



**United Community Action Network**

# **2026 Community Needs Assessment**

Accepted by the UCAN Board of Directors, September 2026

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## Community Assessment Methodology

The geographic scope of this assessment is UCAN's service area: Douglas and Josephine County. County data is often compared with comparable Oregon data. Much of the assessment's data comes from the United States Census Bureau. Because local county data derived from the Census has a larger margin of error than statewide data or larger metropolitan counties, estimates are based on five years of data. Data from the Census is from the American Community Survey, 2020-2024. Whenever a different date range is used, or another data source is used, footnotes indicate these other data ranges/sources.

## About United Community Action Network

UCAN is a 501(c) (3) non-profit that provides comprehensive human services in both Douglas and Josephine Counties. UCAN has provided services for 57 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 a significant proportion of low-income residents in its service area with a staff of over 200 individuals. 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:

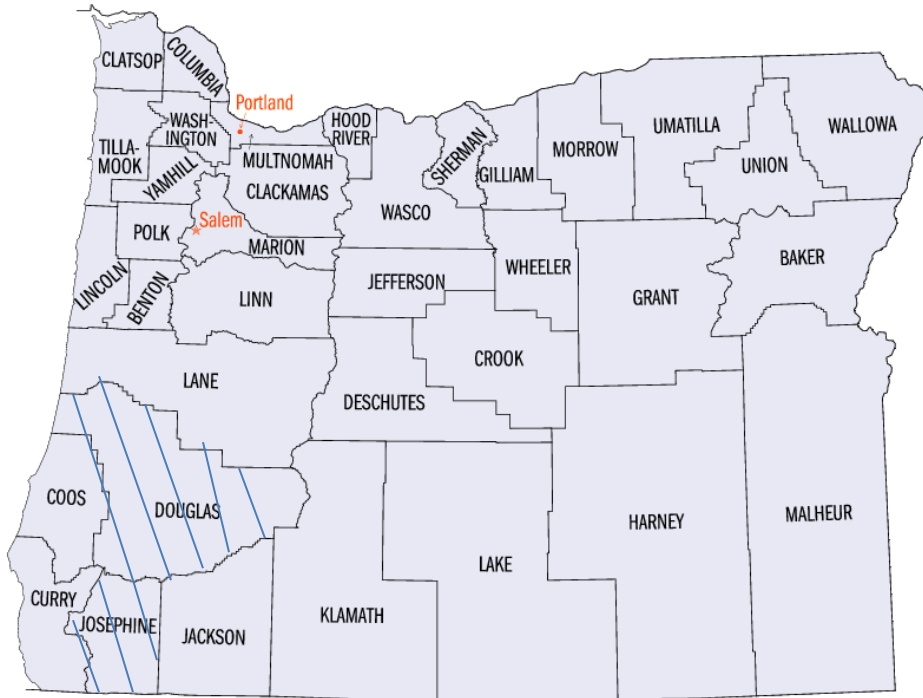
- Head Start, Early Head Start, and Preschool Promise,
- Healthy Families, Nurse Home Visiting and WIC
- Emergency food distribution to pantries, kitchens and residents,

- Affordable housing,
- Homeless and housing stabilization services,
- Shelter services,
- Veteran services,
- Money management,
- Utility assistance,
- Home weatherization.
- AmeriCorps

UCAN also has started offering Health Related Social Needs services offered as part of Oregon's Medicaid program. These services include tenancy support, home modification, and home remediation services.

# Community Profile: Douglas and Josephine Counties

## Oregon



(U.S. Census American Community Survey map)

Oregon is the 9<sup>th</sup> largest state in the United States. Douglas and Josephine County are located in the southwest portion of Oregon.<sup>1</sup> Together, the two counties span approximately 6,674 square miles and are home to 200,251 residents, comprising the geographic area covered by this assessment. Douglas County is the larger of the two counties, with an area of 5,036 square miles. Josephine County's area is 1,639 square miles. The total region's area is larger than the State of Connecticut. The population density for this area, estimated at 30 persons per square mile, is less than the national average population density of 95 persons per square mile. While there are a number of incorporated towns in the two counties, only one, Grants Pass (Josephine County's Seat), has more than 30,000 residents, and one other, Roseburg (Douglas County's Seat), has over 20,000 residents. With all remaining towns having populations under 10,000, much of the region is rural or frontier in nature. The region has considerable federal landholdings (both US Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management).

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<sup>1</sup> United States Census Bureau.

# UCAN Service Area

## Douglas County Map



## Josephine County Map



## Regional Population & Demographics

Like many rural regions in Oregon, the County is not very racially or ethnically diverse. Douglas County does have one federally recognized Indian Tribe, the Cow Creek Band of the Umpqua Indians. The County's percentage of American Indian/Alaska Native is about the same as the state and national percentages. Otherwise, the only racial group with significant representation in both counties are people identifying as bi-racial.

### Racial Diversity

| Report Area          | White  | Black  | Asian | American Indian or Alaska Native | Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander | Some Other Race | Two or More Races |
|----------------------|--------|--------|-------|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| Report Location      | 86.10% | 0.38%  | 0.83% | 0.83%                            | 0.10%                               | 2.28%           | 9.47%             |
| Douglas County, OR   | 86.43% | 0.35%  | 0.86% | 1.06%                            | 0.08%                               | 2.08%           | 9.15%             |
| Josephine County, OR | 85.68% | 0.42%  | 0.80% | 0.54%                            | 0.13%                               | 2.55%           | 9.89%             |
| Oregon               | 74.57% | 1.94%  | 4.52% | 1.13%                            | 0.40%                               | 5.15%           | 12.29%            |
| United States        | 60.95% | 12.22% | 5.95% | 0.92%                            | 0.19%                               | 7.13%           | 12.63%            |

For those who identify as bi-racial, the predominant race identified besides White or Some Other Race is American Indian/Alaska Native.

| Report Area          | White  | Black  | Asian | American Indian or Alaska Native | Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander | Some Other Race |
|----------------------|--------|--------|-------|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------|
| Report Location      | 95.44% | 1.21%  | 2.17% | 4.47%                            | 0.47%                               | 6.58%           |
| Douglas County, OR   | 95.39% | 1.28%  | 2.28% | 4.74%                            | 0.38%                               | 5.96%           |
| Josephine County, OR | 95.51% | 1.12%  | 2.03% | 4.13%                            | 0.58%                               | 7.36%           |
| Oregon               | 86.37% | 3.38%  | 6.82% | 3.74%                            | 0.91%                               | 12.24%          |
| United States        | 72.69% | 14.45% | 7.36% | 2.39%                            | 0.47%                               | 16.17%          |

The region has a bit more diversity when examining Ethnic Diversity.

### Ethnic Diversity

| Report Area          | Total Population | Hispanic or Latino Population | Hispanic or Latino Population, Percent | Non-Hispanic Population | Non-Hispanic Population, Percent |
|----------------------|------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Report Location      | 200,251          | 15,221                        | 7.60%                                  | 185,030                 | 92.40%                           |
| Douglas County, OR   | 112,072          | 7,444                         | 6.64%                                  | 104,628                 | 93.36%                           |
| Josephine County, OR | 88,179           | Suppressed                    | 8.82%                                  | 80,402                  | 91.18%                           |
| Oregon               | 4,254,293        | 624,598                       | 14.68%                                 | 3,629,695               | 85.32%                           |
| United States        | 334,922,499      | 64,759,370                    | 19.34%                                 | 270,163,129             | 80.66%                           |

Over 7.5% of local residents identify as Hispanic/Latino, and the percentage has been slowly increasing in the region over recent years.

NOTE: Given that so few individuals identify fully as a member of a race other than White, data does not provide meaningful comparative information between different races (margins of error are far too large for such small populations). Therefore, this report will not include such data. With greater numbers of Hispanic/Latino residents, this

report will include some data comparing non-Hispanic/Latino versus Hispanic/Latino residents.

As with racial and ethnic diversity, the region does not have many individuals that were born in another country.

## Foreign Born

| Report Area          | Total Population | Naturalized U.S. Citizens | Population w/o U.S. Citizenship | Total Foreign-Birth Population | Foreign-Birth Population, Percent of Total Population |
|----------------------|------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|
| Report Location      | 200,251          | 3,920                     | 2,619                           | 6,539                          | 3.27%                                                 |
| Douglas County, OR   | 112,072          | 2,044                     | 1,106                           | 3,150                          | 2.81%                                                 |
| Josephine County, OR | 88,179           | 1,876                     | 1,513                           | 3,389                          | 3.84%                                                 |
| Oregon               | 4,254,293        | 207,566                   | 210,801                         | 418,367                        | 9.83%                                                 |
| United States        | 334,922,499      | 24,674,406                | 22,674,672                      | 47,349,078                     | 14.14%                                                |

Even fewer residents are non-citizens.

## Citizenship Status

| Report Area          | Native      | Born in a US Territory | Born Abroad to US Citizens | Naturalized | Non-Citizen | Non-Citizen, Percent |
|----------------------|-------------|------------------------|----------------------------|-------------|-------------|----------------------|
| Report Location      | 191,848     | 172                    | 1,692                      | 3,920       | 2,619       | 1.31%                |
| Douglas County, OR   | 107,936     | 75                     | 911                        | 2,044       | 1,106       | 0.99%                |
| Josephine County, OR | 83,912      | 97                     | 781                        | 1,876       | 1,513       | 1.72%                |
| Oregon               | 3,779,831   | 6,886                  | 49,209                     | 207,566     | 210,801     | 4.96%                |
| United States        | 281,864,949 | 2,049,494              | 3,658,978                  | 24,674,406  | 22,674,672  | 6.77%                |

## Age

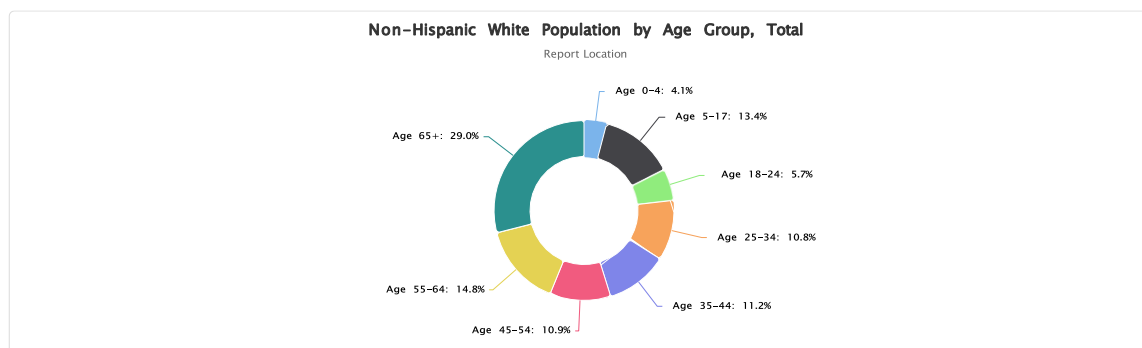
The median age for both counties' residents is considerably older than residents statewide or nationally.

| Report Area          | Total Population | Median Age |
|----------------------|------------------|------------|
| Report Location      | 200,251          | No data    |
| Douglas County, OR   | 112,072          | 46.5       |
| Josephine County, OR | 88,179           | 47.3       |
| Oregon               | 4,254,293        | 40.4       |
| United States        | 334,922,499      | 38.9       |

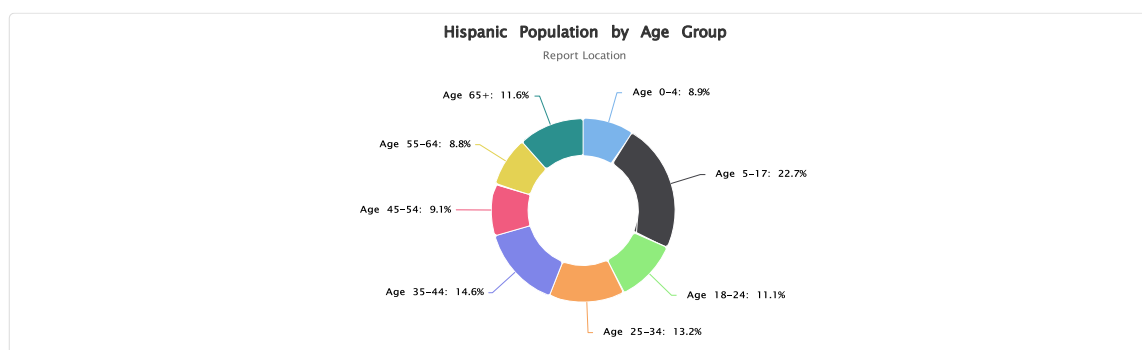
This is not true for the counties' Hispanic/Latino residents. In fact, removing this population from the overall calculation of median age, the median age of remaining residents approaches 50.

| Report Area          | Hispanic or Latino | Not Hispanic or Latino |
|----------------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| Report Location      | No data            | No data                |
| Douglas County, OR   | 30.4               | 49.0                   |
| Josephine County, OR | 29.8               | 50.3                   |
| Oregon               | 27.6               | 44.7                   |
| United States        | 30.7               | 44.1                   |

The chart below shows percentages of the region's residents by age who do not identify as Hispanic/Latino:



The chart that follows shows the age data for those identifying as Hispanic/Latino:



Comparing these two charts, one can see that Hispanic/Latinos have a far greater percentage of children, including children newborn to four years old than the Non-Hispanic/Latino population. The opposite is true for older populations, with those 55+ representing a far greater portion of Non-Hispanic/Latino residents in the region than the percentage of Hispanic/Latino residents.

Taking a closer look at the region's younger and older residents provides more information about two groups that often have unique needs as compared to other residents. The chart below presents data on children age 0-17 in the region:

| Report Area          | Hispanic or Latino | Non-Hispanic or Latino | Hispanic or Latino, Percent | Non-Hispanic or Latino, Percent |
|----------------------|--------------------|------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Report Location      | 4,810              | 33,549                 | 31.60%                      | 18.13%                          |
| Douglas County, OR   | 2,361              | 19,028                 | 31.72%                      | 18.19%                          |
| Josephine County, OR | 2,449              | 14,521                 | 31.49%                      | 18.06%                          |
| Oregon               | 204,001            | 643,021                | 32.66%                      | 17.72%                          |
| United States        | 19,302,198         | 54,215,636             | 29.81%                      | 20.07%                          |

Though both counties have greater percentages of older residents, Douglas County has over 21,000 children, and Josephine County has almost 17,000.

The youngest of these children (and their families), those ages newborn-four, have even more unique needs. The chart below has data on their numbers locally, statewide and nationwide:

| Report Area          | Hispanic or Latino | Non-Hispanic or Latino | Hispanic or Latino, Percent | Non-Hispanic or Latino, Percent |
|----------------------|--------------------|------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Report Location      | 1,355              | 7,785                  | 8.90%                       | 4.21%                           |
| Douglas County, OR   | 591                | 4,570                  | 7.94%                       | 4.37%                           |
| Josephine County, OR | 764                | 3,215                  | 9.82%                       | 4.00%                           |
| Oregon               | 54,310             | 153,447                | 8.70%                       | 4.23%                           |
| United States        | 5,064,151          | 13,715,800             | 7.82%                       | 5.08%                           |

Both counties have several thousand infants, toddlers and pre-K children.

Seniors age 65+ outnumber children in the region, as can be seen below:

| Report Area          | Hispanic or Latino | Non-Hispanic or Latino | Hispanic or Latino, Percent | Non-Hispanic or Latino, Percent |
|----------------------|--------------------|------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Report Location      | 1,760              | 51,933                 | 11.56%                      | 28.07%                          |
| Douglas County, OR   | 876                | 28,818                 | 11.77%                      | 27.54%                          |
| Josephine County, OR | 884                | 23,115                 | 11.37%                      | 28.75%                          |
| Oregon               | 34,816             | 776,036                | 5.57%                       | 21.38%                          |
| United States        | 5,339,994          | 52,293,634             | 8.25%                       | 19.36%                          |

The region not only has a disproportionate number of seniors, it also has greater percentages of rural residents, veterans, and people with disabilities than percentages living elsewhere in the state or nationally.

### Residents Living In Rural Locations

The US Census distinguishes urban versus rural residents based on the number of housing units or residents in a region. Urban residents are those who live in areas with at least 2,000 housing units or in areas with populations of at least 5,000. The table below displays the percentage of residents classified as living in urban versus rural areas by age:

| Report Area          | Population Under Age 18 | Population Age 18-64 | Population Age 65+ |
|----------------------|-------------------------|----------------------|--------------------|
| Report Location      | 36.66%                  | 40.73%               | 46.78%             |
| Douglas County, OR   | 36.24%                  | 39.00%               | 46.15%             |
| Josephine County, OR | 37.21%                  | 42.94%               | 47.54%             |
| Oregon               | 17.90%                  | 17.70%               | 26.79%             |
| United States        | 19.35%                  | 18.91%               | 23.75%             |

As can be seen, a far greater percentage of local residents live in rural locations than statewide or nationally. Higher percentages of seniors live in rural areas locally than those who are not seniors.

## Veterans

The next table includes percentages of individuals who are veterans in the region, statewide and nationally:

| Report Area          | Total Population Age 18+ | Total Veterans | Veterans, Percent of Total Population |
|----------------------|--------------------------|----------------|---------------------------------------|
| Report Location      | 161,769                  | 20,010         | 12.37%                                |
| Douglas County, OR   | 90,601                   | 11,928         | 13.17%                                |
| Josephine County, OR | 71,168                   | 8,082          | 11.36%                                |
| Oregon               | 3,403,379                | 246,300        | 7.24%                                 |
| United States        | 260,112,316              | 16,185,883     | 6.22%                                 |

Younger adult residents are less likely to have served in the military than older residents:

| Report Area          | Age 18-34 | Age 35-54 | Age 55-64 | Age 65-74 | Age 75+ |
|----------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|---------|
| Report Location      | 3.47%     | 7.80%     | 12.30%    | 17.89%    | 27.48%  |
| Douglas County, OR   | 3.61%     | 7.96%     | 13.69%    | 20.03%    | 28.56%  |
| Josephine County, OR | 3.27%     | 7.60%     | 10.53%    | 15.24%    | 26.15%  |
| Oregon               | 2.03%     | 4.75%     | 7.99%     | 12.52%    | 22.09%  |
| United States        | 1.80%     | 4.56%     | 7.10%     | 10.81%    | 18.16%  |

But regardless of age range, the region has a higher proportion of local residents actively involved in the military than residents statewide or nationally.

## People with Disabilities

The region also has a disproportionate number of residents with disabilities, as seen below:

| Report Area          | Hispanic or Latino | Not Hispanic or Latino | Hispanic or Latino, Percent | Not Hispanic or Latino, Percent |
|----------------------|--------------------|------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Report Location      | 2,355              | 39,621                 | 15.58%                      | 21.59%                          |
| Douglas County, OR   | 1,147              | 23,385                 | 15.48%                      | 22.52%                          |
| Josephine County, OR | 1,208              | 16,236                 | 15.68%                      | 20.38%                          |
| Oregon               | 63,683             | 587,183                | 10.29%                      | 16.35%                          |
| United States        | 6,575,719          | 37,294,078             | 10.27%                      | 14.02%                          |

A lesser percentage of Hispanics/Latinos have disabilities compared to their non-Hispanic/Latino counterparts.

One might assume that the region's higher rates of disability are a result of the region having both an older population and a high percentage of veterans. But looking at disability data by age, one sees that the discrepancy between local disability rates, and those statewide and nationally, exists across all age ranges, including children.

| Report Area          | Under Age 18 | Age 18 - 64 | Age 65 + |
|----------------------|--------------|-------------|----------|
| Report Location      | 7.37%        | 17.49%      | 38.48%   |
| Douglas County, OR   | 7.35%        | 18.26%      | 40.53%   |
| Josephine County, OR | 7.39%        | 16.49%      | 35.93%   |
| Oregon               | 5.64%        | 12.89%      | 34.14%   |
| United States        | 4.87%        | 10.89%      | 32.87%   |

# ECONOMIC WELL-BEING

## Living Wage and Median Income

Though it is important to examine federal poverty rates to understand a region's economic well-being, poverty rates alone are not adequate measures in and of themselves.<sup>2</sup> To begin with, these levels calculate poverty based on an assumption that typical households spend one-third of their income on food.<sup>3</sup> As the costs of healthcare, transportation, childcare and housing have risen, far fewer households can get by spending one-third of their income on food alone. As such, the federal poverty level can substantially undercount households in economic distress.

Federal poverty rates also do not take into account geographic differences in the cost of living.<sup>4</sup> The rates are estimates based on a single standard used nationally. But the cost of living can vary substantially based on where one lives. Someone living in Manhattan, NY is going to have to pay far more for housing than someone living in Roseburg.<sup>5</sup> Conversely, housing is much more expensive in Grants Pass than it is in Dallas, TX.<sup>6</sup>

To address the limitations associated with use of the federal poverty level, economic experts have developed living wage formulas that account for a broader range of basic expenses that households must address in the location in which they live. The Massachusetts Institute of Technology maintains living wage measures calculated by county and household type.<sup>7</sup> The MIT model estimates of annual living expenses include the costs for transportation, health, housing, childcare, and other items.

By comparing household median incomes (a measure not affected by extremes of household wealth or poverty) with living wage measures, one can more accurately assess regional economic well-being/distress. The median household income is the statistical mid-point where half of all households earn more and half less. Median income is a better measure of regional income than average income, as median income is not skewed by extremes of income.

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<sup>2</sup> Haider, Areeba and Schweitzer, Justin. The Poverty Line Matters, But It Isn't Capturing Everyone It Should, Center for American Progress, March 5, 2020, <https://www.americanprogress.org/article/poverty-line-matters-isnt-capturing-everyone/>

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis (Housing Inventory: Median Listing Price by County), January 2026.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> <https://livingwage.mit.edu/>

The table below includes average annual household expenses based on living wage estimates for both Douglas and Josephine County for certain household sizes and circumstances.<sup>8</sup>

### Average Annual Household Expenses

| County           | 1 adult, 0 children | 1 adult, 1 child | 1 adult, 2 children | 2 adults (1 working), 0 children | 2 adults (1 working), 1 child | 2 adults (2 working), 0 children | 2 adults (2 working), 1 child |
|------------------|---------------------|------------------|---------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <b>Douglas</b>   | \$47,303            | \$84,034         | \$108,056           | \$66,416                         | \$81,355                      | \$66,416                         | \$97,304                      |
| <b>Josephine</b> | \$48,347            | \$89,247         | \$117,104           | \$67,785                         | \$83,095                      | \$67,785                         | \$102,659                     |

The next table displays median household income by household size, with median incomes that are below average expenses shown with bold font.

| County           | 1-person household | 2-person household | 3-person household | 2-person household | 3-person household | 2-person household | 3-person household |
|------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| <b>Douglas</b>   | <b>\$28,460</b>    | <b>\$69,161</b>    | <b>\$89,134</b>    | \$69,161           | \$89,134           | \$69,161           | <b>\$89,134</b>    |
| <b>Josephine</b> | <b>\$28,442</b>    | <b>\$68,656</b>    | <b>\$80,227</b>    | \$68,656           | <b>\$80,227</b>    | \$68,656           | <b>\$80,227</b>    |

A comparison of average expenses with median income illustrates that a large portion of households with one adult in either County are struggling to make ends meet. For example, while a Douglas County 1-parent, 2-child household's median income is \$89,134, their average household expenses are \$108,056. The same is true for two parent households of all types that have one child, and for two parent households (where two work) with one child in Douglas County.

Even in the few cases in which median incomes exceed the average annual household expenses, a significant number of households are struggling. In the case of 2 adult households in both counties with no children, though the median income is slightly in excess of annual average expenses, that still means that almost half of households of that size are not earning enough to address basic expenses. Only Douglas County households with two adults (one working) and one child have median household incomes several thousand dollars more than average annual expenses.

### Inflation

Inflation causes the living wage calculation to increase. Inflation in the Western United States was 3.2% in June, 2026. Prices of all items that month were 3.2% higher than they were a year ago.<sup>9</sup> Inflation can be offset by increases in wages/salaries. During the same period, wages/salaries increased by 3.2% as well.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>8</sup> <https://livingwage.mit.edu/counties/41019> and <https://livingwage.mit.edu/counties/41033>

<sup>9</sup> US Bureau of Labor Statistics: Consumer Price Index, West Region-June 2026

<sup>10</sup> US Bureau of Labor Statistics: Employment Cost Index-June 2026

## Federal Poverty Rate

Though the federal poverty rate undercounts the proportion of households struggling to make ends meet, it is still a useful statistic, as it shows the percentage of households that may have to skip meals, avoid going to the doctor when ill, or fail to address other basic needs.

The following tables and map include federal poverty rate data for the region, different census tracts, age groups and ethnicities in the region.

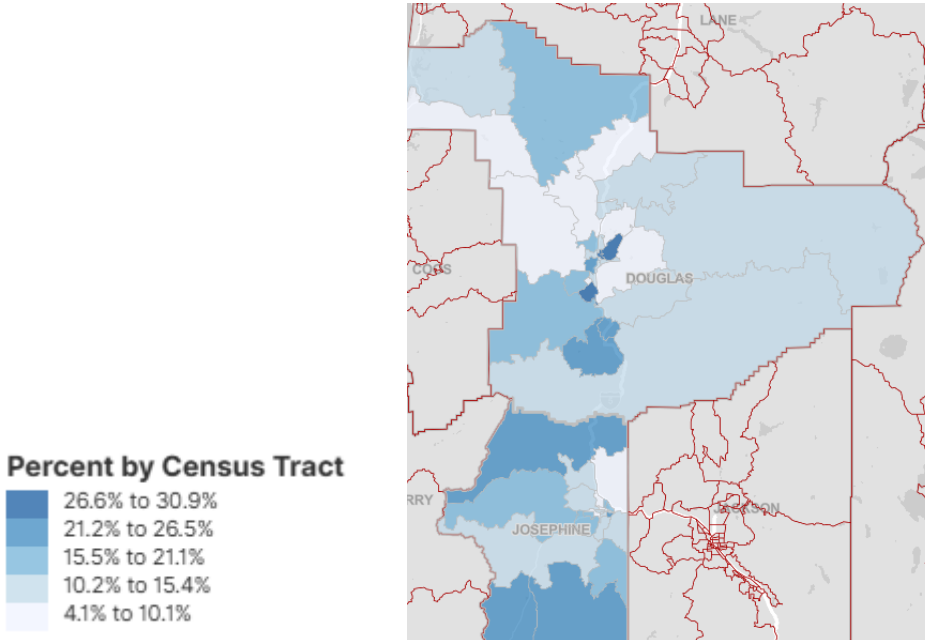
### Population Living Below the Federal Poverty Level

| Report Area          | Total Population | Population in Poverty | Population in Poverty, Percent |
|----------------------|------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------------|
| Report Location      | 197,805          | 31,592                | <b>15.97%</b>                  |
| Douglas County, OR   | 110,710          | 18,011                | 16.27%                         |
| Josephine County, OR | 87,095           | 13,581                | 15.59%                         |
| Oregon               | 4,173,206        | 498,380               | 11.94%                         |
| United States        | 327,079,188      | 40,735,661            | 12.45%                         |

Both Douglas and Josephine County have greater percentages of their overall population living in poverty than statewide or nationally, a continuation of long-term trends. In total, over 30,000 individuals in the region are struggling to meet all of their basic needs.

## Poverty by Census Tract

Poverty rates differ across different census tracts within the region. The map below provides this data by tract, with tracts with higher rates shaded darker:



Portions of the region with highest poverty rates include:

- Scattered sites in Central and South-Central Douglas County,
- North Josephine County,
- South Josephine County.

Communities within census tracts having especially high poverty rates (21.2% and higher) include:

- Drain
- NE and SW Roseburg,
- Winston,
- Dillard,
- Tri-City,
- Riddle,
- Canyonville,
- Wolf Creek,
- SE Grants Pass,
- Kerby,
- Cave Junction

## Population in Poverty by Ethnicity

| Report Area          | Hispanic or Latino | Not Hispanic or Latino | Hispanic or Latino, Percent | Not Hispanic or Latino, Percent |
|----------------------|--------------------|------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Report Location      | 3,148              | 28,444                 | 20.92%                      | 15.56%                          |
| Douglas County, OR   | 1,491              | 16,520                 | 20.20%                      | 15.99%                          |
| Josephine County, OR | 1,657              | 11,924                 | 21.60%                      | 15.01%                          |
| Oregon               | 91,707             | 406,673                | 14.99%                      | 11.42%                          |
| United States        | 10,641,656         | 30,094,005             | 16.74%                      | 11.42%                          |

The poverty rates for local Hispanic/Latino residents exceed rates of poverty for non-Hispanic/Latinx residents. As with the poverty rates for the overall population, rates for those identifying as Hispanic/Latino exceed state and national rates. Over 3,000 Hispanic/Latino residents live in poverty.

## Children Living in Poverty

The Census maintains data for the overall number of children living in poverty as well as those ages newborn through 4 years old.

| Report Area          | Total Population | Population < Age 18 | Population < Age 18<br>in Poverty | Population < Age 18<br>in Poverty, Percent |
|----------------------|------------------|---------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|
| Report Location      | 197,805          | 37,392              | 7,769                             | <b>20.78%</b>                              |
| Douglas County, OR   | 110,710          | 20,761              | 4,633                             | 22.32%                                     |
| Josephine County, OR | 87,095           | 16,631              | 3,136                             | 18.86%                                     |
| Oregon               | 4,173,206        | 830,611             | 109,782                           | 13.22%                                     |
| United States        | 327,079,188      | 72,384,401          | 11,678,577                        | 16.13%                                     |

| Report Area          | Ages 0-4<br>Total Population | Ages 0-4<br>In Poverty | Ages 0-4<br>Poverty Rate |
|----------------------|------------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|
| Report Location      | 9,072                        | 2,203                  | <b>24.3%</b>             |
| Douglas County, OR   | 5,120                        | 1,277                  | 24.9%                    |
| Josephine County, OR | 3,952                        | 926                    | 23.4%                    |
| Oregon               | 202,871                      | 29,806                 | 14.7%                    |
| United States        | 18,441,458                   | 3,193,459              | 17.3%                    |

All local children, as well as all young children, have higher rates of poverty than those statewide or nationally. Local child poverty rates are higher than local poverty rates for all individuals. And local childhood poverty rates are highest for the region's youngest children. This is particularly concerning, as poverty has wide-ranging, sometimes lifelong, effects on children, putting them at a much higher risk of experiencing behavioral, social, emotional, and health challenges.<sup>11</sup>

Local Hispanic/Latino children are also more likely to live in poverty than their non-Hispanic/Latino counterparts.

## Children in Poverty by Ethnicity

| Report Area          | Total Hispanic or Latino | Total Not Hispanic or Latino | Percent Hispanic or Latino | Percent Not Hispanic or Latino |
|----------------------|--------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Report Location      | 1,324                    | 6,445                        | 27.98%                     | 19.73%                         |
| Douglas County, OR   | 563                      | 4,070                        | 24.09%                     | 22.09%                         |
| Josephine County, OR | 761                      | 2,375                        | 31.77%                     | 16.68%                         |
| Oregon               | 37,974                   | 71,808                       | 19.00%                     | 11.38%                         |
| United States        | 4,149,377                | 7,529,200                    | 21.83%                     | 14.10%                         |

<sup>11</sup> Children's Defense Fund: 2023 State of America's Children Report, <https://www.childrensdefense.org/tools-and-resources/the-state-of-americas-children/soac-child-poverty/>

The only local age group with poverty rates that are close to state and national rates are seniors. The table below provides this data.

### Seniors in Poverty (Ages 65 and up)

| Report Area          | Ages 65 and Up<br>Total Population | Ages 65 and Up<br>In Poverty | Ages 65 and Up<br>Poverty Rate |
|----------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Report Location      | 52,935                             | 6,190                        | 11.7%                          |
| Douglas County, OR   | 29,384                             | 3,396                        | 11.6%                          |
| Josephine County, OR | 23,551                             | 2,794                        | 11.9%                          |
| Oregon               | 797,028                            | 79,096                       | 9.9%                           |
| United States        | 56,239,637                         | 6,067,159                    | 10.8%                          |

The poverty rate for seniors in the region is still higher than state and national rates, but the rate is less than that of any other poverty rate shown previously. Poverty rates for Hispanic/Latino seniors are higher than the general senior population.

### Seniors in Poverty by Ethnicity

| Report Area          | Total Hispanic or Latino | Total Not Hispanic or Latino | Percent Hispanic or Latino | Percent Not Hispanic or Latino |
|----------------------|--------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Report Location      | 267                      | 5,923                        | 15.22%                     | 11.57%                         |
| Douglas County, OR   | 119                      | 3,277                        | 13.58%                     | 11.50%                         |
| Josephine County, OR | 148                      | 2,646                        | 16.86%                     | 11.67%                         |
| Oregon               | 4,685                    | 74,411                       | 13.58%                     | 9.76%                          |
| United States        | 953,761                  | 5,113,398                    | 18.16%                     | 10.03%                         |

### Income Supports

Individuals who lack living wage jobs can qualify for several supports to enhance their ability to make ends meet. Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) is a major source of cash benefits for those with little income. Families qualifying for TANF in Oregon are those that:

- Live in Oregon,
- Have little or no income and very few resources (like property, vehicles or bank accounts),
- Are either:
  - The parent or caregiver for a child who is 18 or younger, or
  - Pregnant, or
  - 18 or younger and head of their household

The following table has data on those with TANF locally, statewide and nationally:

| Report Area          | Total Households | Households with Public Assistance Income | Percent Households with Public Assistance Income |
|----------------------|------------------|------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|
| Report Location      | 84,234           | 3,724                                    | 4.42%                                            |
| Douglas County, OR   | 47,519           | 2,182                                    | 4.59%                                            |
| Josephine County, OR | 36,715           | 1,542                                    | 4.20%                                            |
| Oregon               | 1,718,422        | 69,796                                   | 4.06%                                            |
| United States        | 129,227,496      | 3,525,449                                | 2.73%                                            |

The percentage of local households receiving TANF is slightly greater than statewide and nationally.

Another source of cash benefits for low-income residents is through the federal government's social security program, either as Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI).

Individuals may be eligible to receive SSI if they have:

- Little or no income, and
- Little or no resources, and
- A disability, blindness, or are age 65 or older.

To be eligible for SSDI, an individual must have been employed and paid into Social Security, have a medical condition that meets Social Security's definition and be unable to work for at least 12 months. While a recipient is unable to work, they can continue receiving SSDI. In 2024, 6,109 individuals in the region received SSI (3%), of whom 2,265 also received SSDI benefits.<sup>12</sup>

Many local households living below the federal poverty level are receiving neither TANF nor SSI. The percentage of households (not individuals) living in poverty in the region is 10.7%. Only 4.4% of such households receive TANF and 3% receive SSI. The gap between the percentage living in poverty and percentage receiving some form of cash assistance is a result of eligibility requirements. If a household has no children, it cannot receive TANF. If a household does not have a member with a disability, blindness of someone age 65 or older, it cannot receive SSI. This leaves many households living in poverty without any cash assistance.

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<sup>12</sup> US Social Security Data: [https://www.ssa.gov/policy/docs/statcomps/ssi\\_sc/index.html](https://www.ssa.gov/policy/docs/statcomps/ssi_sc/index.html)

# HOUSING

## Housing Units

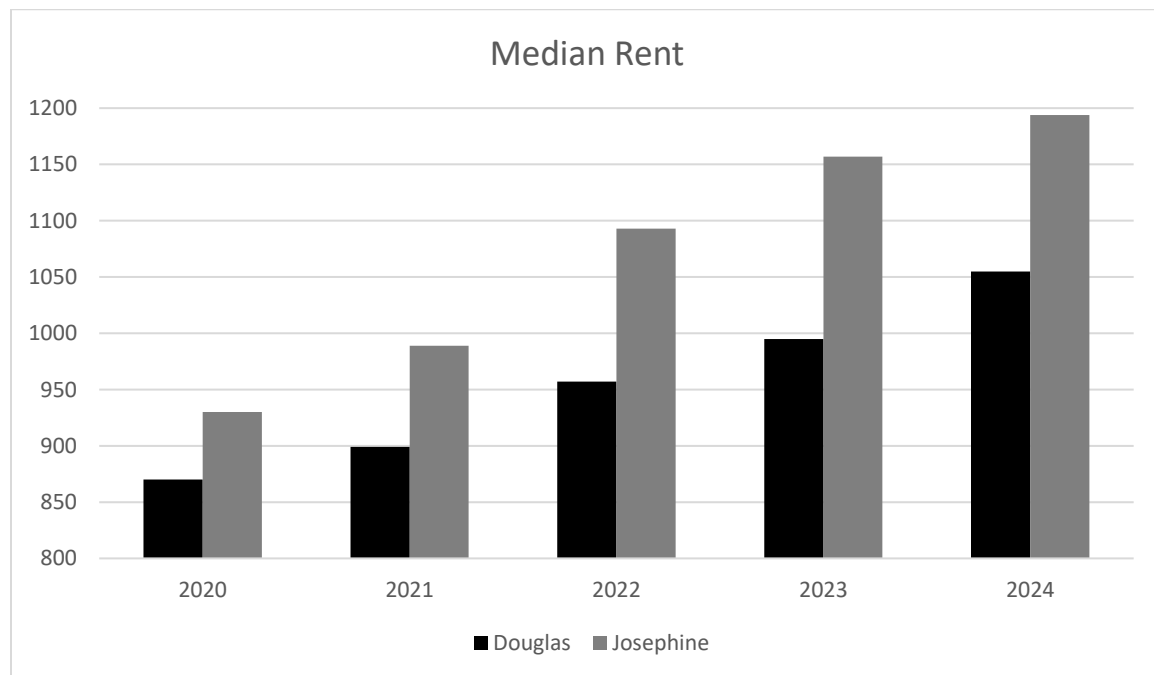
Total housing units in the region, statewide and nationally over the past ten years are shown in the table below.

| Report Area          | July 2015   | July 2016   | July 2017   | July 2018   | July 2019   | July 2020   | July 2021   | July 2022   | July 2023   | July 2024   |
|----------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Report Location      | 88,391      | 88,865      | 89,379      | 89,991      | 90,611      | 88,669      | 89,302      | 90,187      | 90,865      | 91,384      |
| Douglas County, OR   | 49,816      | 50,031      | 50,300      | 50,618      | 50,970      | 49,856      | 50,140      | 50,652      | 50,958      | 51,245      |
| Josephine County, OR | 38,575      | 38,834      | 39,079      | 39,373      | 39,641      | 38,813      | 39,162      | 39,535      | 39,907      | 40,139      |
| Oregon               | 3,462,332   | 3,496,816   | 3,535,880   | 3,576,498   | 3,616,930   | 3,638,392   | 3,673,382   | 3,717,554   | 3,758,524   | 3,793,866   |
| United States        | 135,285,123 | 136,286,436 | 137,366,902 | 138,516,439 | 139,684,244 | 140,811,440 | 142,172,055 | 143,799,370 | 145,359,015 | 146,770,711 |

The region has seen a 3.4% increase in units during this timeframe. Statewide, units have increased by 9.6%. During this timeframe, Josephine County's population increased by 5.8% and Douglas County's by 5.1%. Not only is development of new housing in the region lagging behind state rates, the percentage increase in units is less than the percentage increase in population. Housing development is not keeping up with new demand.

Both rental and housing prices are soaring. Most low-income households live in rentals, so median rents are examined next.

## Housing Cost



Median rents have increased in Douglas and Josephine County by 21.2% and 28.7% respectively in the past 5 years. Both increases exceed the increase in minimum wage for the two counties over the same period. For those on social security or social security supplemental income, Douglas County residents had a slightly greater increase from cost-of-living adjustments during this time frame than the increase in rental costs, while Josephine County residents had slightly lesser increase than increases in rental costs.

## Housing Burden

Housing costs burden a household when they comprise a high percentage of household income. A household is considered “cost-burdened” when it spends more than 30% of its income on rent and utilities. These households can typically meet their basic needs, but are stressed by the cost of housing. A household is “severely cost-burdened” when it spends more than 50% of its income on housing. These households are likely having to forego addressing some basic needs to stay housed. The table below shows percentages of households that are cost-burdened locally, statewide and nationally:

| Report Area          | Total Households | Cost-Burdened Households | Cost-Burdened Households, Percent |
|----------------------|------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Report Location      | 84,234           | 25,889                   | 30.73%                            |
| Douglas County, OR   | 47,519           | 13,605                   | 28.63%                            |
| Josephine County, OR | 36,715           | 12,284                   | 33.46%                            |
| Oregon               | 1,718,422        | 557,212                  | 32.43%                            |
| United States        | 129,227,496      | 38,509,052               | 29.80%                            |

Josephine County has a slightly greater percentage of renters who are burdened than the percentage statewide and nationally. Douglas County has slightly lesser percentage of burdened renters. Nearly 1/3 of renters in both counties are spending a high percentage of their income on rent. The next table distinguishes the percentage of those burdened by housing costs by type of housing (rental, owner-occupied with mortgage, owner-occupied without a mortgage).

| Report Area          | Rental Households | Rental Households Cost-Burdened, Percent | Owner-Occupied Households w/ Mortgage | Owner-Occupied Households w/ Mortgage Cost-Burdened, Percent | Owner-Occupied Households w/o Mortgage | Owner-Occupied Households w/o Mortgage Cost-Burdened, Percent |
|----------------------|-------------------|------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|
| Report Location      | 23,334            | 48.49%                                   | 33,108                                | 35.20%                                                       | 27,792                                 | 15.37%                                                        |
| Douglas County, OR   | 12,952            | 45.38%                                   | 18,057                                | 30.49%                                                       | 16,510                                 | 16.81%                                                        |
| Josephine County, OR | 10,382            | 52.37%                                   | 15,051                                | 40.84%                                                       | 11,282                                 | 13.26%                                                        |

About half of burdened households live in rentals, which is typically the housing available to low-income households.

The next table provides data on households that are severely burdened by housing costs.

| Report Area          | Total Households | Severely Burdened Households | Severely Burdened Households, Percent |
|----------------------|------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Report Location      | 84,234           | 12,315                       | 14.62%                                |
| Douglas County, OR   | 47,519           | 6,103                        | 12.84%                                |
| Josephine County, OR | 36,715           | 6,212                        | 16.92%                                |
| Oregon               | 1,718,422        | 261,279                      | 15.20%                                |
| United States        | 129,227,496      | 18,421,572                   | 14.26%                                |

The region has over 12,000 such households. As with those burdened by housing costs, almost half of those severely burdened are renters.

| Report Area          | Severely Burdened Households | Rental Households, Percent | Owner-Occupied Households w/ Mortgage, Percent | Owner-Occupied Households w/o Mortgage, Percent |
|----------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|
| Report Location      | 12,315                       | 47.05%                     | 40.89%                                         | 15.62%                                          |
| Douglas County, OR   | 6,103                        | 48.03%                     | 36.49%                                         | 18.20%                                          |
| Josephine County, OR | 6,212                        | 46.09%                     | 45.20%                                         | 13.07%                                          |

## Homelessness

High housing costs can lead to high levels of stress and can force difficult trade-offs when addressing basic needs. Communities with high housing costs may lose workers who cannot afford the housing. But the impact of homelessness on individuals and communities far exceeds these impacts. Homelessness adversely affects virtually every aspect of a person's life, from one's sense of safety and social support to overall health and life expectancy. For children and families, homelessness can lead to developmental delays, disruptions in education, and family separation. High numbers of homeless individuals can strain communities' welfare systems, hospitals and emergency health care services, and criminal justice systems, sapping local resources.

Tallying the number of individuals who are homeless is challenging. The US Department of Housing and Urban Development requires each county to undertake a Point-In-Time Count, which occurs on a single day and night in January and counts both sheltered and unsheltered individuals. Both researchers and the federal government have identified serious shortcomings in the use of the PIT Count to estimate the number of people experiencing unsheltered homelessness.<sup>13</sup> The Department of Education requires a count of homeless students, which includes those who are living "doubled up" by necessity. For this reason, the federal government recommends combining the PIT

<sup>13</sup> 2025 Oregon Statewide Homelessness Estimates, Oregon Housing and Community Services, 2026.

Count with other sources of data to better estimate the total number of people experiencing homelessness.<sup>14</sup>

The authors of “2025 Oregon Statewide Homelessness Estimates” estimate homelessness in Oregon’s counties by examining a wide variety of data. The report notes that there are two groups of homeless individuals: unsheltered and sheltered. HUD defines those experiencing unsheltered homelessness as “an individual or family with a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings.” Homeless individuals lacking shelter are at greatest risk for poor health, having less access to health care, and an increased risk of premature mortality as compared with those who are sheltered.

The 2025 Report estimates that Douglas and Josephine County have rates of 2.2 and 3.7 unsheltered individuals per 1,000. Douglas County’s rate is 18<sup>th</sup> highest of Oregon’s 36 counties.<sup>15</sup> Josephine’s rate is 22<sup>nd</sup> highest.<sup>16</sup> Douglas County’s unsheltered population represents 71% of its homeless population.<sup>17</sup> Josephine County’s unsheltered population represents 90% of its homeless population.<sup>18</sup>

Sheltered homelessness is defined by HUD as someone “living in a supervised publicly or privately operated shelter designated to provide temporary living arrangements.” Between 2023 and 2025, Douglas County had 14 more individuals sheltered, while Josephine County had 24 fewer individuals sheltered.<sup>19</sup> The overall homeless population in Douglas and Josephine County are 3.1/1,000 and 4.1/1,000 respectively (13<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> highest out of Oregon’s 36 counties).<sup>20</sup> Though many other Oregon counties struggle with higher rates of and greater numbers of homelessness, the lack of shelter beds locally leaves many local homeless residents at high risk for health issues and early death.

Student homeless rates are greater locally than the general population’s homeless rates. Douglas County homeless student rate was 43/1,000 for school year 2024-2025, the 19<sup>th</sup> highest rate statewide.<sup>21</sup> Josephine County student homeless rate was much higher, at 80.5/1,000 for the same school year, 4<sup>th</sup> highest statewide.<sup>22</sup> Examining homeless rates by race and ethnicity, Douglas County has a disproportionate percentage of homeless Native Americans and African Americans.<sup>23</sup> The same is true

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<sup>14</sup> U.S. Government Accountability Office, “HUD Should Help Communities Better Leverage Data to Estimate Homelessness, GAO-22-104445 (2021).

<sup>15</sup> 2025 Oregon Statewide Homelessness Estimates, Oregon Housing and Community Services, 2026.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

for Native Americans in Josephine County.<sup>24</sup> But this is not true of Hispanic/Latino individuals in either County.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

## FOOD

Low-income individuals can experience a combination of hunger and malnutrition. Hunger and malnutrition can have many short- and long-term health impacts, including:<sup>26</sup>

- Increases in diet-related diseases like diabetes,
- Increases in infectious diseases,
- Poor oral health,
- Higher incidence of injuries,
- Increases in chronic conditions, including depression and anxiety disorders, heart disease, hypertension, arthritis, back problems, and chronic pain

Both hunger and malnutrition contribute to poverty. Those who are hungry often struggle at school and at work. Hungry children miss school more often and are at-risk for developmental delays.<sup>27</sup> Hunger increases anxiety among workers which interferes with work productivity.<sup>28</sup> The CDC reports that malnutrition increases the likelihood that individuals of any age will incur higher health costs.<sup>29</sup>

Feeding America provides annual data on both overall and child hunger by County. In 2023, 16.8% of residents of both Douglas and Josephine County were hungry.<sup>30</sup> The two counties had the 7<sup>th</sup> highest rate of hunger of Oregon's 36 counties. Douglas and Josephine County had the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> highest percentage of hungry children, with nearly 1 in 4 children in both Counties suffering from hunger.<sup>31</sup> 38% and 34% of adults in Douglas and Josephine County respectively were obese in 2023.<sup>32</sup>

Aside from lacking money to purchase adequate, nutritious food, many low-income individuals have difficulty accessing supermarkets that sell such food. The USDA Food Access Research Atlas defines a food desert as any neighborhood that lacks healthy food sources due to income level, distance to supermarkets, or vehicle access.

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<sup>26</sup> <https://proof.utoronto.ca/food-insecurity/what-are-the-implications-of-food-insecurity-for-health-and-health-care/>

<sup>27</sup> Children's Healthwatch Brief, Too Hungry to Learn: Food Insecurity and School Readiness

<sup>28</sup> American Psychological Association, Food Insecurity Impacts Employee's Productivity, February 19, 2026.

<sup>29</sup> <https://www.cdc.gov/obesity/php/about/index.html>

<sup>30</sup> <https://map.feedingamerica.org/county/2023/overall/oregon/county/>

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> County Health Rankings.

The table below shows that a substantial number of local residents live in such deserts.<sup>33</sup>

| Report Area          | Total Population (2010) | Food Desert Census Tracts | Other Census Tracts | Food Desert Population | Other Population |
|----------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------|------------------------|------------------|
| Report Location      | 190,380                 | 14                        | 24                  | 81,512                 | 108,868          |
| Douglas County, OR   | 107,667                 | 8                         | 14                  | 47,104                 | 60,563           |
| Josephine County, OR | 82,713                  | 6                         | 10                  | 34,408                 | 48,305           |
| Oregon               | 3,831,074               | 100                       | 726                 | 494,475                | 3,336,599        |
| United States        | 308,745,538             | 9,293                     | 63,238              | 39,074,974             | 269,670,564      |

Over 40% of local residents live in food deserts in contrast to 13% statewide and nationally. Many of these residents rely on local convenience stores to purchase their groceries, often paying more for less healthy food.

Benefits that help offset food insecurity and malnutrition are Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) (also known as food stamps), WIC and free/reduced lunch program. Individuals can qualify for SNAP if they are Oregon residents and earn less than a certain income based on household size. Children in households qualifying for SNAP automatically qualify for free/reduced lunches at school. If their household earns less than a certain amount, but does not receive SNAP, they can also qualify. Pregnant, postpartum, breastfeeding persons, infants and children under 5 qualify for WIC if they are on SNAP, TANF, or Medicaid.

The tables below show SNAP, Free/Reduced Lunch and WIC participation in the region.

#### Households Receiving SNAP By Poverty Status

| Report Area          | Households Receiving SNAP Total | Households Receiving SNAP Percent | Households Receiving SNAP Income Below Poverty | Households Receiving SNAP Income Above Poverty | Households Not Receiving SNAP Total | Households Not Receiving SNAP Percent | Households Not Receiving SNAP Income Below Poverty | Households Not Receiving SNAP Income Above Poverty |
|----------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|
| Report Location      | 18,877                          | 22.4%                             | 6,825                                          | 12,052                                         | 65,357                              | 77.6%                                 | 6,407                                              | 58,950                                             |
| Douglas County, OR   | 10,041                          | 21.13%                            | 3,776                                          | 6,265                                          | 37,478                              | 78.87%                                | 3,382                                              | 34,096                                             |
| Josephine County, OR | 8,836                           | 24.07%                            | 3,049                                          | 5,787                                          | 27,879                              | 75.93%                                | 3,025                                              | 24,854                                             |
| Oregon               | 275,719                         | 16.04%                            | 98,659                                         | 177,060                                        | 1,442,703                           | 83.96%                                | 107,743                                            | 1,334,960                                          |
| United States        | 15,572,114                      | 12.05%                            | 6,598,381                                      | 8,973,733                                      | 113,655,382                         | 87.95%                                | 9,649,356                                          | 104,006,026                                        |

Between 1/4 and 1/5 local households received SNAP in the period 2020-2024, 12,052 of whom lived above the poverty level. However, new work requirements and more complicated application processes

<sup>33</sup> US Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Services, Food Access Research Atlas, 2019

Below is the most recent free/reduced lunch data:

| Report Area          | Total Students | Students Eligible for Free or Reduced Price Lunch | Students Eligible for Free or Reduced Price Lunch, Percent |
|----------------------|----------------|---------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|
| Report Location      | 23,488         | 16,054                                            | 68.3%                                                      |
| Douglas County, OR   | 13,706         | 8,688                                             | 63.4%                                                      |
| Josephine County, OR | 9,782          | 7,366                                             | 75.3%                                                      |
| Oregon               | 541,479        | 290,752                                           | 53.9%                                                      |
| United States        | 46,694,706     | 24,748,121                                        | 54.7%                                                      |

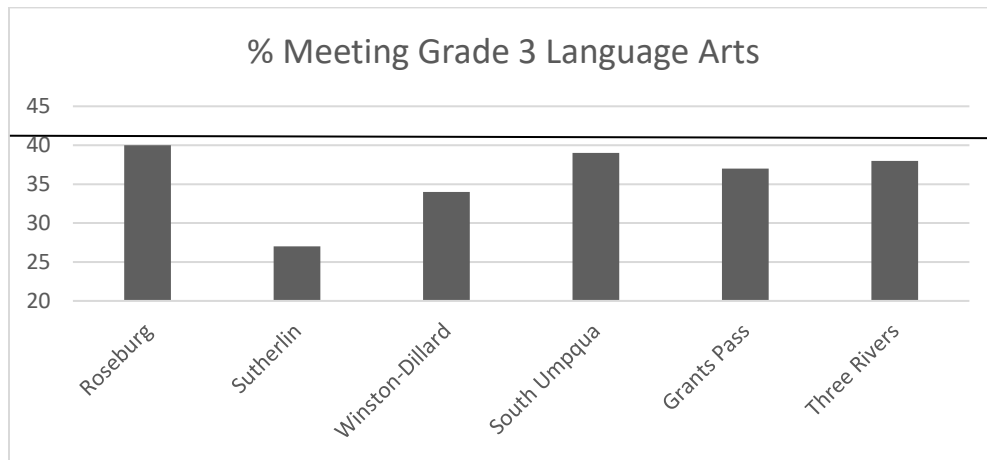
Not surprisingly given the region's high percentage of children living below the federal poverty level, the percentage of children receiving this benefit is considerably higher in the region than statewide or nationally. In Josephine and Douglas County, 3,728 and 4,430 individuals respectively participated in WIC programs.<sup>34</sup> These individuals not only received free foods, they also received dietary education and children received developmental checks.

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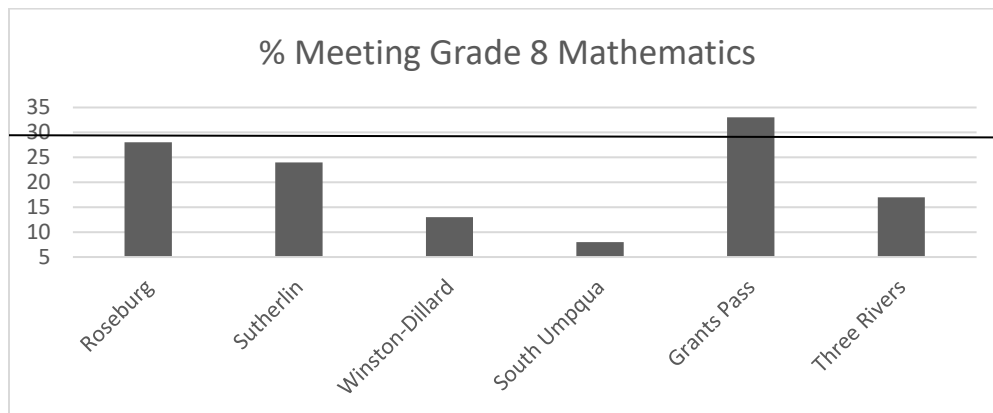
<sup>34</sup> <https://www.oregon.gov/oha/ph/healthypeoplefamilies/wic/pages/annual.aspx>

## EDUCATION

Oregon on a whole is struggling to provide an adequate education for students K-12. The most recent US News and World Report ranked the state 44<sup>th</sup> out of 50 based on combined college readiness, preschool enrollment, reading, math and high school graduation measures.<sup>35</sup> Oregon's reading and math scores ranked 36<sup>th</sup> and 40<sup>th</sup> respectively.<sup>36</sup> Given Oregon's poor ranking, school districts that are doing worse in the state are performing very poorly compared to districts nationally. The following data is for the six largest school districts in Douglas and Josephine County. The first table shows the percentage of students meeting grade 3 language art standards by district.



All local school districts have lower percentages of students meeting grade 3 language arts standards than those statewide (41%).<sup>37</sup>



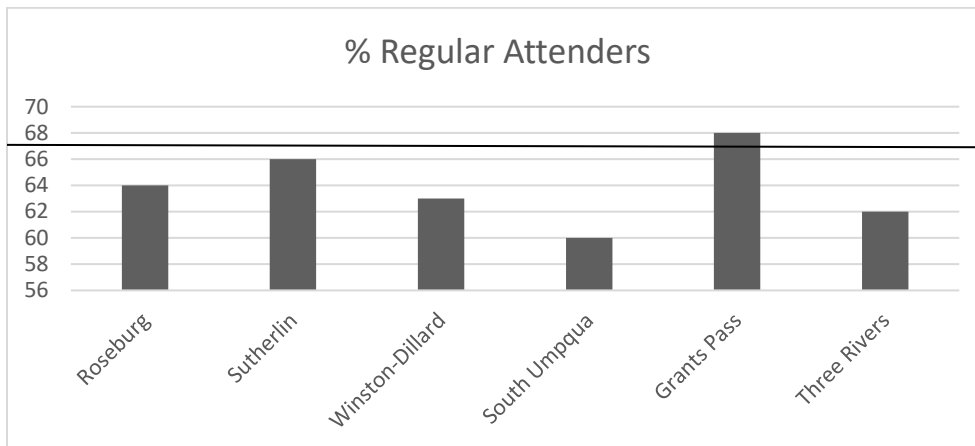
Grants Pass is the only local school district with a greater percentage of students meeting 8<sup>th</sup> grade math standards than statewide.<sup>38</sup>

<sup>35</sup> <https://www.usnews.com/news/best-states/rankings/education/prek-12>

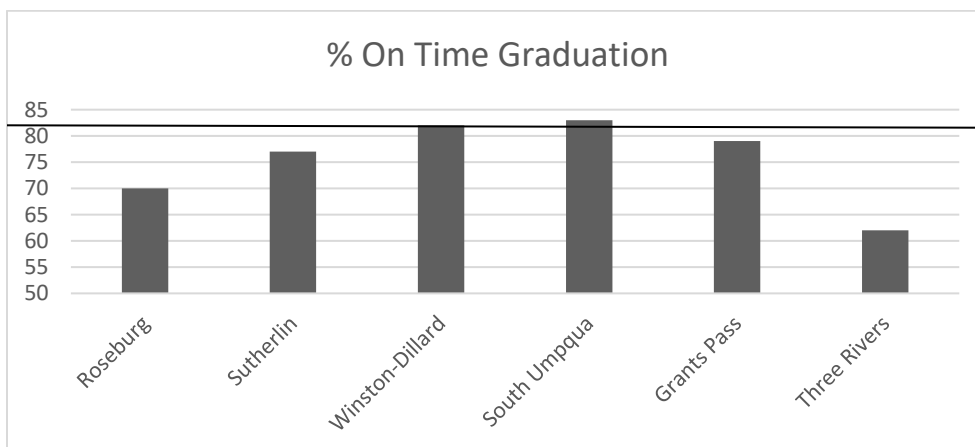
<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> ODE, School Report Cards, 2024-2025.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.



Given that Oregon schools are among the worst nationally in terms of the average number of days students miss classes,<sup>39</sup> the fact that most local schools' percentage of regular attenders is near the state average indicates this is a local problem as well.<sup>40</sup>



Examining the percentage of students graduating on time, only two school districts have an equal or greater percentage of such students than the statewide percentage.<sup>41</sup>

The combined dropout rate of all Douglas County schools is 4.6%, the state's 3<sup>rd</sup> highest rate.<sup>42</sup> In Josephine County, Three Rivers SD has a higher dropout rate of 4.8%.<sup>43</sup> Only Grants Pass SD (2%) has a dropout rate less than the statewide rate of 3.2%.<sup>44</sup>

<sup>39</sup> Alex Baumhardt, "Oregon Education Officials Recommend Repealing, Replacing Compulsory School Attendance Rules, Oregon Capital Chronicle, June 17, 2026.

<sup>40</sup> ODE, School Report Cards, 2024-2025.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> ODE, Dropout Rates, 2024-2025.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

Local students doing poorly are less likely to continue on to college, which is very concerning, as those with less education have lower median incomes in the United States.<sup>45</sup> While in recent years, the median income has increased for those with college degrees, those lacking degrees (even if they have some college education) have seen little if any increase.<sup>46</sup> Local educational attainment data further indicates the need for improvement in local education systems.

| Report Area          | No High School Diploma | High School Only | Some College | Associate's Degree | Bachelor's Degree | Graduate or Professional Degree |
|----------------------|------------------------|------------------|--------------|--------------------|-------------------|---------------------------------|
| Report Location      | 9.12%                  | 31.36%           | 29.12%       | 10.93%             | 12.36%            | 7.11%                           |
| Douglas County, OR   | 8.74%                  | 31.62%           | 28.96%       | 11.38%             | 12.25%            | 7.05%                           |
| Josephine County, OR | 9.59%                  | 31.03%           | 29.32%       | 10.36%             | 12.50%            | 7.19%                           |
| Oregon               | 8.15%                  | 22.42%           | 23.51%       | 9.11%              | 22.66%            | 14.14%                          |
| United States        | 10.39%                 | 26.04%           | 19.08%       | 8.81%              | 21.61%            | 14.08%                          |

Nearly 70% of local residents lack college degrees as compared to less than 56% statewide and nationally.

Early childhood education programs improve local educational outcomes.<sup>47</sup> Head Start is one such program offered to children ages 0-4. Both the US and Oregon fund Head Start. Oregon also funds a similar program called Preschool Promise. Douglas County has 312 Head Start slots for children age 3-4, and 98 slots for children age 0-2.<sup>48</sup> Josephine County has Head Start slots for children age 3-4 and 92 slots for children age 0-2.<sup>49</sup> Douglas County has an additional 167 Preschool Promise slots for children age 3-4.<sup>50</sup> Josephine County has 113 Preschool Promise slots for children in this age range.<sup>51</sup> Despite efforts by the state to expand this service, the region has a lower percentage of children enrolled in preschool (age 3-4) than nationally (Douglas County does have a higher percentage of children enrolled in preschool than the state).

| Report Area          | Population Age 3-4 | Population Age 3-4 Enrolled in School | Population Age 3-4 Enrolled in School, Percent |
|----------------------|--------------------|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|
| Report Location      | 4,450              | 1,768                                 | 39.73%                                         |
| Douglas County, OR   | 2,429              | 1,060                                 | 43.64%                                         |
| Josephine County, OR | 2,021              | 708                                   | 35.03%                                         |
| Oregon               | 87,234             | 36,445                                | 41.78%                                         |
| United States        | 7,849,466          | 3,572,543                             | 45.51%                                         |

Josephine County's young children are particularly underserved, with only 35% of children ages 3-4 enrolled in school.

<sup>45</sup> US Census Report, <https://www.census.gov/library/stories/2025/09/education-and-income.html>

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> McCoy, Dana Charles; Yoshikawa, Hirokazu; Ziolo-Guest, Kathleen M; Duncan, Greg J; Schindler, Holly S; Magnuson, Katherine; Yang, Rui; Koepp, Andrew; Shonkoff, Jack, Impacts of Early Childhood Education on Medium- and Long-Term Educational Outcomes, Educ Res. 2017 Nov 15;46(8):474-487.

<sup>48</sup> Oregon Department of Early Learning and Care: <https://www.oregon.gov/delc/data/pages/default.aspx>

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

# EMPLOYMENT

## Jobs

The table below shows the number of local residents who work in various sectors of the economy, and their average wage.

| Sector                              | Number of Jobs in Region | Average Wage in Region |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------|
| Farming                             | 3,214                    | \$4,166                |
| Forestry/Fishing                    | 1,903                    | \$55,651               |
| Mining                              | 243                      | \$48,646               |
| Utilities                           | 260                      | \$147,557              |
| Construction                        | 5,284                    | \$60,890               |
| Manufacturing                       | 8,497                    | \$72,316               |
| Wholesale Trade                     | 2,103                    | \$55,126               |
| Retail Trade                        | 11,802                   | \$45,541               |
| Warehouse                           | 3,487                    | \$45,577               |
| Information                         | 916                      | \$63,015               |
| Finance/Insurance                   | 3,392                    | \$49,221               |
| Real Estate/Leasing                 | 4,817                    | \$49,028               |
| Professional, Scientific, Technical | 3,826                    | \$50,636               |
| Management                          | 771                      | \$106,384              |
| Admin./Waste Mgmt.                  | 4,391                    | \$44,880               |
| Educational Services                | 897                      | \$23,937               |
| Health Care; Social Aid             | 15,594                   | \$60,668               |
| Arts, Entertain, Rec.               | 1,592                    | \$22,240               |
| Accommodation; Food                 | 7,309                    | \$44,786               |
| Other Services                      | 5,452                    | \$40,303               |
| Government                          | 11,040                   | \$87,262               |

The sectors with the most jobs offering high wages are: government, manufacturing and healthcare.<sup>52</sup> Manufacturing jobs are a key sector for those who have not attended college.<sup>53</sup> Oregonians with less than a high school diploma earn 11.4% more in the manufacturing sector than in other industry.<sup>54</sup> This premium rises to 16.7% for high school graduates.<sup>55</sup> Construction also offers a number of good paying jobs to those who have not attended college. Residents with low levels of education attainment would benefit most from an increase in construction and manufacturing jobs. Retail trade, accommodation and food, other services, and administrative/waste management

<sup>52</sup> US Department of Commerce, US Bureau of Economic Analysis, 2022.

<sup>53</sup> The Condition of Oregon's Manufacturing Sector, EcoNorthwest, October 2024.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

sectors also offer many jobs to residents with low levels of education, but few of these jobs pay well.

Having more young people continue their education beyond high school would lead to more people employed in higher paying jobs. It would also be helpful to provide more opportunities for local residents to obtain the education and experience they need to go into the healthcare field, as this field is expected to continue growing.

## Unemployment

The region has long had unemployment rates exceeding both state and national rates. Unemployment rates for April of the past five years are shown below.<sup>56</sup>

| Report Area          | April<br>2022 | April<br>2023 | April<br>2024 | April<br>2025 | April<br>2026 |
|----------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| Report Location      | 4.6%          | 4.1%          | 4.8%          | 5.8%          | 5.9%          |
| Douglas County, OR   | 4.5%          | 4.0%          | 4.7%          | 5.5%          | 5.8%          |
| Josephine County, OR | 4.7%          | 4.3%          | 4.9%          | 6.3%          | 6.2%          |
| Oregon               | 3.5%          | 3.0%          | 3.7%          | 4.6%          | 4.8%          |
| United States        | 3.4%          | 3.1%          | 3.5%          | 3.9%          | 4.0%          |

The chart shows that Josephine County's unemployment rate has slightly exceeded Douglas County's during this period. As of June 2026, Douglas County's unemployment rate stood at 6.2% and Josephine County's rate was 6.8%.<sup>57</sup> These rates were the State's 5<sup>th</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> highest respectively.

## Childcare

More parents can join the workforce if their children have access to childcare. Douglas County has 72 licensed facilities able to serve 1,149 children.<sup>58</sup> Josephine County has 71 licensed facilities able to serve 1,941 children.<sup>59</sup> A county is considered a childcare desert if fewer than 33% of the county's children have access to a slot.<sup>60</sup> As of 2024, Douglas County (22%) and Josephine County (30%) were both childcare deserts. Many low-income families cannot afford the childcare that is available in the two Counties. The typical cost of childcare differs based on the age of the child served and whether they are served in a home or center-based setting. Childcare for school age children served in a center-based setting costs between \$4,000-5,376/yr. For all other types of care and ages served, the range in annual cost for childcare is around \$8,443-\$19,241. Oregon offers subsidies known as Employment Related Day Care (ERDC) to offset part of the payment of care to qualifying low-income families. Douglas County currently has

<sup>56</sup> Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2022, 2023, 2024, 2025, 2026-April

<sup>57</sup> State of Oregon Employment Department, June 2026.

<sup>58</sup> Oregon Department of Early Learning and Care, <https://www.oregon.gov/delc/data/pages/default.aspx>

<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

<sup>60</sup> Oregon's Child Care Deserts 2024: Mapping Supply by Age Group and Percentage of Publicly Funded Slots, Oregon State University, College of Health, Oregon Child Care Research Partnership, July, 2025.

360 families receiving ERDC with another 311 families waitlisted.<sup>61</sup> Josephine County has 460 enrolled families with another 355 families waitlisted.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> Oregon Department of Early Learning and Care, <https://www.oregon.gov/delc/data/pages/default.aspx>

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

# CHILD WELFARE AND FAMILY WELL-BEING

## 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 2024.<sup>63</sup>

| Indicator                               | Douglas          | Josephine        | Oregon |
|-----------------------------------------|------------------|------------------|--------|
| Abuse and neglect victim rate per 1,000 | 21.5             | 19.3             | 13.9   |
| Children in foster care per 1,000       | 7.9              | 5.5              | 5.3    |
| Closed homes/new certifications         | 65 closed/43 new | 50 closed/27 new | N/A    |

Both Counties have high rates of child abuse and children in foster care compared to statewide rates. Douglas County continues to struggle more with these issues than Josephine County. Both counties also saw more certified foster care homes close in 2023 than open, perhaps leaving fewer options for placement of children needing care.

Oregon DHS also maintains a dashboard with data on other measures of welfare related to abuse/neglect and foster care. As of 2025, both Counties were generally meeting federal standards for permanency (finding a permanent home).<sup>64</sup> But both Counties failed to meet federal standards for: re-entry to foster care, recurrence of maltreatment, and maltreatment in foster care.<sup>65</sup>

## Issues with Family Strength

The primary indicators for issues regarding family strength examined here are domestic violence, pregnancies to unmarried mothers, divorce and grandparents responsible for grandchildren.

Oregon now reports crimes with domestic violence involved on its Oregon Uniform Crime Reporting Data dashboard.<sup>66</sup> Given that this data is based on police and sheriff department arrest records, it is unclear how well this data reflects actual incidences of domestic violence.

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<sup>63</sup> Oregon Department of Human Services, Child Welfare Data Book, 2024.

<sup>64</sup> <https://www.oregon.gov/odhs/data/pages/cw-dashboard-fpm.aspx>

<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

<sup>66</sup> <https://www.oregon.gov/osp/pages/uniform-crime-reporting-data.aspx>

The table below shows the rates of victimization based on arrest reports made in counties with comparable numbers of people as the region's counties: <sup>67</sup>

| County    | Population | Number of Victims | Rate per 1,000 |
|-----------|------------|-------------------|----------------|
| Umatilla  | 81,784     | 87                | 1.1            |
| Polk      | 89,616     | 195               | 2.2            |
| Josephine | 89,686     | 167               | 1.9            |
| Benton    | 98,291     | 68                | 0.7            |
| Douglas   | 110,355    | 49                | 0.4            |
| Yamhill   | 110,777    | 236               | 2.1            |
| Linn      | 130,322    | 168               | 1.3            |

Douglas County has the lowest victimization rate and Josephine County the highest. But given that incidents of domestic violence often go unreported, the data above may be impacted by factors other than actual numbers of incidents, such as availability of public safety officers to make arrests and trust in victims to report incidents to public safety.

Pregnancies by unmarried mothers are a potential area of concern in the region, 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. Others may be to couples who have chosen not to marry, but who have ample resources to raise their children. 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, 45.2% and 45.9% of births in 2025 were to unmarried women.<sup>68</sup> These percentages were significantly higher than the state rate (37.2%).<sup>69</sup> Teenage pregnancy rates in both counties was also high, with 4.2% and 4.9% of births in 2025 in Douglas and Josephine County to mothers age 17 and under (in excess of the state rate of 2.9%).<sup>70</sup>

<sup>67</sup> <https://www.oregon.gov/osp/pages/uniform-crime-reporting-data.aspx>

<sup>68</sup> Oregon Health Authority, 2025 Birth Data, <https://visual-data.dhsoha.state.or.us/t/OHA/views/Oregonbirthsandpregnanciesbycounty/CountyDashboard?%3AisGuestRedirectFromVizportal=y&%3Aembed=y>

<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid.

Divorce rates in Douglas and Josephine County also exceed those statewide and nationally.

|                     | <b>United States</b> | <b>Oregon</b> | <b>Douglas County</b> | <b>Josephine County</b> |
|---------------------|----------------------|---------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| <b>Divorce Rate</b> | 10.6%                | 12.6%         | 14.2%                 | 15.1%                   |

Between 1,500 and 2,000 grandparents live with their grandchildren. Not all of these grandparents are responsible for the grandchildren, but approximately 25% are. The total of those responsible for their grandchildren is shown below.

|                                                   | <b>Douglas County</b> | <b>Josephine County</b> |
|---------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| <b>Grandparents responsible for grandchildren</b> | 524                   | 501                     |

## TRANSPORTATION

Both Douglas and Josephine County are larger than Rhode Island. Residents living outside of each County's seats (Roseburg and Grants Pass) often face long drives to commute to work or access critical services. The table below shows the miles from various towns to Roseburg or Grants Pass.

| <b>Douglas County Towns</b> | <b>Distance to Roseburg</b> |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| <b>Reedsport</b>            | 74 miles                    |
| <b>Glendale</b>             | 47 miles                    |
| <b>Drain</b>                | 34 miles                    |
| <b>Yoncalla</b>             | 31 miles                    |
| <b>Canyonville</b>          | 27 miles                    |
| <b>Tri-City</b>             | 23 miles                    |
| <b>Oakland</b>              | 18 miles                    |
| <b>Sutherlin</b>            | 14 miles                    |
| <b>Dillard</b>              | 10 miles                    |
| <b>Winston</b>              | 9 miles                     |

| <b>Josephine County Towns</b> | <b>Distance to Grants Pass</b> |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| <b>Cave Junction</b>          | 30 miles                       |
| <b>Williams</b>               | 28 miles                       |
| <b>Merlin</b>                 | 9 miles                        |

Some distant locations do have some services, like a supermarket or doctor's office, or are closer to other service centers, like Coos Bay, Medford or Eugene. But residents without cars face significant transportation barriers. The following table provides the total number and percentages of those without cars both by County and by town.

| <b>Location</b>       | <b>Total Lacking Cars</b> | <b>Percentage Lacking Cars</b> |
|-----------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------------|
| <b>Douglas County</b> | 2,452                     | 5.2%                           |
| <b>Canyonville</b>    | 19                        | 2.2%                           |
| <b>Dillard</b>        | 16                        | 10.6%                          |
| <b>Drain</b>          | 8                         | 2.1%                           |
| <b>Glendale</b>       | 11                        | 2.9%                           |
| <b>Oakland</b>        | 9                         | 2.1%                           |
| <b>Myrtle Creek</b>   | 59                        | 3.9%                           |
| <b>Reedsport</b>      | 222                       | 10.6%                          |
| <b>Riddle</b>         | 6                         | 1.5%                           |
| <b>Roseburg</b>       | 1060                      | 10.8%                          |
| <b>Sutherlin</b>      | 299                       | 7.0%                           |
| <b>Winston</b>        | 213                       | 8.1%                           |
| <b>Yoncalla</b>       | 5                         | 1.4%                           |

| Location         | Total Lacking Cars | Percentage Lacking Cars |
|------------------|--------------------|-------------------------|
| Josephine County | 1,863              | 5.1%                    |
| Cave Junction    | 55                 | 6.6%                    |
| Grants Pass      | 1,440              | 8.7%                    |

Buses do serve residents in both Counties. In Douglas County, Umpqua Public Transit offers bus service hourly along two lines in Roseburg, as well as commuter service from Roseburg to Sutherlin and Roseburg to Winston. Josephine County operates buses in the County. Grants Pass residents can pick up the bus every hour. Commuter routes serve communities between Cave Junction and Grants Pass, as well as to Merlin and other north Josephine County communities. Reedsport has a single commuter bus operated by Coos County Area Transit that goes to Coos Bay in the morning and returns to Reedsport early evening once daily.

Residents lacking any bus service in the region include those living in:

- Drain,
- Yoncalla,
- Oakland,
- Tri-City,
- Canyonville,
- Glendale,
- Williams

The table below shows the percentage of residents using various modes to commute to work:

| Location  | Drive Alone | Carpool | Bus  | Bicycle | Walk | Work from Home | Other |
|-----------|-------------|---------|------|---------|------|----------------|-------|
| Douglas   | 71.4%       | 10.0%   | 0.3% | 0.2%    | 2.4% | 12.3%          | 1.2%  |
| Josephine | 73.8%       | 9.9%    | 0.4% | 0.5%    | 1.6% | 12.1%          | 1.6%  |

This data shows that it is possible that nearly 30% of local residents can work without owning a car, though the majority of these residents likely have their own car. Still, with around 50% of both County's residents living in unincorporated areas, it is likely that a number of such residents are hard pressed to access transportation to service and commercial centers.

## HEALTH AND HEALTHCARE

Poor health and its associated costs are drivers of poverty.<sup>71</sup> Unexpected medical bills are often a cause of poverty that arises suddenly, sometimes derailing the financial situation of individuals who previously lived middle-class lives. Poor health is also a result of poverty, as people living in poverty often have less opportunity for exercise, less access to healthy foods, less access to medical care, and lack health literacy.<sup>72</sup> Since other community partners, such as hospitals and coordinated care agencies are already required to prepare comprehensive health needs assessments, this assessment will not offer an in-depth assessment of health issues in the region. But key health issues are examined to provide a high-level overview of the relationship between health and poverty in the region.

The data that follows is found in County Health Rankings, a web-site maintained by the University of Wisconsin's Population Health Institute.<sup>73</sup> Perhaps no measure of health is more important in evaluating a region's overall well-being than premature death (years of potential life lost before age 75 per 100,000). From 2021-2023, the average years of potential life lost was 11,300 in Douglas County and 11,600 in Josephine County. During that same timespan, the statewide years of life lost was 7,500, and nationally the years of life lost was 8,100. On average, local residents have shorter lifespans than those statewide or nationally.

Local residents report having more poor physical health days and a greater percentage report being in poor or fair health than those statewide and nationally. Issues County Health Rankings categorizes as Health Infrastructure that are particularly problematic locally include:

- Low percentages of individuals getting flu vaccinations,
- Very low percentages of individuals with access to exercise opportunities,
- Less healthy food environments, and,
- Low percentages of individuals getting mammography screenings.

The region's primary physical environmental issue is its high count of particulate matter associated with air pollution. These high counts are especially associated with smoke from wildfires in the summer.

Social and economic factors related to health that are regional issues include:

- Low percentages of residents with some college education,
- High unemployment rates,
- High rates of childhood poverty,
- High rates of deaths due to injury, and

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<sup>71</sup> <https://www.healthpovertyaction.org/news-events/key-facts-poverty-and-poor-health/>

<sup>72</sup> Ibid.

<sup>73</sup> <https://www.countyhealthrankings.org/>

- High childcare costs, particularly in Josephine County.

Additional measures that are much worse locally than state or national indicators that are or may be related to what are known as deaths of despair include:<sup>74</sup>

- Rates of suicide,
- Alcohol impaired driving deaths,
- Motor vehicle crash deaths, and
- Firearm fatalities

Though the region ranks poorly on many indicators of health, it does well on some, including:<sup>75</sup>

- Low percentage of people with long commute times who drive alone,
- Low traffic volume,
- Lower costs to live in the region,
- High rates of homeownership,
- Low prevalence of HIV and other sexually transmitted infections.

All in all, County Health Rankings finds that with respect to social determinants of health, Douglas and Josephine County are both faring worse than the average county in Oregon and in the United States.<sup>76</sup> Both are found to be faring slightly worse than the average county in Oregon and about the same for the average county nationally for measures of population health and well-being.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> <https://www.countyhealthrankings.org/>

<sup>75</sup> Ibid.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid.

# TRENDS AND CHANGES IN FUNDING

## Trends

While many issues remain the same from year-to-year in the region, certain issues related to poverty have changed quite a bit in the past few years. This section highlights areas where changes are occurring, as well as where factors related to poverty have remained relatively stable:

- Beginning in 2014, the region had a significant drop in poverty rates through 2020. Since the Pandemic, poverty rates in Josephine County have remained stable (around 16%); Douglas County rates have increased from the period just prior to the Pandemic (rising from 13% to 16.3%).
- Douglas County has experienced an increase in individuals on cash assistance over the past 5 years (+444); Josephine County has experienced a slight decrease (-13).
- The number of housing units has slowly increased in the region, but has not kept up with population changes. At the same time, rents have increased substantially over the past five years.
- Despite increasing rents, the total percentage of burdened and severely cost-burdened renters in Douglas County has remained relatively stable over the last five years; the total percentage of such renters in Josephine County dropped by 3% between 2020 and 2024.<sup>78</sup>
- Rates of food insecurity for both the total population and for children in both Counties have steadily increased from 2021-2024. In Douglas County, for all residents and children, food insecurity has increased by 5.5% and 8.2% respectively. In Josephine County, for all residents and children, food insecurity has increased by 8.5% and 8.3% respectively.
- During this period of time, despite increasing child hunger, SNAP participation has remained relatively stable in Douglas County families with children. Josephine County has seen a 4.5% increase in participation between 2020-2024.
- Drop-out rates began increasing in both Counties in the first full school year during the Pandemic. Rates increased sharply the following year. Since then, rates have been falling but still exceed pre-Pandemic rates. Douglas County's 2024-2025 drop rate exceeded its 2019-2020 rate by 1.23%. In Josephine County, the increase was 0.54%.
- Educational attainment has followed different trends among young adults (age 18-24) in the two Counties. Douglas County saw an increase in the percent of young adults either attending some college or obtaining bachelor's degrees between 2020 and 2023, but the percentage dropped back to 2020 levels in 2024. In Josephine County, the percentage of such adults has decreased almost every year during this period, with 18.5% fewer having started college or obtaining a bachelor's degree in 2024 as compared to 2020.

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<sup>78</sup> American Census Survey, five-year estimates: 2020-2024, 2019-2023, 2018-2022, 2017-2021, 2016-2020

- Preschool enrollment has followed similar patterns in both Counties from 2020-2024. Both Counties' enrollments were greatest in the five-year period at the onset of the Pandemic, with 53.4% and 40.6% of Douglas and Josephine County 3-4 year old children enrolled in 2020 respectively. These percentages have fallen to 43.6% and 35% in the two Counties as of 2024.
- As mentioned earlier, unemployment rates for both Counties have risen steadily in the past five years 2022-2026, and are now at their highest levels since prior to 2022.
- Child victimization rates have seen a slight uptick in both Counties between 2020-2024. At the same time, the rate of children in foster care has dropped significantly in both Counties. In Douglas County, between 2020-2024, children in foster care rates dropped from 16.4 to 7.9/1,000. In Josephine County, rates dropped from 11.1 to 5.5/1,000. It is possible that this represents a change in policy at DHS to reduce placements in foster care. It is also possible that fewer foster families are available now than in the recent past.
- Between 2017-2021, the years of potential life lost increased in Douglas County by almost 2,000 years per 100,000 in population. Josephine County saw about a 1,500 year increase during this period. Lifespans are shortening in both Counties. During this timeframe, 5% fewer Douglas and Josephine County residents obtained flu vaccinations.

## Funding Changes

Beyond the trends mentioned here, there are some changes to the funding of social service programming that are likely to have a significant impact on low-income households in the near future. Some of these changes include:

- **SNAP:** The federal government has both added documentation and work requirements to obtain SNAP benefits. People who are homeless, veterans and young adults aging out of foster care lost exemptions to work requirements. The same was true for families whose youngest dependent is 14 years old or older, asylees, non-citizens and refugees. As of June 2026, DHS reported that 62,000 Oregonians had already lost their benefits. Of these, 25,000 individuals did not even submit paperwork.<sup>79</sup> The situation is expected to worsen in upcoming years, because the federal government is shifting some of the cost of SNAP benefits to states. States with higher error rates in either over- or under-paying benefits over 10% will have to pay the most to cover SNAP. Presently Oregon's error rate is among the highest nationally at 14%. States will also have to take on more of the cost of administering the program. Presently, the state has not developed a plan to make up this funding gap.<sup>80</sup>
- **Medicaid:** Beginning January 1, 2027, people on Medicaid will face new requirements to continue receiving health insurance in Oregon. New requirements include showing that you work, volunteer or attend school, and submitting applications twice a year, rather than once every two years. Anyone who is between 19-64, is not pregnant and is not on Medicare will be impacted by changing requirements. The State estimates that 600,000 current recipients will need to be evaluated to determine whether they meet any exemption, and that between 100,000-200,000 will lose the benefit. Local healthcare systems, such as hospitals, will see increased costs as they will still be required to treat individuals even if they lack insurance.<sup>81</sup> Cuts to federal funding will increase over time, doubling the hole in the state's budget. For Medicaid alone, the State is facing a \$868 million funding hole by 2029.<sup>82</sup>
- **Housing/Homeless funds:** On June 1, 2026, HUD announced that it was substantially reducing funding for permanent housing to fund more temporary housing. In Oregon, the National Alliance to End Homelessness estimates 1,770 additional individuals could lose permanent housing due to this change.<sup>83</sup> This change essentially replaces the Housing First policy adopted in Oregon, which aims to house individuals with substance abuse disorders and mental health

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<sup>79</sup> How work requirements and other federal changes to SNAP are impacting vulnerable Oregonians. Oregon Public Broadcasting, June 23, 2026.

<sup>80</sup> Trump's Food Stamp Cuts Could Strain Oregon's Budget and Increase Hunger, US Representative Salinas Say. Oregon Public Broadcasting, August 6, 2026.

<sup>81</sup> Big Changes Coming for People on Oregon Health Plan, Oregon Public Broadcasting, July 29, 2026.

<sup>82</sup> Oregon Eyes \$421 million in Medicaid Cuts, Including Benefits and Limits on Treatments, Oregon Public Broadcasting, July 8, 2026.

<sup>83</sup> Changes to HUD Policy Threaten Efforts to End Homelessness: At Least 97,000 People Could Lose Housing, June 2, 2026.

disabilities without requiring treatment, to a policy requiring that such individuals obtain treatment to obtain housing.<sup>84</sup> The Notice of Funding has been challenged in court, and a federal judge recently set aside the change, ruling that HUD failed to engage in the required notice and comment process.<sup>85</sup> It is unclear whether HUD will try again to change policy in conformance with the judge's ruling. Facing federal cuts to state funding, Oregon itself cut \$100 million in eviction prevention services in 2025.<sup>86</sup> These funds had been a critical source of rent assistance for those who are perilously housed and at high risk for eviction. In January of 2026, eviction filings in Oregon surged, with the highest number recorded in the state in five years.<sup>87</sup>

- Veterans Homeless Programming-The President's current budget request for all veteran programming, including those serving homeless veterans, represents a 7.7% increase over the previous year.<sup>88</sup>
- Utility assistance: Changes to SNAP are impacting those needing utility assistance as well. Previously, those receiving utility assistance received a Full Utility Allowance. With the change, an estimated 29,000 Oregonians are losing this allowance, reducing their SNAP benefit by \$58/mo.<sup>89</sup> Many Oregonians are now having to choose whether to obtain the heat they need during the winter or additional food.<sup>90</sup> A more direct threat to utility assistance is the President's repeated calls to cut the federal utility assistance program.<sup>91</sup> At this point, Congress has continued to support the program, with States receiving the bulk of LIHEAP funds in November, 2025.<sup>92</sup> But the remaining 10% of funds were held back by the President in April.<sup>93</sup> In the midst of funding uncertainty arising at the federal level, Oregon leaders doubled funding for the State's energy assistance program, from \$20 to \$40 million.<sup>94</sup> For now, utility assistance programming remains relatively stable.
- Weatherization: The President signed a bill on February 3 that included increased funding for weatherization from federal sources. The amount provided increased funds by \$20 million from the previous Fiscal Year.<sup>95</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> HUD Shifts \$4B Homelessness Program from 'Housing First' to Treatment, The Center Square, June 2, 2026.

<sup>85</sup> Federal Judge Vacates Trump Administration's 2026 Homelessness Funding Plan, Vanguard News Group, August 10, 2026.

<sup>86</sup> Oregon Homelessness and Eviction Support Programs Face Layoffs as State Funding Drops, Oregon Public Broadcasting, September 15, 2026.

<sup>87</sup> Oregon Eviction Crisis: Families Face Court as Funding Cuts Bite, KDRV News, February 6, 2026.

<sup>88</sup> US Department of Veterans Affairs, FY 2027 Budget Submission.

<sup>89</sup> Oregon Department of Human Services Announces Federal Changes to SNAP So That Thousands of Oregonians Who May Be Impacted Can Prepare, DHS Newsroom, September 30, 2025.

<sup>90</sup> Oregonians Face Tough Choice: Heat or Eat Under New Federal Energy Aid Rules, KATU news, November 6, 2025.

<sup>91</sup> Trump Re-ups Push to Eliminate Low-income Heating Assistance Program LIHEAP, The Hill, April 3, 2026.

<sup>92</sup> Low-Income Americans Pay Their Rising Utility Bills, Politico, April 13, 2026.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid.

<sup>94</sup> Oregon Lawmakers Pass Bill to Strengthen the State's Energy Assistance Program, Oregon Public Broadcasting, June 27, 2025.

<sup>95</sup> FY26 Appropriations Update: Funding Increase for LIHEAP, Building Performance Association, February 9, 2026.

- WIC: As with utility assistance funding, WIC funding levels are being re-evaluated at the federal level. The President's budget would sharply reduce fruit and vegetable benefits.<sup>96</sup> The House has passed an appropriations bill that would put these cuts into place, and also restrict virtual service options.<sup>97</sup> However, at this time, the Senate has passed a continuing resolution that leaves the WIC program fully funded through at least December 11, 2026.<sup>98</sup>
- Head Start: The President's budget provides \$12 billion dollars for Head Start programming.<sup>99</sup> However, the US Office of Health and Human Services recently proposed eliminating most Head Start performance standards.<sup>100</sup> Among the standards that would be removed are limits on class size. Though more children could potentially be served, many fear that larger classes lacking standards will effectively end this program as it currently operates. Oregon does have performance standards in place that mirror the current federal standards, and the proposal allows states to set their own standards. So even if these changes go into effect, the same programming may still operate locally.

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<sup>96</sup> For Second Year in a Row, Trump Budget Seeks to Slash WIC Fruit and Vegetable Benefits for Millions, Center for Budget and Policy Priorities, April 14, 2026.

<sup>97</sup> House Agriculture Bill Underfunds WIC, Cuts Fruit and Vegetable Benefit, and Fails to Make Virtual Services Permanent, Center for Budget and Policy Priorities, April 22, 2026.

<sup>98</sup> Senate Passes Bill to Fund the Government Through December 11 and Delay OMB Rule, National Association of Counties, August 10, 2026.

<sup>99</sup> The Major Changes Head Start Faces Under Trump Proposal, PBS News Hour, August 6, 2026.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid.

## Summary

Reviewing the most up-to-date data on potential factors causing poverty, trends, and current funding situations, low-income residents' lack of food is a primary concern for the region. Most recent data show the region having among the state's highest levels of food insecurity. Rates of insecurity have been increasing. And the number of SNAP recipients has already decreased and is likely to continue doing so.

Unsheltered homelessness is another major issue in the region, with high percentages of homeless individuals lacking shelter. Josephine County's situation is most concerning, with 90% of its homeless unsheltered. Josephine County also has one of the highest rates of student homelessness in the state.

The large percentage of students dropping out in the region is another issue of high concern. With relatively low levels of educational attainment among the general population locally, many in the region will continue to lack the education needed to find work. Improving educational outcomes is critical to lowering chronically high unemployment rates and improving wages of those who are employed. Participation in pre-school can help students succeed in school, but Josephine County has a low percentage of young children doing so.

On-going high rates of children suffering abuse and neglect are of great concern. Combined with fewer households offering to provide foster care, the region needs to offer more services to help families at risk of abuse and neglect build protective factors that reduce harm to children.

The region already has some of the State's highest levels of years of potential life lost. This important metric of health continues to worsen. Cuts to Medicaid are going to make it extremely difficult to reverse this trend. Cuts to Medicaid will force local residents spend more on healthcare or avoid needed care. These cuts will also burden local healthcare system with increasing costs to serve more uninsured patients. Cuts to Medicaid may also impact the Health Related Social Need (HRSN) services UCAN and others provide locally, reducing the availability of rent and utility assistance, tenancy supports, installation of home modifications, provision of home remediations, provision of climate devices, and nutritional benefits.

Given current challenges, and the potential for losses in funding to address them, it will be incumbent that local government, non-profits, faith-based entities and others:

- Implement the most efficient ways to offer the broadest range of services to address these issues,
- Develop effective partnerships and collaborative approaches to best meet regional needs,
- Respond promptly to emergent needs.