have poverty rates in excess of Oregon's and the United States' rates. Approximately 31,000 residents live below the federal poverty level in the region. Far more lack adequate income to make ends meet. Women are more likely to live in poverty, particularly those that are single and heads of households. Poverty rates trended lower in both counties in the past few years; the impact of the pandemic and wildfires on poverty rates is unknown at this time. Low numbers of non-White populations make it difficult to determine accurate poverty rates by race, but it seems likely that those identifying as Hispanic/Latino have higher rates of poverty than those who do not. Seniors have much lower poverty rates than the overall percentage, but seniors living in distressed communities are more likely to live in poverty. Income supports play an important role in bringing in tens of millions of dollars to support local distressed communities.

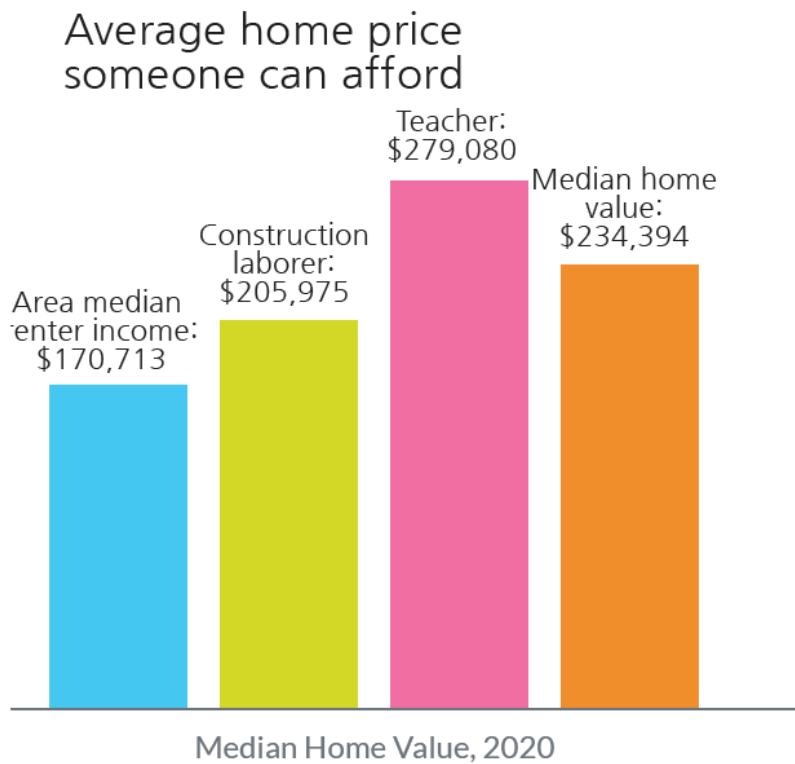
Housing

Low-income residents are primarily limited to renting their place of residence, unless they own manufactured homes or small, old homes in poor condition. The following section examines both local homeownership as well as renting challenges. The Housing Alliance of Oregon has created infographics⁶⁴ that depict how these challenges are greatly contributing to local poverty. In the upcoming sections on both homeownership and renting, the needs assessment incorporates these infographics as well as other data to demonstrate how local housing is at a crisis point.

Homeownership

In Douglas County:

Homeownership is out of reach for many



⁶⁴ http://www.oregonhousingalliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Douglas_County_2020.pdf and http://www.oregonhousingalliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Josephine_County_2020.pdf

Not only are prices currently too high for low- and many middle-income residents, the cost of ownership is rapidly increasing, as can be seen in the next infographic.

\$234,394

median home value
in 2020

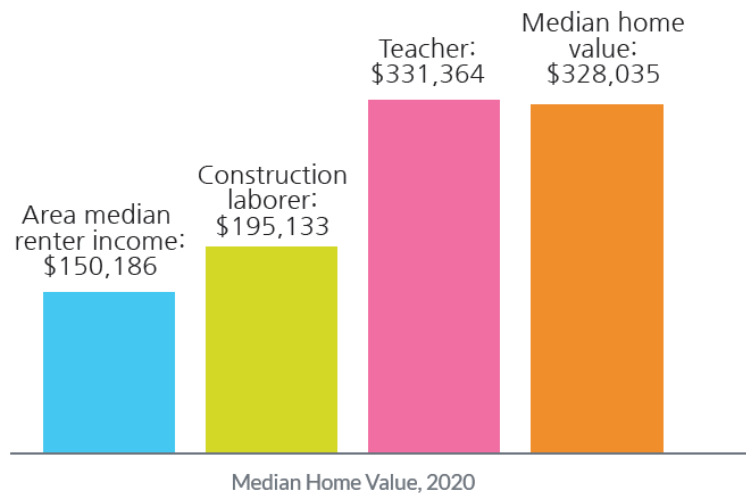


...up 8.8% from 2019

In Josephine County, the situation is much worse:

Homeownership is out of reach for many

Average home price
someone can afford



The median home value is among the higher amounts of any non-metro Oregon county, and costs are rising even faster than in Douglas County.

\$328,035

median home value
in 2020



That's a 13.3% increase from 2019.

In addition to low-income residents, most middle-income residents are priced out of the market here.

Renting

As with much of the United States, and almost all of Oregon, the cost to rent has steadily increased in the past five years in Douglas and Josephine County.⁶⁵

Median Gross Rent (2015-2019)

Year	US	Oregon	Douglas	Josephine
2019	\$1062	\$1110	\$824	\$908
2018	\$1023	\$1050	\$790	\$860
2017	\$982	\$988	\$772	\$847
2016	\$949	\$941	\$763	\$834
2015	\$928	\$907	\$751	\$837

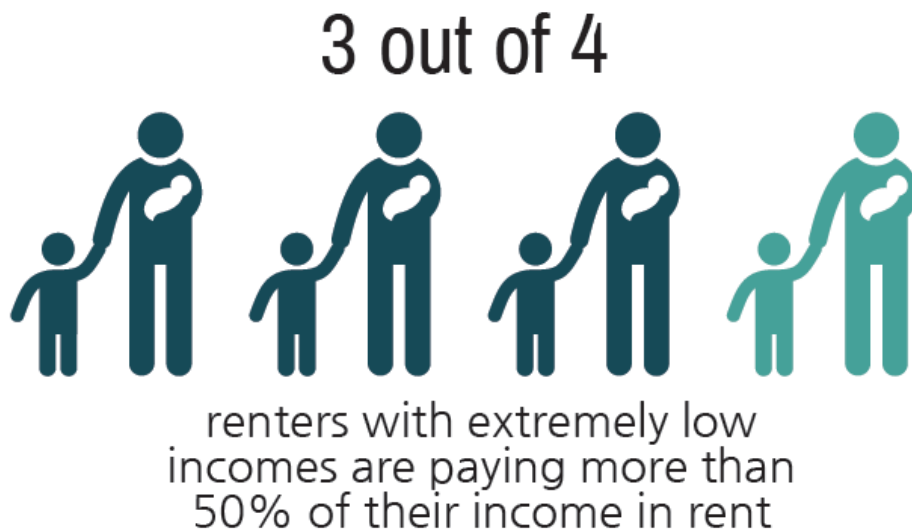
While both counties have lower median gross rents than the state or national rents, they have seen increases of a little over \$70/mo. in median rents in the past five years. During this time, wages, particularly those of low-income workers, have stayed relatively flat.

⁶⁵ US Census, American Community Survey, five-year estimates, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018 and 2019.

To better understand how housing costs are affecting residents, particularly low-income residents, it is useful to examine how much of residents' paychecks are being spent on rent. Individuals paying more than 30% of their rent on housing are categorized as rent-burdened, and those paying more than 50% of their income are considered to be severely rent-burdened. Severely rent-burdened residents are especially likely to cut back on purchases of food, medicines, etc. in order to cover their rent payments, and are at-risk of losing their rentals. The following table indicates the proportion of residents that are rent burdened and severely rent burdened nationally, statewide, and in the two county region.⁶⁶

Location	Rent Burdened	Severely Rent Burdened
United States	49.6%	22.9%
Oregon	50.5%	24%
Douglas	43.5%	17.8%
Josephine	58%	27.6%

Oregon's government determines the percentage of severely burdened renters by city with populations over 10,000. The government's data shows that 29.7% of Roseburg rents and 31.5% of Grants Pass renters were severely burdened in 2018.⁶⁷ Even though housing rents are less in Douglas and Josephine County, renters, especially those in Josephine County, are paying far too much of their paycheck on rent. This is even more true for low-income renters. In both Douglas and Josephine County:



⁶⁶ US Census, American Community Survey, five-year estimate 2015-2019.

⁶⁷ US Census, American Community Survey, five year estimate 2014-2018 and PSU Population Estimates 2019.

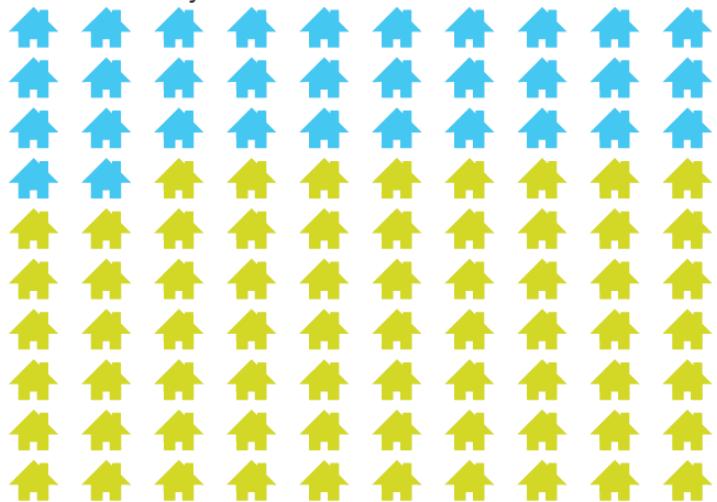
Affordable housing can address this crisis, but both Douglas and Josephine County have an inadequate stock of such housing.⁶⁸ In Douglas County,

For every 100 families with extremely low incomes, there are only 26 affordable units available.



In Josephine County:

For every 100 families with extremely low incomes, there are only 32 affordable units available.



⁶⁸ http://www.oregonhousingalliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Douglas_County_2020.pdf and http://www.oregonhousingalliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Josephine_County_2020.pdf

Those with criminal histories, low credit scores, or histories of evictions may earn an income sufficient to rent, but may still have landlords refuse to rent to them.

Homelessness

The Oregon Department of Housing and Community Services performs a “point-in-time” homeless count each winter. The count undercounts the number of homeless individuals in Oregon, as many homeless people leave the area during this time of year. In 2019, the Douglas County PIT found that 542 people were homeless in the County.⁶⁹ This was an increase of 79 people from 2017.⁷⁰ Approximately 6 out of 10 homeless residents lacked any shelter.⁷¹ Particularly disturbing, 224 of Douglas County’s homeless people were either adults with children or children living alone.⁷² The homeless population also increased in Josephine County between 2017 to 2019, from 650 to 1030. Josephine County had the highest count of homeless adults with children and homeless children living alone of any Oregon county in 2019 with 706 such residents.⁷³ Homelessness is especially difficult for school children, whose housing condition greatly diminishes their chance to have successful educational outcomes.

⁶⁹ OHCS, Douglas County PIT, 2019.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Ibid.

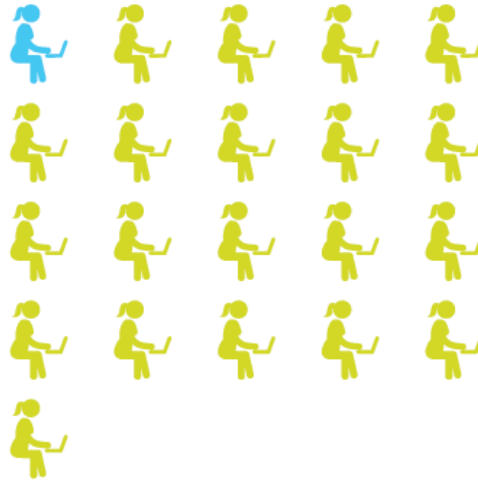
⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Ibid.

The Housing Alliance infographics demonstrate the severity of this problem in both counties. In Douglas County:⁷⁴

1 in 21 students

experienced homelessness
in 2019-20



In Josephine County, the situation for children is much worse with:

1 in every 12 students

experienced homelessness in
2019-20



Only Lincoln County has a higher proportion of students who are homeless than Josephine County's proportion, and Josephine County has the highest number of

⁷⁴ http://www.oregonhousingalliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Douglas_County_2020.pdf and http://www.oregonhousingalliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Josephine_County_2020.pdf

students experiencing homelessness of any non-metropolitan county in the state. In total, the Housing Alliance of Oregon reports that 670 and 903 Douglas and Josephine County students respectively experience homelessness.⁷⁵

Summary

All of Oregon is experiencing a housing crisis. Vacancy rates are very low, and prices are rapidly increasing. Though official data from the Census Bureau is not available for 2020, the Oregon Employment Department reported in March 2021 that prices are going up rapidly.⁷⁶ The Department reports:

In an unexpected turn we have seen a large increase in the demand for housing during this pandemic recession. The high demand has led to historically low inventories of residential real estate for many communities across the state. High demand and low inventory is leading to dramatic home price appreciation, further increasing concerns around housing affordability.

Zillow reports that as of the end of April 2021, home values in Josephine County had gone up 17.4% over the previous year.⁷⁷ While home values in Douglas County were considerably lower, Zillow reported the prices rising by 13.3% over the previous year.⁷⁸ The near-term future looks worrisome, as few new permits for construction are being issued.⁷⁹ Homelessness is a particularly concerning issue in both Counties. While rents are not going up as dramatically, they are rising regularly, and low-income renters can ill afford to pay increased rents. Costs of housing in the region far exceed what most low-income residents earn so most such residents are forced to skip meals, put off doctor's appointments and forgo filling prescriptions to pay for housing. Those who are chronically homeless, living on the streets for long periods of time, often end up with multiple chronic health problems. Not only do the chronically homeless often die young, they are frequently involved with emergency health and public safety systems, costing distressed communities significant amounts of resources. Homeless students are far more likely to have poor lifelong health, educational and economic outcomes. When looking for root causes of local poverty, the cost of housing certainly ranks near the top.

⁷⁵ http://www.oregonhousingalliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Douglas_County_2020.pdf and http://www.oregonhousingalliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Josephine_County_2020.pdf

⁷⁶ <https://www.qualityinfo.org/-/did-oregon-s-residential-real-estate-market-become-more-affordable-in-the-pandemic-#:~:text=According%20to%20the%20Zillow%20All,7.0%25%20in%20fourth%20quarter%202020.>

⁷⁷ <https://www.zillow.com/josephine-county-or/home-values/>

⁷⁸ <https://www.zillow.com/josephine-county-or/home-values/>

⁷⁹

Home Comfort

As alluded to in the previous section, a person can have housing, but lack adequate housing. Factors related to home adequacy include:

1. Overcrowding,
2. Lack of kitchen or plumbing facilities,
3. Presence of toxic mold or other dangerous substances,
4. Leaks,
5. Lack of or poor heating/cooling systems,
6. Broken items like windows, doors, etc.
7. Lack of accessibility.

This section of the assessment will cover home comfort data that is available related to adequacy of housing.

Fewer than 1% of housing units lack full plumbing in the two Counties.⁸⁰ Douglas County has a similar percentage of housing units lacking complete kitchens, but a little over 2% of Josephine County's housing units (approximately 778) lack them.⁸¹ Fewer than 3% of housing units in Douglas County have more than one occupant per room, but in Josephine County, almost 5% housing units are potentially overcrowded.⁸² Lack of access to technology has created major barriers during the pandemic. In both Counties, a little over 10% of households lack computers, and approximately 20% of households lack an Internet subscription.⁸³ In Douglas County, an estimated 1000 units have no telephone access; in Josephine, an estimated 575 do.⁸⁴ Over 10% of housing in both Counties were constructed over 70 years ago.⁸⁵ 20.7% and 16.1% of Douglas County and Josephine housing respectively is manufactured.⁸⁶ Manufactured homes built prior to 1976 were subject to no building standards. The government updated building standards for such homes in 1996. Many such homes in the two Counties were not constructed to meet any standards. Moreover, even homes built to early construction standards may fail to meet newer standards. So it is very likely that many local residents are living in sub-standard manufactured home stock in both Counties.

⁸⁰ US Census, American Community Survey, 2015-2019 estimate.

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

Fisher, Sheehan and Colton Public Finance and General Economics Consultants have developed a model to determine the affordability gap for home energy.⁸⁷ This number, determined for each US county, is the gap between "affordable" home energy bills and "actual" home energy bills. The "affordable burden" for home energy bills is set at 6% of gross household income. The table below shows the number of households in 2020 who were energy burdened at income levels between different percentages of the federal poverty level (FPL).⁸⁸

County	Below 50% FPL	50-99% FPL	100- 124% FPL	125- 149% FPL	150- 184% FPL	185- 199% FPL
Douglas	3,020	3,675	2,,577	2,767	3,647	1,728
Josephine	3,341	3,233	2,551	2,689	2,703	1,315

Of households living below 200% of the federal poverty level in 2019, 17,828 were energy burdened in Douglas County, and 15,832 were energy burdened in Josephine County. Based on the number of households in these two counties in the most recent 5-year American Community Survey, these households alone represent 2/3 of Douglas County households, and over 40% of Josephine County households.⁸⁹ The energy burden is most acute for those with lower incomes. Those living at 50% of less of the federal poverty level in the two counties are spending in excess of 20% of their income to stay warm.⁹⁰ Those between 50-99% of the poverty level are spending over 10% of their income.⁹¹ With a high percentage of these same households paying 50% of their income on housing alone, it becomes even more clear that housing and related costs alone take a huge chunk out of the income of low-income households. This data indicates that there is a high need for UCAN's energy assistance and home weatherization services in the two-county region.

Summary

Few residents in either Douglas or Josephine County have residences lacking kitchens or plumbing or those that are overcrowded. A substantial number do lack Internet service and computers, which have been critical for connection during the pandemic. Many owners of manufactured homes live in substandard homes, and it is likely that a decent portion of renters and homeowners living in older housing also live with health and safety issues. A large percentage of residents pay far too much for utilities.

⁸⁷ http://www.homeenergyaffordabilitygap.com/01_whatIsHEAG2.html

⁸⁸ http://www.homeenergyaffordabilitygap.com/03a_affordabilityData.html

⁸⁹ US Census, American Community Survey, 2015-2019 estimate.

⁹⁰ http://www.homeenergyaffordabilitygap.com/03a_affordabilityData.html

⁹¹ Ibid.

Health

COVID-19

Health data related to COVID is perhaps the best single collection of information foretelling what may lie in store for the near-term health and economic well-being of residents of both Douglas and Josephine County. The federal government is putting out regular reports with comprehensive information related to COVID for all counties in the US.⁹² At the time of the writing of this assessment, the most recent report was for May 25, 2021. As of the week leading up to that date, the number of cases of COVID and deaths from COVID were decreasing substantially in the US.⁹³ While cases were leveling off or decreasing slightly in Josephine County, Douglas County was seeing a spike in cases at this time (a 61% increase over the prior week).⁹⁴ For the past 14 days, the CDC reports Douglas County as being the only Oregon county designated an “Area of Concern-Rapid Riser County.”⁹⁵ Douglas County also saw a spike in ICU usage of over 20%.⁹⁶ Fortunately, neither County was experiencing a high percentage of use of hospital beds for COVID patients, and mortality rates for both were relatively low.⁹⁷ Both Counties remain at risk of spikes in cases, as both have only vaccinated about 1/3 of their residents.⁹⁸ Consequently, while Douglas County is currently categorized as having high levels of community transmission, Josephine County is remains categorized as having substantial community transmission.⁹⁹ Douglas County is currently identified as a “hotspot” by the CDC (a community that has reached a threshold of disease activity considered as being of high burden).¹⁰⁰ Looking to the future, the CDC has developed a measure, the Social Vulnerability Index that identifies communities that will need continued support to recover following an emergency or natural disaster. Both Douglas and Josephine County rank has having moderate to high levels of vulnerability, primarily because of high rates of poverty in the two counties.¹⁰¹

Community Health Needs Assessments

Several different organizations help to publish health needs assessments for both counties in our region. These include Coordinated Care Organizations (CCOs), which are coordinated network of care providers offering services covered by the state’s Medicaid program, hospitals, and local public health agencies. The CCOs in Douglas (Umpqua Health) and Josephine County (AllCare) and public health departments in the

⁹² CDC COVID Community Profile Report, 2021_0525

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ <https://covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/#county-view>

⁹⁵ CDC COVID Community Profile Report, 2021_0525

⁹⁶ <https://covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/#county-view>

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ CDC COVID Community Profile Report, 2021_0525

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ <https://svi.cdc.gov/map.html>

two Counties worked together to publish their assessments in 2019.¹⁰² Mercy Medical Center in Douglas County and Asante Three Rivers Medical Center in Josephine County also published health assessments that year.¹⁰³ This assessment examines some overall indicators of the health of residents in the region and health indicators related to women’s health, maternal health, infant health and the health of children. Information about nutritional health and health issues related to poor nutrition is found in the assessment’s section addressing food and nutrition issues.

General Health

As mentioned earlier, The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation has a program, County Health Rankings, which evaluates and ranks each county’s health based on a range of factors. Douglas and Josephine County consistently rank very poorly among all Oregon counties in the Rankings. The table below shows rankings reflecting areas of particular concern in one or both Counties.¹⁰⁴

Metric (year(s) of measure)	Douglas	Josephine
Life Expectancy (2017-2019)	34 th out of 35 counties ranked	33 ^d out of 35 counties ranked
Adults reporting fair or poor health (2018)	Out of 36 counties ranked, in the bottom 12	Out of 36 counties, in the bottom 5
Average number of mentally unhealthy days (2018)	Out of 36 counties ranked, in the bottom 8	Worst out of 36 counties
Percentage of adults who are current smokers (2018)	Out of 36 counties ranked, in the bottom 8	Worst out of 36 counties
Teen Pregnancy (2013-2019)	Out of 33 counties ranked, in the bottom 7	Out of 33 counties ranked, in the bottom 14
Number of Mental Health Providers (2020)	Out of 35 counties ranked, in the bottom 6	Out of 33 counties ranked, fifth best
Number of deaths due to injury	Out of 36 counties ranked, in the bottom 10	Out of 36 counties ranked, in the bottom 8
Rate of Suicides (2015-2019)	Out of 31 counties ranked, in the bottom 6	Out of 31 counties ranked, in the bottom 8

¹⁰² https://douglaspublichealthnetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Douglas-CHA-2018_Optimized.pdf, <http://jeffersonregionalhealthalliance.org/CHA/>

¹⁰³ https://www.chimercyhealth.com/assets/dc_community-benefit-report-final2019.pdf, <https://www.asante.org/app/files/public/34855668-9851-4814-b2a5-c7b034dac80f/atrmc-chna-cha-2019-final.pdf>

¹⁰⁴ County Health Rankings.

Contributing to the poor health measures listed above is the lack of medical, dental and mental health professionals in the region. The US Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) regularly maintains data on Medically Underserved Areas (MUAs) (areas having too few primary care providers) and Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSAs) (areas with shortages of primary medical care, dental or mental health providers). HRSA currently designates both the Grants Pass and Cave Junction regions of Josephine County as MUAs, and Douglas County as an MUA for low-income populations.¹⁰⁵ HRSA currently designates all of both counties as designated mental health HPSAs.¹⁰⁶

Summary

Poverty and poor health are interrelated in the region. Those living in poverty experience significant social determinants of poor health, such as substandard housing (County Health Rankings ranks Josephine County as having the most severe housing problems of all Oregon counties). At the same time, these same individuals lack the resources to appropriately address their health issues. Making matters worse, the region lacks medical and mental health providers to meet the needs of low-income residents.

¹⁰⁵ <https://data.hrsa.gov/tools/shortage-area>

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

Food and Nutrition

The availability of adequate food meeting the nutritional needs of residents also impacts local resident health. In this section of the assessment, not only is local food security examined, but also indicators of nutrition, such as the prevalence of breast feeding, use of WIC vouchers, and diet-related health conditions.

Food Insecurity

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) defines food security as “access by all people at all times to enough food for an active, healthy life.”¹⁰⁷ Feeding America has an excellent definition to distinguish the terms “hunger” and “food insecurity:”

It is important to know that hunger and food insecurity are closely related, but distinct, concepts. Hunger refers to a personal, physical sensation of discomfort, while food insecurity refers to a lack of available financial resources for food at the level of the household. ¹⁰⁸

Feeding America maintains data estimating the percentage of children and the overall population of counties that are food insecure. Prior to the COVID pandemic, Douglas and Josephine County had overall rates of food insecurity of 14% and 15%.¹⁰⁹ At that time, Josephine County had the fifth highest rate of food insecurity of any Oregon county. The proportion of children who are food insecurity in both Counties was a little over 1 in 5.¹¹⁰ Overall, Douglas County had approximately 15,000 food insecure individuals, including 4,400 children.¹¹¹ Josephine County had approximately 13,000 food insecure individuals, including over 3,500 children.¹¹² Feeding America also has developed a model to estimate food insecurity rates for 2020 and 2021.¹¹³ Their model predicts that in the 2020, overall food insecurity rates for Douglas and Josephine County would increase to 16.6% and 17.6%, leaving Josephine County with the fifth highest rate of food insecurity in the state and Douglas County with the 8th highest rate.¹¹⁴ Rates of insecurity are expected to drop somewhat in 2021, with Josephine County’s overall rate at 15.9% and Douglas County at 14.8%.¹¹⁵ So COVID19 is anticipated to continue to cause increased food insecurity through the year of this report.

¹⁰⁷ United States Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service.

¹⁰⁸ <https://hungerandhealth.feedingamerica.org/understand-food-insecurity/>

¹⁰⁹ Feeding America, Map the Meal Gap, 2019.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ <https://feedingamericaaction.org/resources/state-by-state-resource-the-impact-of-coronavirus-on-food-insecurity/>

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

The lack of money to purchase food is not the only reason that people are food insecure. Many local residents live in areas designated by the USDA as being food deserts. The USDA determines areas that are food deserts by looking at:

- Whether a census tract is by definition low-income,
- The distance at least 33% of people are from the nearest supermarket, supercenter, or large grocery store (distances used differ based on whether the tract examined is deemed urban or rural)¹¹⁶

For 2019, the USDA designated several census tracts within both counties as being food deserts. Communities within these tracts include: Sutherlin, NE and SE Roseburg, Green, Winston, Dillard, Riddle, Myrtle Creek, Tri-City, Days Creek, Tiller, Glendale, Glide, SW Grants Pass, Cave Junction, Williams and Merlin.¹¹⁷

Nutrition

People in the United States dealing with food insecurity rarely appear to be starving. It is much more likely that such people are obese, as they can only afford foods that are high in fats, sugars, salts and preservatives. In Douglas and Josephine County, the percentage of adults drinking seven or more sodas a day is 24% and 19.8% respectively, fifth and eighth worst in the state. The percentage of obese students in 6th, 8th and 11th grade in Douglas County increases between these grades, and exceeds the state’s averages for each.¹¹⁸ Rates of obesity in Josephine County are similarly in excess of 6th graders statewide, but drop below the state rate for 8th and 11th grades.¹¹⁹

Poor nutrition and obesity are related to a number of chronic health conditions. The most recent data for these conditions is provided by the Oregon Health Authority for the period 2014-2017¹²⁰

Disease	Douglas County	Josephine County
Cardiovascular Disease	9.1%-8 th worst in state	10%-5 th worst in state
Diabetes	11.4%-6 th worst in state	8.1%-18 th worst in state
2 or More Chronic Diseases	61.2%-3 rd worst in state	56.7%-9 th worst in state

¹¹⁶ United States Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service.

¹¹⁷ <https://www.ers.usda.gov/data-products/food-access-research-atlas/go-to-the-atlas/>

¹¹⁸ https://www.oregon.gov/oha/PH/BIRTHDEATHCERTIFICATES/SURVEYS/SHS/Douglas_Co_2018.pdf

¹¹⁹ https://www.oregon.gov/oha/PH/BIRTHDEATHCERTIFICATES/SURVEYS/SHS/Josephine_Co_2018.pdf

¹²⁰ <https://www.oregon.gov/oha/PH/DISEASES/CONDITIONS/CHRONICDISEASE/DATAREPORTS/Pages/Adult-Prevalence.aspx>

Despite the fact that there are troubling indications of poor diets and/or diet-related health conditions in the two Counties, residents of the two Counties have high levels of protective factors related to nutrition when compared to other Oregon counties.¹²¹ Over 1 in 3 adults in both counties have appropriate weights for their heights, and 8 in 10 adults in both counties exercise outside of work (better than 22 counties in both cases).¹²²

Good nutrition plays a vital role in the healthy development of children. Both the Women and Children (WIC) and Free and Reduced Lunch programs help improve child nutrition. The table below shows local participation in these programs.¹²³

Program Participation	Douglas	Josephine
WIC Overall Participation	4,448 individuals	3,018 individuals
% of Pregnant Women Served in WIC	47%	36%
% of WIC moms breastfeeding exclusively for six months	45%	48%
Percent Free/Reduced Price Lunch Eligible	59.7%	70.6%

Summary

Both food insecurity and poor nutrition are problems for many local residents. The chronic diseases that can arise as a result of these issues are costly for residents and communities to address. Fortunately, many residents have protective factors that are lessening the chance that such diseases arise.

¹²¹ <https://www.oregon.gov/oha/PH/DISEASES/CONDITIONS/CHRONICDISEASE/DATAREPORTS/Pages/Adult-Prevalence.aspx>

¹²² Ibid.

¹²³ OHA, 2020 WIC Facts; Oregon Kids Count Data Cards, 2019-2020.

Transportation

Lack of reliable transportation can curtail individuals' abilities to hold jobs, access educational opportunities, and obtain needed benefits and services. In households with one worker in Douglas and Josephine County, 532 and 437 households respectively lack any vehicles.¹²⁴ For households with two workers, 1,056 and 783 residents in the two counties respectively either lack a car or have only one car for both workers.¹²⁵ For households lacking vehicles to get to work, most residents had to walk to work, while some biked or used motorcycles. Few were able to work from home. Public transit and taxis rarely helped these residents access work.

Low-income residents who do have cars often face other challenges with transportation. Many lack the resources to cover the expenses of repairs. This may be a more pressing issue presently, as the average age of cars, light trucks, and SUVs hit a record high of 12.1 years, up from 11.9 in 2019. In 2002, it was 9.6.¹²⁶ While newer cars have been built to last longer, those owning older cars face high costs of maintenance. At the same time, used cars are selling for 46.9% more than they were a year ago.¹²⁷ So those lacking cars are currently hard pressed to purchase one.

Beyond the costs of repairs and maintenance, many low-income residents lack resources to maintain necessary car insurance. For some, even the cost of basics like gas can be a hardship. Drivers who have their licenses suspended or revoked are often put at risk of losing their jobs.

A lack of reliable transportation is particularly a problem for those living in the more rural parts of Douglas and Josephine County. Given the size of both Douglas and Josephine County, residents living outside of Central Douglas County and the Grants Pass area face potentially long commutes to work. The table below provides some average commute times between communities in Douglas County and Roseburg:

Home Community	Commute Time to Roseburg
Drain	37 minutes
Yoncalla	31 minutes
Oakland	20 minutes
Canyonville	28 minutes
Glendale	50 minutes

¹²⁴ US Census, American Community Survey, five-year estimate, 2019

¹²⁵ Ibid.

¹²⁶ https://www.usatoday.com/story/money/cars/2021/06/14/used-cars-suvs-trucks-used-car-prices/7638769002/?utm_source=feedblitz

¹²⁷ Ibid.

Commuters driving from Cave Junction to Grants Pass have a 38-minute drive. Some Grants Pass residents work in Medford, Oregon, which is a 35-minute drive. Given these commute times, and the fact that most residents drive alone to work, anyone who has difficulty affording personal transportation (cannot pay for gas, maintenance, insurance, or a vehicle), or who has a suspended or revoked license faces a substantial barrier to services and employment if living outside of Roseburg or Grants Pass.

Summary

Many local residents lack adequate access to transportation in the region, though the only definitive data available addressing this issue is number of vehicles per household. Commuter services are available in both Counties, but the percentage of residents taking advantage of such services is very small.

Children and Family Well-Being

This section of the assessment examines indicators of general child and family well-being. Indicators of health, particularly those regarding perinatal health and nutrition have been addressed in earlier sections. Areas examined here are related to child welfare, family strength, child care and overall child well-being. Child poverty rates are extremely high for the region, especially for young children. The table below compares child poverty rates for all children and those ages (0-4) with state and national rates:¹²⁸

Report Area	Ages 0-17 Total Population	Ages 0-17 In Poverty	Ages 0-17 Poverty Rate	Ages 0-4 In Poverty	Ages 0-4 Poverty Rate
Josephine County, OR	16,001	4,102	25.6%	1,099	28.4%
Douglas County, OR	20,556	4,537	22.1%	1,510	27.8%
Oregon	850,452	172,582	16.6%	53,794	18.0%
United States	72,235,700	15,335,783	18.5%	4,614,933	20.3%

Over 1 in 5 children in the region living in poverty. Poverty rates rise for younger children. Over 1 in 4 children ages 0-4 in the region live in poverty. The total number of children living in poverty in the region is 8,639. Such high rates of youth poverty correlate with a number of significant child welfare issues.

¹²⁸ US Census, American Community Survey, five-year estimate, 2015-2019.

Child Welfare

The Oregon Department of Human Services maintains data related to child welfare by Oregon county. The tables below summarize key indicators of child welfare for Douglas and Josephine County for the year 2019:¹²⁹

Indicator	Douglas	Josephine	Oregon
Founded cases of child abuse	447	194	N/A
Victim rate per 1,000	30.1-4th highest county rate	18.6-15 th highest rate	15.7
Children in foster care per 1,000	19.5-3rd highest county rate	13.4-9 th highest rate	8.2
Median months in foster care	19.9	20.1	19.7
Closed homes/new certifications	124 closed/110 new	52 closed/60 new	N/A

Our Children Oregon maintains some additional data regarding child foster care, as seen below:¹³⁰

Indicator	Douglas County	Josephine County	Oregon
Percentage of children exiting foster care	4.8%-8 th worst county rate	4.0%-7 th worst county rate	6.8%
Foster care stability 6+ placements	19.7%-2nd worst level in the state	10.3%	14.4%

Both Counties' children face high rates of abuse and foster care. Those in foster care are exiting out at low rates. These indicators suggest that Douglas County is having a crisis regarding child abuse and the number of children in foster care. This is an on-going crisis, as the County rate continues to rank among the highest in the state.¹³¹ It is especially concerning that such a high percentage of children in Douglas County's foster system are moving between homes more than six times.

¹²⁹ Oregon Department of Human Services, Child Welfare Data Book, 2019.

¹³⁰ Our Children Oregon, 2020 Oregon Kids Count Data Cards

¹³¹ Oregon Department of Human Services, Child Welfare Data Book, 2019.

Family Strength

The primary indicators for issues regarding family strength examined here are domestic violence, pregnancies for unmarried mothers and divorce. Oregon’s Department of Human Services Department puts out data regarding domestic violence and calls to domestic violence service providers. Data are combined for some counties, so comparisons between counties are not possible. 2016 domestic violence indicators include:¹³²

Indicator	Douglas	Josephine
Calls for domestic violence	4,160	3,702
Calls for stalking	60	58
Calls for sexual assault	162	216
Other calls	445	429
Adults sheltered	124	106
Children sheltered	77	44

Of particular concern is that both Counties had more calls for domestic violence than either Clackamas County (population over 400,000) or Washington County (population over 600,000).¹³³ Both also had far more adults and children in shelters than Washington County (Clackamas County shelters were closed for part of the year for renovations, so accurate data is lacking). These indicators suggest that domestic violence is a major problem in both Counties.

Pregnancies by unmarried mothers are a potential area of concern in the region, especially because the poverty rate is so much higher for households headed by women. Some of these pregnancies may be to older single women with substantial resources who simply have decided that they would like to have a child without marrying. Others may be to couples who have chosen not to marry, but have resources and/or have made a significant commitment to raising the children together. But far more of these pregnancies are among young women who lack resources and a partner, leaving the family at-risk for poor outcomes. In Douglas and Josephine County, 47.0% and 48.7% of births in 2019 were to unmarried women.¹³⁴ These percentages were significantly higher than the state rate (36%). Teenage pregnancy rates in both counties was also high, with rates of 26.3 and 25.2 per thousand teens in Douglas and Josephine County respectively (far in excess of the state rate of 18.1).¹³⁵ The

¹³² Oregon Department of Human Services, *Striving to Meet the Need*, 2018.

¹³³ Oregon Department of Human Services, *Striving to Meet the Need*, 2018.

¹³⁴ Oregon Health Authority, *Vital Statistics*, Vol. 1, 2019.

¹³⁵ *Our Children Oregon*, 2020 Oregon KIDS COUNT Data Cards.

percentage of those ages 15+ who are divorced or separated in Douglas and Josephine County are 16.7% and 16.4% respectively.¹³⁶ The two counties have the 10th and 11th highest percentage of combined divorced/separated residents of Oregon’s 36 counties.¹³⁷

Childcare

The availability of childcare impacts both general family well-being and the ability of parents to work. The pandemic has significantly reduced the availability of childcare in the region. Numbers are not available at this time to reflect this impact. The data that follows is from 2018, when childcare availability and affordability were already major problems for families with young children in the area. The table below shows the number of children in various age ranges for that year.¹³⁸

Age Range	Douglas County Children	Josephine County Children
0-2	3,546	2,687
3-4	2,364	1,791
5-12	9,368	7,284

As of 2018, in Douglas County, nearly 2/3rd of children under age of six had both parents employed or a single parent employed.¹³⁹ In Josephine County, nearly ½ of families with children under age six were similarly situated.¹⁴⁰ Applying these ratios to the number of children under age 13 in both Counties, an estimated 10,236 children in Douglas County and 5,881 children in Josephine County were likely candidates for childcare. These figures may overestimate the need for paid childcare, because some families may have other family members or friends who provide either no-cost or low-cost care. What is known is that Douglas County had 1,765 slots in centers and family child care homes for children under 13, and Josephine County had 1,508 slots.¹⁴¹ Douglas County had one slot available for about every six children needing childcare. Josephine County had one slot available for about every four children needing childcare.

Other factors further complicate some families search for care. A number of childcare providers have limits on the number of children who are newborn-two years old that they will serve. Parents with children these ages may have an even more difficult time finding childcare. Some communities have a disproportionately lower number of childcare providers than others. This is especially the case for more rural areas of the two counties. Oregon State University’s interactive childcare map shows that communities outside the I-5 corridor in Douglas County, and those outside of Grants

¹³⁶ US Census, American Community Survey, 2015-2019 5-year estimate.

¹³⁷ Ibid.

¹³⁸ Oregon State University, College of Public Health and Human Sciences, Child Care and Education in Douglas County, Oregon, and Josephine County, Oregon, 2018.

¹³⁹ Ibid.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

Pass and Cave Junction in Josephine County have had few if any childcare providers.¹⁴² With respect to preschool, in 2018, Douglas County had 33% of children age 3-4 enrolled.¹⁴³ Josephine County had 39% enrolled.¹⁴⁴

Douglas County parents paying for childcare had to pay on average \$8,880/yr., and those in Josephine County had to pay on average \$7,200/yr.¹⁴⁵ Parents earning minimum wage needed to spend over 1/3 of their annual wage for one child's care. Given that most families with minimum wage earners were already paying ½ of their take home pay for rent in the two Counties, these families could not afford to pay a significant portion for child care as well.

Long-Term Well-Being of Children

Recently, researchers have determined that certain potentially traumatic events experienced by children, termed Adverse Childhood Experiences (or ACEs), can lead to long-term negative consequences.¹⁴⁶ The more ACEs a child experiences, the greater the negative consequences.¹⁴⁷ Examples of ACEs include experiencing violence, abuse or neglect, witnessing violence, having parents with behavioral health issues, having parents divorce or separate, or having household members in jail. The more ACEs a child experiences, the more likely they are to later experience chronic health problems, mental illness, and substance use problems.¹⁴⁸ Children experiencing high numbers of ACEs are also more likely to have poor educational outcomes, perform worse at work, and have lower earning potential.¹⁴⁹

In 2018, the Oregon Health Authority published the results of student wellness surveys for each Oregon county. Students in 6th, 8th and 11th grade responded to a large number of survey questions, including a set related to adverse childhood experiences. These experiences included whether the student had: parents separated or divorced, whether they lived with a problem drinker, whether they lived with a street drug user, whether they lived with someone who was depressed or mentally ill, whether they did not have enough food to eat, whether they felt they had to wear dirty clothing and whether they felt they had nobody to protect them. Results of these surveys suggest that children growing up in Douglas and Josephine County experience ACEs at worrisome levels.

¹⁴² <http://geo.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=5242e1c28751484fa5887c4767bf6a79>

¹⁴³ Oregon State University, College of Public Health and Human Sciences, Child Care and Education in Douglas County, Oregon, and Josephine County, Oregon, 2016.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

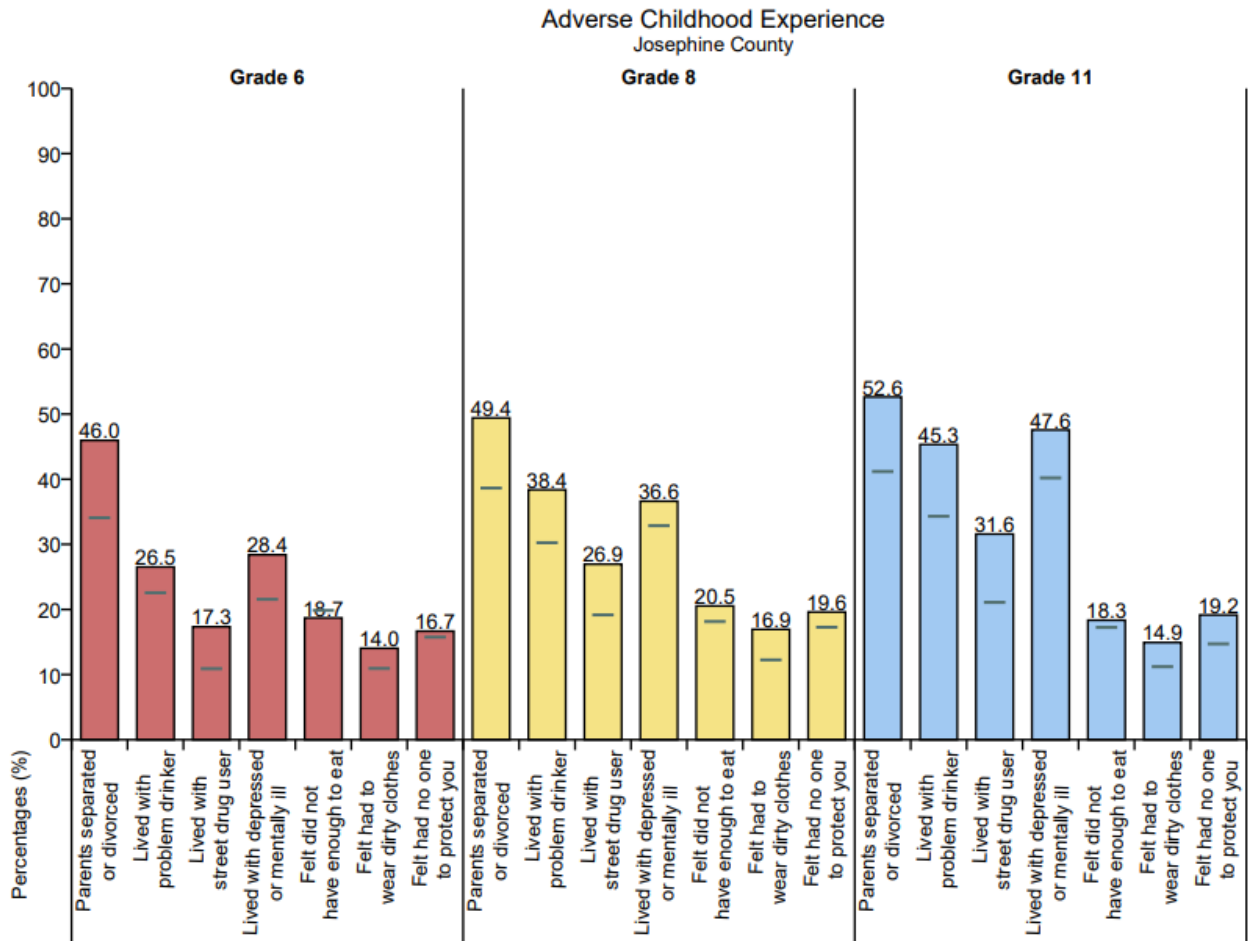
¹⁴⁶ <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4090696/>

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

¹⁴⁸ United States Centers for Disease Control.

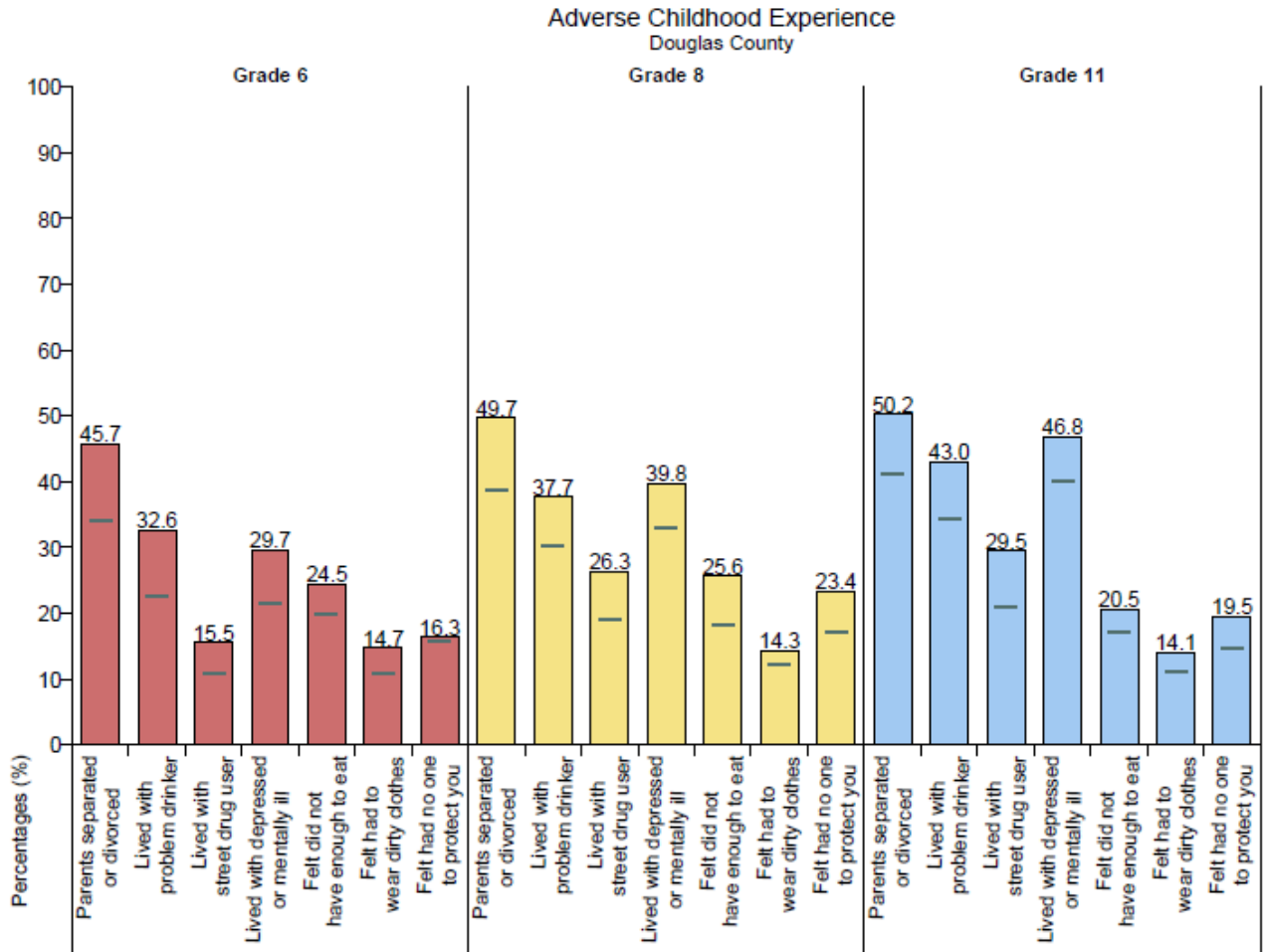
¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

The figures on the next two pages show the percentage of respondents impacted by these experiences in 6th, 8th and 11th grades in the two counties.¹⁵⁰ The horizontal dashes shown in each bar indicate the average response for all Oregon counties.



As can be seen above, for all but one response (sixth grade response to not having enough food to eat), Josephine County’s children reported experiencing more than the state average for all indicators of adverse experiences. Some of these responses were far above the state average, such as the percentage of students whose parents were separated or divorced, and the percentage of students who lived with a street drug user.

¹⁵⁰ Oregon Health Authority, 2018 Student Wellness Survey, Douglas and Josephine County reports.



In Douglas County, students reported experiencing all ACEs in all grades at levels higher than the state averages. Again, the percentage of students experiencing a number of these ACEs was not just above the state average, but well above average. Looking at the cumulative totals of all percentages of children reporting experiencing all ACEs in the three grades, Douglas and Josephine County totals are only exceeded by one other Oregon county. Taken together with the fact that for virtually all ACEs, both Douglas and Josephine County 6th, 8th and 11th grade students exceeded state averages, the state’s ACEs data suggests that children in the region are at highest need for provision of protective factors that can help blunt the impact of such experiences.

Summary

The stress low-income families live with is having significant negative consequences for both parents and children in the region. Many indicators of stress, such as rates of divorce, child abuse, foster care, and domestic violence are high, in some cases, among the state’s highest rates. Childcare, which could alleviate some of this stress, remains unavailable for many of those with the least resources. Data on ACEs indicates that children from this region are among those most at-risk statewide for poor health, behavioral health, educational and economic lifelong outcomes.

While data is not yet available, indications are that the pandemic has likely had a profound, negative impact on family health. In a report published by the US Chamber of Commerce in December 2020, the Foundation reports that nearly half of childcare providers closed their facilities during the COVID-19 shutdowns.¹⁵¹ The report further found that those that had reopened were generally operating at decreased capacity, with enrollment down by 67%.

Many are concerned that the pandemic has contributed to an increase in child abuse. On March 29, 2021, the Associated Press reported on the loss of the ability for people to report cases of abuse during the pandemic.¹⁵² In the AP's analysis, it found more than 400,000 fewer child welfare concerns reported during the pandemic and 200,000 fewer child abuse and neglect investigations and assessments compared with the same time period of 2019. Their reporters noted:

With many children out of the public eye, the U.S. system of relying on teachers, police and doctors to report potential abuse and neglect to Child Protective Services — known by various names across states — has been failing. School personnel are the top reporters of child abuse; they're the most important eyes and ears for child welfare agencies across states.

The AP specifically found that child abuse and neglect reports from school sources fell sharply during the pandemic as the U.S. pivoted to online learning — by 59%. The extent of the harm done by the pandemic to family and child well-being is likely to remain unknown until next year, but what is known is that many of the region's families were already struggling prior to Oregon's statewide shutdown.

¹⁵¹ PIECING TOGETHER SOLUTIONS: The Importance of Childcare to U.S. Families and Businesses-Working parents, employers, and childcare providers need long-term, cross-sector solutions to recover from COVID-19. US Chamber of Commerce Foundation, December 2020.

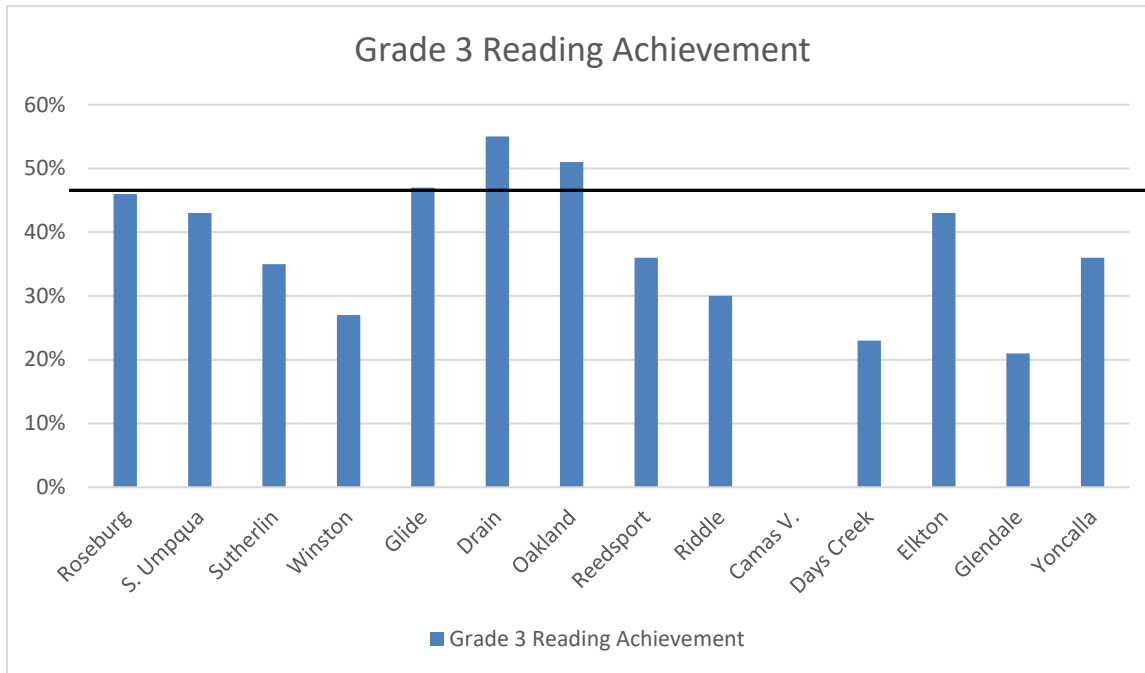
¹⁵² Pandemic Masks Ongoing Child Abuse Crisis as Cases Plummet, Sally Ho and Camille Fassett, AP, March 29, 2021.

Education

School Outcomes

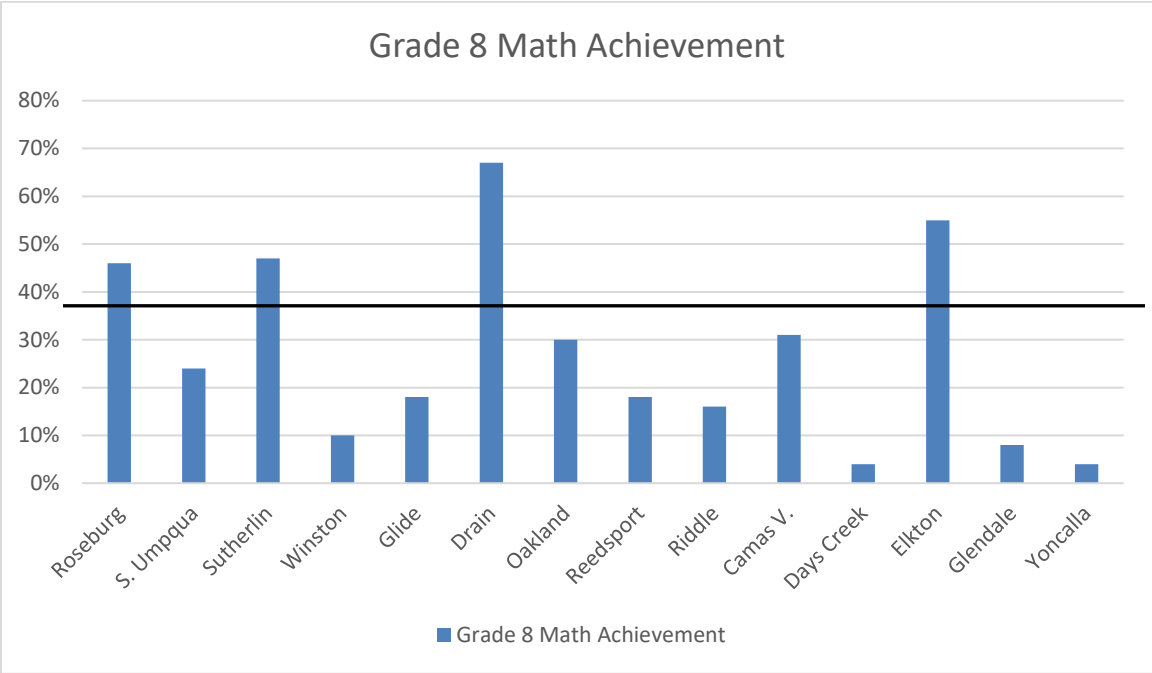
This portion of the assessment examines how well students are doing in local schools. The Oregon Department of Education (ODE) provides data on school performance through school year 2018-2019. School year 2019-2020 lacks performance data, as most schools closed and reconfigured during spring of 2020 due to the pandemic. Data for this section are based on the 2018-2019 performance statistics.

The bar charts below display the percentages of students attaining three key performance metrics, third grade reading achievement, eighth grade math achievement and on-time graduation by Douglas County School District.¹⁵³ The dark line across each figure depicts the average percentage for all Oregon schools. Douglas County has 14 school districts. Roseburg SD has over 5,000 students, South Umpqua, Sutherlin and Winston/Dillard have between 1,000-2,000 students, Glide, Drain, Oakland, Reedsport and Riddle have been 300-999 students and the remaining have less than 300 students each.

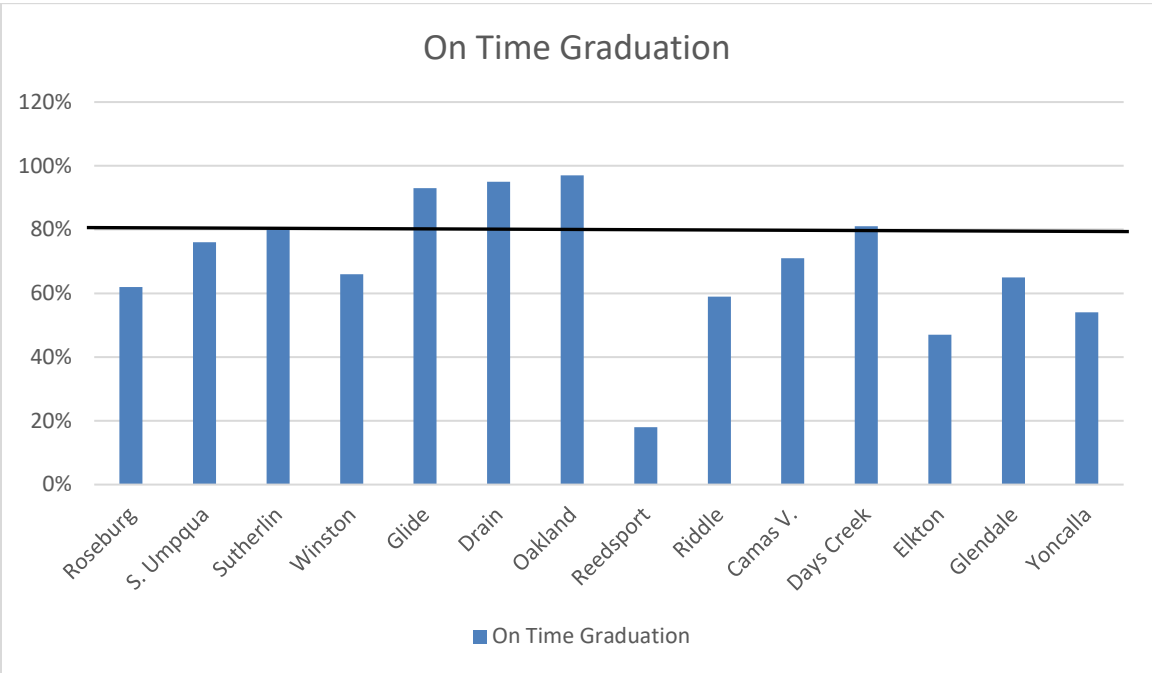


Of schools reporting data for grade 3 reading achievement (Camas Valley did not), only Glide, Drain and Oakland districts met or exceeded the statewide average. Many were far below the average, including two of the county's larger districts (Sutherlin and Winston/Dillard), two middle-sized districts (Reedsport and Riddle, and three smaller districts (Days Creek, Glendale and Yoncalla).

¹⁵³ Oregon Department of Education, School Report Cards, 2018-2019.



Looking at grade 8 math achievement, four schools exceeded the state average, including two large schools (Roseburg and Sutherlin, one medium sized school (Drain) and one small school (Elkton). But many of the County’s districts had 20% or fewer students meeting state expectations (both Days Creek and Yoncalla simply reported having fewer than 5% meet expectations).



Only one large school had the same on-time graduation rate as the state average. Three medium schools far exceeded the state average (Glide, Drain and Oakland). In contrast, less than half of students in Elkton, and less than one in five students in Reedsport graduated on time. Looked at across the three metrics, only students at Drain’s school are thriving.

Josephine County only has two school districts: Grants Pass SD 7 and Three Rivers/Josephine County SD. The former district serves Grants Pass and nearby areas, and the latter serves much of the rest of the County, as well as a small portion of Jackson County. Grants Pass SD 7 serves over 6,000 students, and Three Rivers SD serves almost 4,750. The table below provides information on these two districts:¹⁵⁴

School District Name	3 rd Grade Reading	8 th Grade Math	Graduating on Time
Grants Pass SD 7	51%	39%	73%
Three Rivers/Josephine County SD	47%	33%	75%

These two districts are performing much closer to state averages than Douglas County districts. Only Three Rivers/Josephine County district’s 8th grade math achievement is a little below state average. Both schools are a bit below the state average for on time graduation.

ODE maintains four and five year cohort graduation data by County. This assessment examines the five-year rate, as it may serve to better reflect the success schools have had with certain groups of students, such as students with disabilities, English learners, and students whose education was interrupted. For school year 2019-2020, the five year cohort graduation rate for Douglas County schools was the third lowest statewide at 71.52%.¹⁵⁵ With the exception of those identifying as Asian or Pacific Islander, who graduated at much higher percentages, rates were within a percentage point or two of this rate for other races/ethnicities. Those within the County with the lowest graduation rates were students who were economically disadvantaged, students with disabilities, and homeless students. Josephine County schools performed better in this area, with a cohort graduation rate 11th lowest in the state. Sub-groups of students in the County with lower graduation rates included: males, Hispanic/Latino, multi-racial, English-Language Learners, those with disabilities and those who were homeless. Students classified as economically disadvantaged graduated at approximately the same rate in Josephine County.

¹⁵⁴ Oregon Department of Education, School Report Cards, 2018-2019.

¹⁵⁵ Oregon Department of Education, cohort graduation rates by county, 2019-2020.

The State maintains data on the rates of students going on to post-secondary school by district. The chart provides the percentages of students who enrolled in a community college or four-year school within 16 months of graduation from school in 2015:¹⁵⁶

School District	% Continuing to Post-Secondary School
Camas Valley	46%
Douglas County SD 15 (Days Creek)	42%
Douglas County SD 4 (Roseburg)	59%
Elkton	37%
Glendale	33%
Glide	68%
North Douglas SD 22 (Drain)	57%
Oakland	52%
Reedsport	64%
Riddle	37.5%
South Umpqua	46%
Sutherlin	56%
Winston/Dillard	54%
Yoncalla	57%
Grants Pass SD 7	57%
Three Rivers/Josephine County SD (3 High Schools)	58%, 42%, 44%

The statewide average for continuing school after high school is 62%. Only two districts, both relatively small Douglas County high schools, have students continuing to post-secondary schools at above average rates (Reedsport and Elkton).

¹⁵⁶ Oregon Department of Education, School Report Cards, 2018-2019.

Educational Attainment

Not long ago, residents living in the region could obtain relatively high-paying jobs without much formal education. That is no longer the case. But educational attainment levels continue to lag in the region. The table below depicts this problem:¹⁵⁷

Report Area	Percent No High School Diploma	Percent High School Only	Percent Some College	Percent Associates Degree	Percent Bachelor's Degree	Percent Graduate or Professional Degree
Douglas County, OR	10.42%	31.7%	31.2%	9.7%	10.9%	6.5%
Josephine County, OR	9.64%	31%	32.7%	9.3%	11%	6.5%

The percentage of residents in both Counties that only have a high school diploma is much greater than that of residents statewide and nationally. At the same time, the percentage of residents with 4-year college degrees or higher is much lower than that of residents statewide and nationally

Summary

Assuming that the Oregon performance test results are meaningfully connected to overall student achievement, schools in many of the region's school districts need to take action to improve student achievement. Districts throughout the region should work toward decreasing drop-out rates, particularly those in Douglas County. Most of the region's school districts should also be focusing on improving the rates of students continuing on to post-secondary schools. The region lacks adults who have graduated from college with any degree.

¹⁵⁷ US Census, American Community Survey, five-year estimate, 2015-2019.

Economic Well-Being/Jobs

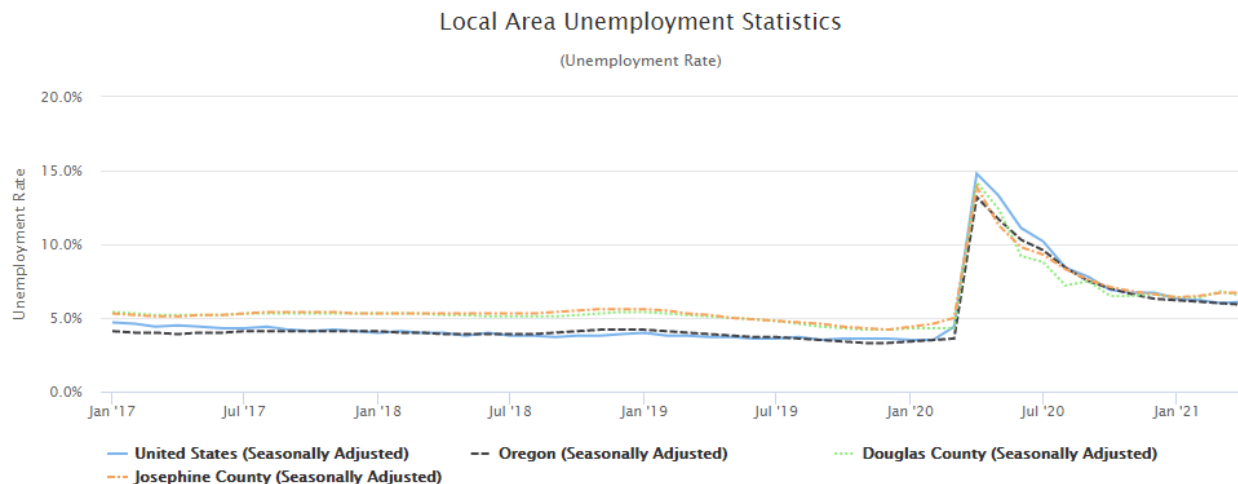
Economic Well-Being

The most basic measure of economic well-being is annual income. The government measures both per capita and median income. Per capita income is simply the income of an area divided by the total number of residents. Because this average is impacted by extreme values of income, it is not the best measure to use in areas with smaller populations like Douglas/Josephine County. The median income identifies the income at the 50th percentile of all incomes, and so is not impacted by income extremes. This assessment uses median income as a basic measure of economic well-being.

In 2019, Josephine County had the fourth lowest median household income statewide, at \$47,500.¹⁵⁸ Douglas County's median income was the 7th lowest among Oregon counties at \$48,900.¹⁵⁹ Oregon's median income was \$62,818 and the nation's was \$62,843.¹⁶⁰ Though 2020 census data have yet to be released, the disparity between the region's median income and state and national median income has been consistent. So if the pandemic reduced median incomes nationwide, it would likely have had a disproportionate impact on the region.

Employment

Douglas and Josephine County's economies had substantially recovered from the Great Recession of 2008 prior to the economic disruption caused by the 2020 pandemic. Unemployment then soared in April 2020. Rates of unemployment have since been recovering. The following graph and charts provide a snapshot of changes over the past five years, as well as over the past year, ending May 2021.¹⁶¹



¹⁵⁸ US Census, American Community Survey, five-year estimate, 2015-19.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

¹⁶¹ Oregon Employment Department Quality Info.org

5-Year % Unemployment as of May Each Year

Location	May 2017	May 2018	May 2019	May 2020	May 2021
Douglas	5.2	5.2	5	12.4	6.5
Josephine	5.2	5.3	5	11.3	6.7
Oregon	4	3.9	3.8	11.7	5.9
US	4.4	3.8	3.7	13.3	5.8

Monthly % Unemployment for the Past Year

Location	6/20	7/20	8/20	9/20	10/20	11/20	12/20	1/21	2/21	3/21	4/21	5/21
Douglas	9.2	8.8	7.2	7.5	6.5	6.5	6.6	6.4	6.4	6.8	6.5	6.5
Josephine	9.8	9.3	8.3	7.6	7.1	6.8	6.6	6.4	6.5	6.7	6.7	6.7
Oregon	10.3	9.6	8.4	7.5	7	6.6	6.3	6.2	6.1	6	5.9	5.9
US	11.1	10.2	8.4	7.8	6.9	6.7	6.7	6.3	6.2	6	6.1	5.8

This data shows that with a few exceptions, Douglas and Josephine County unemployment rates have remained above national and statewide rates throughout the past five years. Recovery from the worst of the pandemic's economic shock started earlier in both counties, But beginning in 2021, the region again began to lag behind the state and the nation in terms of unemployment. And while state and nationwide unemployment rates have generally continued to drop, Douglas and Josephine County have experienced slight rises in rates in 2021. Compared to March 2020 (the month prior to the pandemic impacting employment), unemployment has increased by 2.2% in Douglas County and by 1.7% in Josephine County.

Though unemployment rates are slowly returning to pre-pandemic levels, many remain concerned about the types of jobs lost. Between 2019 and 2020, Douglas County lost 1,270 jobs.¹⁶² Of the jobs lost, over 25% were in the leisure and hospitality industry.¹⁶³ Many workers in this sector make minimum wage or a bit more. Of greatest concern, these jobs have continued to disappear in 2021, with leisure and hospitality jobs having shed another 368 jobs.¹⁶⁴

A look at this sector in Josephine County is even more concerning. Between 2019 and 2020, Josephine County lost a little over 1,000 jobs.¹⁶⁵ Almost 2 out of every 3 jobs lost were in the leisure and hospitality sector.¹⁶⁶ Fortunately, the sector is recovering better than in Douglas County in 2021, having added back an average of 184 jobs.¹⁶⁷ Still, the

¹⁶² Oregon Employment Department Quality Info.org

¹⁶³ Ibid.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid.

number of jobs in this sector in Josephine County is currently at levels last seen in 2015.¹⁶⁸

Summary

The good news is the economy is recovering from the shut-down caused by the pandemic. The bad news is that lower-paying jobs do not appear to be returning as quickly. Both Douglas and Josephine County are no longer recovering as fast as Oregon or the nation, and there are signs that the recovery may have slowed substantially in both Counties. Current median income is not known, but based on prior trends, residents of both Counties are likely earning quite a bit less than their counterparts in other parts of the state or nation.

The Pew Research Center had a report come out in March of 2021 which reflects the challenges still to come for low-income residents.¹⁶⁹ While noting that a year since the pandemic began, the economy was improving, the report's authors stated:

*Among those who say their financial situation has gotten worse during the pandemic, 44% think it will take them three years or more to get back to where they were a year ago – including about one-in-ten who don't think their finances will ever recover.*¹⁷⁰

They also reflected on the unequal impact of the pandemic on different people.

*The economic fallout from COVID-19 continues to hit some segments of the population harder than others. Lower-income adults, as well as adults younger than 30, are among the most likely to say they or someone in their household has lost a job or taken a pay cut since the outbreak began in February 2021. Among those who've had these experiences, lower-income adults are particularly likely to say they have taken on debt or put off paying their bills in order to cover lost wages or salary.*¹⁷¹

It is not yet clear what the long-term impact will actually be to the economic well-being of local residents, but this survey makes it clear that low-income residents throughout the country have been hit hardest by the pandemic, and do not feel optimistic about their short-term economic well-being.

¹⁶⁸ Oregon Employment Department Quality Info.org

¹⁶⁹ Pew Research Center, A Year Into the Pandemic, Long-Term Financial Impact Weighs Heavily on Many Americans, March 5, 2021.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid.

¹⁷¹ Ibid.

Community Resources

Both Douglas and Josephine County have many resources available to address area needs. Resources are sometimes available only to a specified portion of the community (e.g., those earning less than the federal poverty level, children only), and are sometimes limited (potentially having long waiting lists). During the pandemic, some have been completely closed and many have had limited services, but Oregon is reopening, so many will be able to resume normal service soon. The table below provides the name of Douglas County service providers, their location(s) when fully open, and the service they offer:

Name	Location	Type of Service
Adapt	Roseburg, Reedsport	Behavioral Health Addiction
HIV Alliance	Roseburg	HIV and addiction services
Compass Behavioral Health	Roseburg, Reedsport	Behavioral Health
Options	Roseburg	Behavioral Health and Family Strengthening
South Lane Mental Health	Cottage Grove (serves N. Douglas County)	Behavioral Health
South River Community Health Center	Roseburg, Winston	Healthcare
AVIVA	Glide, Myrtle Creek, Roseburg, Sutherlin, Drain	Healthcare, Dental, Behavioral
Cow Creek Health and Wellness Clinics	Roseburg, Canyonville	Healthcare
Mercy Foundation	Countywide	Youth Dental, Health Ed.
Lions Club	Countywide	Vision
UCC Wooley Center	Roseburg	GED Prep, Basic Ed, ESL
Boys and Girls Club of the Umpqua Valley	Roseburg	Youth Development
School District Offices	Reedsport, Elkton, Drain, Yoncalla, Oakland, Sutherlin, Roseburg, Glide, Winston, Camas Valley, Riddle, Myrtle Creek, Glendale, Days Creek	Education and Related Services
Douglas Educational Service District	Roseburg	Education Support Services
OSU Extension	Roseburg	Adult Education, Youth Programs
Phoenix Charter School	Roseburg	Youth Education
South Coast Education Service District	Reedsport	Education Support Services

Name	Location	Type of Service
Care, Connections and Education	Roseburg	Childcare
Family Relief Nursery	Drain	Family Strengthening
Peace at Home	Roseburg	Domestic Violence
Douglas C.A.R.E.S	Roseburg	Child Abuse
Family Development Center	Roseburg	Family Strengthening
Take Root	Countywide	Family Strengthening
UCAN Head Start/Early Head Start	Yoncalla, Sutherlin, Roseburg, Winston, Myrtle Creek, Glendale	Early Child Education, Family Strengthening
Preschool Promise	Myrtle Creek, Drain, Yoncalla, Winston, Sutherlin	Early Child Education
UCAN Healthy Start	Selected Douglas County Zip Codes	Family Strengthening
UCAN Nurse Home Visiting	Countywide	Family Strengthening, Health
UCAN Healthy Families	Countywide	Family Strengthening
UCAN WIC	Drain, Canyonville, Glendale, Myrtle Creek, Sutherlin, Reedsport, Glide, and Roseburg	Nutrition
Umpqua Health-New Day and New Beginnings	Roseburg	Family Strengthening
Umpqua Community College	Winchester	Post-Secondary Education
YMCA	Roseburg	Fitness, Health
Habitat for Humanity	Roseburg	Housing
UCAN Affordable Housing	Canyonville, Winston, Roseburg, Sutherlin, Drain	Housing
UCAN Housing/Homeless Services	Douglas County	Homeless, Homeless Prevention
HADCO	Douglas County	Housing
NeighborWorks Umpqua	Douglas County	Housing, Financial Assist.

Name	Location	Type of Service
Roseburg Dream Center	Roseburg	Homeless, Basic Needs
Onward Roseburg	Roseburg	Homeless
Housing First Umpqua	Roseburg	Homeless
Roseburg Rescue Mission	Roseburg	Homeless
Glide Helping Hands	Glide	Food, Clothing, Firewood
Salvation Army	Roseburg	Basic Needs
Samaritan Inn	Roseburg	Homeless
Saint Vincent DePaul	Roseburg, Myrtle Creek	Basic Needs
UCAN Energy Assistance/Weatherization	Douglas County	Energy, Housing Rehab
UCAN Health Insurance and Rx Assistance	Douglas County	Health-related
UTrans	Douglas County	Public Transit
Douglas RIDES	Douglas County	Transportation
DHS	Roseburg, Reedsport	Child Welfare
DHS	Roseburg, Canyonville	Income Support
Advantage Dental	Canyonville, Winston, Sutherlin, Roseburg	Dental
VA	Roseburg	Veterans Healthcare and additional Veteran Service
Veteran's Service Office	Roseburg	Veterans Benefits
Lower Umpqua Hospital	Reedsport	Healthcare
Mercy Medical Center	Roseburg	Healthcare
AVIVA	Roseburg	Student Healthcare
Umpqua Health	Douglas County	Healthcare/Behavioral Health
CASA of Douglas County	Douglas County	Child Abuse
Legal Aid Services of Oregon	Roseburg	Legal
Oregon Law Center-Coos Bay	Serves western Douglas County	Legal
Common Ground Mediation	Douglas County	Legal
Oregon Child Support Program	Roseburg	Financial
UCAN Money Management Program	Douglas County	Financial

Name	Location	Type of Service
DHS	Roseburg	Disability, Senior Services
Mentor Oregon	Roseburg	Disability-Related
Umpqua Valley disAbilities Network	Roseburg	Disability Services, Adult Literacy
Sunrise Enterprises	Roseburg	Disability Day Services and Job Services
Community Living Case Management	Douglas County	Intellectual Disability
Oregon Vocational Rehabilitation Office	Roseburg	Disability and Job Services
Douglas County Senior Services	Roseburg	Seniors
Oregon WorkSource Office	Roseburg	Employment
Community Kitchens	Roseburg, Drain, Sutherlin,	Food
Food Pantries	Reedsport, Yoncalla, Drain, Sutherlin, Roseburg, Glide, Winston, Riddle, Myrtle Creek, Glendale	Food
UCAN Mobile Outpost	Days Creek, Elkton, Diamond Lake, Camas Valley	Food
Feeding Umpqua-UCAN	Countywide	Nutrition Ed
Umpqua Community Veg Education Program	Countywide	Nutrition Ed

The following table contains a listing of Josephine County service providers:

Name	Location	Type of Service
Josephine County Health Department	Grants Pass, Cave Junction, Wolf Creek	WIC
Women’s Crisis Support Team	Grants Pass	Domestic Violence
DHS	Grants Pass, Cave Creek	Financial
DHS	Grants Pass	Child Welfare
DHS	Grants Pass	Disability-Related, Seniors
DHS	Grants Pass	Vocational Rehab
Southern Oregon Head Start	Grants Pass, Cave Junction, Merlin	Early Childhood Education, Family Strengthening
Preschool Promise	Grants Pass, Cave Junction	Early Childhood Education
Child Care Resource Network	Medford	Childcare
Saint Vincent DePaul	Grants Pass	Basic Needs
Salvation Army	Grants Pass	Basic Needs
RVCOG Senior and Disabilities Services	Eagle Point	Disability-Related, Seniors
Siskiyou Community Health Center	Grants Pass, Cave Junction	Healthcare, Dental
Planned Parenthood	Grants Pass	Family Planning
Pregnancy Care Center	Grants Pass	Family Planning
JCT	Josephine County	Public Transit
Options of Southern Oregon	Grants Pass, Cave Junction	Mental Health
Hearts With a Mission	Grants Pass	Homeless Youth, Family Strengthening
Maslow Project	Countywide	Homeless Youth, Basic Needs
Literacy Council of Josephine County	Grants Pass	Adult Basic Education
Oregon Law Center	Grants Pass	Legal
Oregon WorkSource Office	Grants Pass	Employment
OSU County Extension	Grants Pass	Adult Education, Youth Activities
Josephine County Health Department	Grants Pass, Cave Junction	Healthcare-Related, Family Planning, WIC
Josephine County Food Bank	Grants Pass	Nutrition

Name	Location	Type of Service
Josephine County Kitchens	Grants Pass	Food
Josephine County Pantries	Grants Pass, Cave Junction, Williams	Food
Illinois Valley Family Coalition	Cave Junction	General Support
Illinois Valley Safe House Alliance	Cave Junction	Domestic Violence
Job Council	Grants Pass	Employment
Gospel Rescue Mission	Grants Pass	Homeless
Josephine Housing and Community Development Council	Grants Pass	Affordable Housing
Family Solutions	Grants Pass	Child Mental Health, Family Strengthening
Boys and Girls Club of Rogue Valley	Grants Pass, Cave Junction	Youth Development
Choices Counseling Center	Grants Pass, Cave Junction	Substance Abuse, Behavioral Health
Resolve	Medford	Conflict Resolution
Adapt	Grants Pass	Substance Abuse
HIV Alliance	Medford	HIV-Related
UCAN Housing and Homeless	Grants Pass	Homeless/Housing Services
UCAN Energy Assistance/Weatherization	Grants Pass	Energy/Home Rehab
School Districts	Grants Pass	Education
Southern Oregon Education Service District	Medford (covers Josephine County)	Education-Related
Rogue Community College	Grants Pass, Kerby	Post-Secondary Education, Adult Basic Ed, GED Prep, ESL
Women's Health Center	Grants Pass	Healthcare
Family Nurturing Center	Grants Pass	Family Strengthening
OnTrack	Grants Pass, Cave Junction	Substance Abuse
CASA of Josephine County	Grants Pass	Child Abuse
Healthy U	Cave Junction	Mental Health
Kairos	Grants Pass	Youth Mental Health
Consumer Credit Counseling Of Southern Oregon	Medford	Financial

Name	Location	Type of Service
Habitat for Humanity	Grants Pass	Housing
Asante Three Rivers Medical Center	Grants Pass	Healthcare
Healthcare Coalition of Southern Oregon Healthy Start	Josephine County	Family Strengthening
Siskiyou Community Health Center-Healthy Families/Maternity Case Management	Josephine County	Family Strengthening, Healthcare

Causes of Poverty

This section of the assessment analyzes the causes of poverty. This analysis is somewhat challenging, because many dimensions of poverty, like lack of educational attainment, can be both a cause and a result of poverty. It is made even more challenging at present as the impact of COVID isn't yet fully understood.

Economy

The Pandemic caused a major spike in unemployment, but jobs have been returning. Still, it is concerning to see that rates of rehiring have slowed locally, compared to rehiring in Oregon or nationally. And it does look like many of the lower paying jobs are the ones that are not recovering as quickly, leaving low-income residents with fewer job opportunities. This points to the real problem in the region, which is wages. Median wages for both Counties are far below the State's median wage. While costs may not be quite as high in the region compared to more metropolitan areas of the state, many people just don't have enough money to make ends meet. The region needs more high-wage jobs in order to improve this situation. Wages on existing jobs also need to increase.

Education

Regional measures of education suggest a two-fold problem likely increasing poverty levels. At the level of K-12 education, too many children are dropping out of the region's schools, especially in Douglas County. Those failing to complete high school are not likely to obtain living wage work. Schools in general are struggling to provide area students with the skills they need to succeed in post-secondary settings. Consequently, the region is less likely to develop an adequately educated workforce. Educational attainment levels for those who have completed school are also problematic in the region. Low numbers of residents with high levels of education makes it more difficult for the region to attract employers, such as technology firms, with high-wage jobs. The many residents who have not completed any type of post-secondary degree will continue to struggle to find living wage employment.

Children and Family Well-Being

A number of regional indicators of children and family well-being are likely connected to high, local poverty rates. The high rates of child abuse, foster care placement, and domestic abuse in the region, as well as other situations faced by youth, have resulting in high levels of adverse childhood experiences. The significantly high rates of birth to unmarried women in the region is also likely a contributor to high local poverty rates. Households headed by women alone have much higher rates of poverty than others locally. The lack of available childcare slots in both Counties makes it more difficult for parents to work. The lack of affordable childcare increases the number of parents who are unable to obtain care. For those who do obtain care, they have fewer available resources to meet other needs.

Transportation

Given the size of the region, and its low population density, one would expect that lack of reliable transportation would be a major issue for those needing to commute to work. But both Counties have commuter lines to outlying communities. Data indicates that few residents are taking advantage of local transit to commute to work. Given that residents living outside of Roseburg and Grants Pass are generally earning less than residents of those two communities, it would seem that use of public transit could help low-income residents earn more money. The problem, in the case, may not be lack of access to transit, but the challenge of changing habits to use a shared mode of transportation.

Food and Nutrition

Lack of food might be a causal agent in terms of poverty in the following manner. Hungry children are more likely to do poorly in school, and are less likely to move on to post-secondary education. Lack of post-secondary education makes it more likely that such children will be unable to obtain living wage jobs in the future. Hungry adults also are likely to have difficulty focusing on their work, which would impair their ability to maximize their earning potential. Regarding nutrition, the expenses associated with nutrition-related health disorders leaves malnourished residents with less money to address other needs. To the extent that hospitals and other medical providers must absorb such health costs, local communities are left more distressed.

Health

The region's poor health contributes to poverty in a number of ways. Residents experiencing poor health generally have to spend more money to address their health issues, leaving them with less to spend on other needs. Adults with poor health miss more days of work, as do those with children with health problems. Adults experiencing regular health issues may lose their jobs if they miss too many days. Those experiencing more serious health issues may drop out of the workforce, unable to continue working. Children living with parents experiencing poor health, especially poor mental health, experience adverse childhood impacts, which can lead to poorer educational and economic outcomes.

Home Comfort

The high percentage of local residents that are energy-burdened indicates that many residents are spending too much of their income on keeping their homes warm in the winter. The large number of residents living in older manufactured homes in the region impacts poverty as well. These residents typically do not own the land upon which their homes sit. When owners of manufactured home parks decide to sell, residents can end up unable to pay for a new location. They may also be forced to spend money to

relocate that contributes to their lack of resources. Manufactured home owners also are more likely to live in “unhealthy” homes (homes lacking adequate heat or homes with dangerous conditions like toxic mold) which contribute to their poor health. As noted above, poor health has multiple connections to poverty.

Housing

Increased costs to rent and lack of affordable housing in general, contribute to poverty, as many residents are having to spend far too much for housing. Driving this problem is the lack of developers willing to build new, affordable homes/apartments. A lack of affordable housing may be limiting job development in the region, as companies look to locate in communities with less expensive housing markets or markets with more vacancies. Though the number of residents who are homeless is relatively low, those who lack homes are far less likely to escape poverty. Homeless adults do not have a place to perform basic hygienic activities. They cannot cleanup for job interviews. If they have jobs, they are less able to prepare for work. Homeless children face substantial hurdles in terms of school success, and again are much more susceptible to adverse childhood experiences. Residents who are chronically homeless and living on the streets have much shorter life-spans than others, and contribute significantly to communities’ costs to provide healthcare, emergency services and public safety.

Income Supports

The availability, of lack thereof, of income supports such as TANF and EITC, can make the difference between whether a family lives in poverty or not. During the pandemic, record levels of income supports have been made available, particularly unemployment payments. Recent federal law has created a new source of child tax credits that could have a major impact on reducing childhood poverty. The new law currently is set to expire after the end of one year, but many believe that Congress will eventually make this new credit permanent.

Seniors/People with Disabilities

Those over the age of 65 and people with disabilities typically face different circumstances than others living in poverty. These individuals often can no longer work, or are limited to working fewer hours or for lower wages than others. While others living in poverty often move out of poverty in a matter of a few months, seniors and people with disabilities are much less likely to do so. Ameliorating regional poverty will likely require multiple strategies, as the region has a much higher percentage of seniors and people with disabilities than found statewide.

Racial/Ethnic Factors

Much has been written in the past several years about structural factors that have left many people who are members of the BIPOC community living in poverty. Such historical practices as red-lining¹⁷² have made it difficult for such individuals to accumulate wealth. The Pandemic brought a new focus on differences in which members of this community are impacted. Rates of infection and poorer outcomes from infection have been much higher in Oregon's BIPOC communities.¹⁷³ Local data, though having large margins of error, seems to support the notion that those residents who are part of the BIPOC populace are much more likely to live in poverty than their white residents. With a larger portion of the local population than other BIPOC communities, data reflecting high poverty rates among Latinos most likely reflects real inequities. Even if the percentage of residents who struggle with English is only about 1.5%, this would leave nearly 3,000 residents with language barriers to obtaining services. This barrier likely is contributing to poverty among these thousands of residents.

¹⁷² Redlining was a former practice that forced housing segregation throughout the US. Though no longer a federal or local policy, many argue that this single practice alone is a cause of wealth inequality today between BIPOC communities and white communities. See, Richard Rothstein, *The Color of Law: A Forgotten History of How Our Government Segregated America*, 2018, Liveright Publishing Corporation.

¹⁷³ Was Oregon's COVID-19 pivot enough to address racial inequities?, Oregon Public Broadcasting, March 18, 2021, Jes Burns.

Top Needs/Top Gaps

The Pandemic has made it more difficult to identify top needs and top gaps in services in the region. For one, although Oregon is reopening, new strains of the Corona virus are still developing, and it is not clear what impact they may have on the region after this report is completed. Since much of the data contained in this assessment was collected prior to the Pandemic, it is difficult to tell the full extent of its impact to date. With federal and state governments enacting many laws to buffer the impact of the Pandemic, how needs will change once these measures are removed is not known. And nobody knows how people's behaviors may change short- and long-term as a result of the Pandemic.

At the time of the writing of this assessment, a new Delta variant of COVID is creating concerns. This variant is much more contagious than previous variants. Communities are already having to reassess their ability to fully reopen in light of this variant, and there continue to be concerns of future variants that current vaccines may not be as effective against.

Since last year, many laws have been enacted to help ameliorate the impact of the Pandemic. Some of the most significant include increases in unemployment benefits and eviction bans. Additional rent and energy assistance resources have been made available to help people pay their rent and utility bills. Currently, Oregon has loosened its restrictions on evictions. Unemployment payments have been reduced. Many fear that once additional rent and energy assistance payments run out, and eviction moratoria are completed lifted, the region may see a large increase in evictions.

People have generally been saving more during the Pandemic. Whether this habit will continue post-pandemic is not clear. Some people who lost their jobs during the Pandemic are indicating a lack of interest in returning to the same jobs, or for the same hours per week. In some cases, former workers have workplace health and safety concerns that they previously lacked. Others want to more time to see if they can find a better work/life balance. So even the hospitality and leisure sector is having difficulty hiring back workers at present.

With all of this in flux, some past and new trends suggest some top needs to focus on. Here are five for consideration.

Top Needs

Family Strengthening

The region has consistently struggled with a combination of family violence indicators, whether they be incidence of child abuse, foster care use, or the need for domestic violence services. Recent ACEs data, along with the understanding of the long-term economic, health and well-being impacts associated with ACEs, further substantiates the need to improve family well-being. Improving family and child well-being can do much to address area poverty. Healthier families not only means there is a better chance household heads stay together, it also means that children are more likely to obtain better paying work later in life.

Living Wage Jobs

Despite an increase in minimum wage over the past several years, many jobs in the region fail to pay anything near a living wage, especially for families with children. With costs ranging from healthcare to housing substantially increasing, wages are simply too low for many workers to move out of poverty.

Affordable Housing

Local housing expenses have risen annually. This past year, the rate of increase has gone up substantially. With so many local residents severely rent-burdened, many fall deeper into poverty when urgent health issues, loss of employment, divorce, or death in the family occur.

Adequate Supply of Affordable Childcare

As with most of Oregon's counties, Douglas and Josephine County have not had enough childcare to meet needs, and the childcare that has been available has often not been affordable to low-income families. The Pandemic clearly exacerbated this problem. As mentioned earlier, even with many childcare centers reopening, some have permanently closed, and many are running at reduced capacity. The lack of childcare can have a profound impact on the local economy, with many heads of households, oftentimes mothers, having to opt out of the workforce to care for their children.

Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services for Latinos

As pointed out earlier, several thousands of residents speak Spanish at home, and do not communicate well in English. Many Latinos face additional barriers to adequate services, whether due to program restrictions related to citizenship status, implicit bias, fear Latinos may have in seeking services, etc. The Pandemic has made it abundantly clear that it is imperative that providers commit to breaking down barriers that Latinos face.

Top Service Gaps

Publicly Funded Childcare/Early Childhood Education/Family Strengthening Services

The private sector does provide childcare, but under current conditions, the private system is not adequate. Few private providers of early childhood education or family strengthening services operate in the region. Head Start functions to provide all three of these services. Yet Head Start programs serve far fewer students than are eligible for services, and the program generally does not serve those who are not technically living in poverty, but are still financially struggling. Oregon's Kindergarten Promise Program is serving additional children, meeting childcare and early childhood education needs. But again, there are far too few spaces for the need. The region has several programs offered for families at high-risk for poor outcomes, including Healthy Start, Healthy Families and Nurse Home Visiting and Relief Nursery programs. Funding for these programs is also limited, and many more families could benefit from the services provided by these programs.

All Services in More Remote County Locations

With relatively high proportions of both county's populations living in unincorporated areas, or in small, incorporated communities, obtaining services in Roseburg and Grants Pass is challenging for many. This is a particular problem for the elderly, people with disabilities and those without reliable transportation. The region needs more outreach and mobile service provision. A few years ago, UCAN began offering a mobile food pantry, servicing some of Douglas County's most remote areas, including Days Creek, Camas Valley and Diamond Lake. The program has been very successful, but many challenges exist to maintaining such services long-term.

Lack of Service Integration

Many local service providers must spend most of their time focusing on how to keep their own services flowing without adequate resources or staffing. This leaves little time for providers to work together to find ways to best bundle their services. Many providers also are also not familiar with the culture of other service providers, hindering service integration. For example, while it is well known that physical and social-environmental factors may have a profound impact on health, health providers and human and social service providers are just beginning to meet to understand how their programs together might benefit health outcomes.

Adequate Housing/Shelter/Day Centers

Since the Great Recession of 2008, the construction industry has contracted substantially in the region. The number of multifamily units being built in the area has plummeted. Affordable housing projects often face pushback from nearby neighborhoods. So affordable housing is lacking. At the same time, the region has virtually no shelter operators meeting current best practice models. Available shelters have restrictions that create barriers to many of those in need of them. Day centers, needed by people living on the street, are virtually absent in the area. These individuals lack such basics as a place to use the bathroom or to wash clothes.

Bilingual/Bicultural Service Providers

Many service providers in the region lack bicultural/bilingual providers to offer to the local Latino population. Often, local service providers do not know where potential Latino clients are living. This further complicates efforts to outreach to this community.