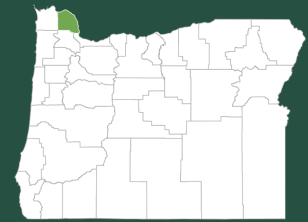




COLUMBIA COUNTY

Oregon Voices Data Summary



County Total Population

52,117

About the Summary

Oregon Voices began in summer of 2021 when The Ford Family Foundation invited 18,000 randomly selected households — 500 in each Oregon county — to complete a survey online or by mailing back a paper response. We then reached out to Ford Family friends and partners, encouraging them to participate and invite others to do the same. In total more than 4,300 Oregonians from all walks of life responded to the survey, generously sharing their honest reflections on the question we posed: *What is it like to live in your corner of the state?*

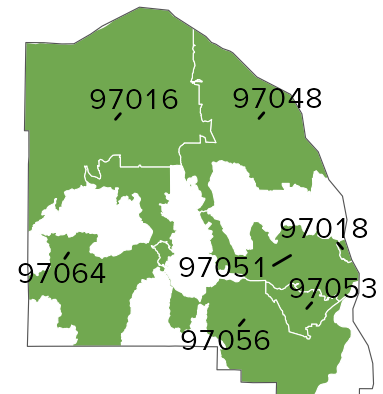
The following report provides a high-level summary of the survey data received from those who responded in Columbia County. Here the number of random household respondents outnumbered the Ford Family respondents. For clarity, the two data sets have been combined in the visualizations below, even though the two samples show differences in demographics and response patterns. Please interpret the findings with this in mind. Data have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

Total number of Columbia County respondents: 85
Random household sample: 51, Ford Family sample: 34

Key Highlights

- Columbia County has the longest stretch of the Columbia River of any county in Oregon. Respondents like their region’s location, as it is close enough to the amenities offered in the city, but far enough to have wide open spaces and a rural character.
- Respondents worry about the lack of living- and family-wage jobs that would allow people to work locally. They desire infrastructure repairs to roads and sidewalks and are concerned about the representation of local voices in state government decision making.
- Notably, a third of respondents from Columbia County report annual household incomes over \$100,000.

All reporting zip codes

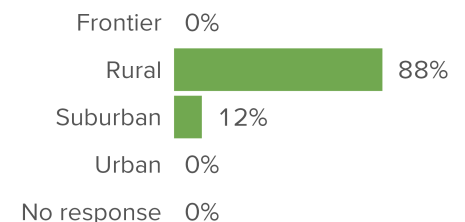


Top 3 reporting zip codes

- 1 97064
- 2 97056
- 3 97051

Rural/Urban

How respondents described their community, the immediate area where they live



Two of the early survey questions asked people to name something they appreciate or that concerns them about where they live. Their open-ended responses were coded into categories. These are the top two results for Columbia County.

What respondents **APPRECIATE** most about where they live



Community, People

Culture, relationships conflict, size, leadership, change



Natural Environment

Beauty, recreation, public land, parks, water, disasters, climate

What **CONCERNS** respondents most about where they live



Community, People

Culture, relationships conflict, size, leadership, change



Services/Economy

Housing, infrastructure, healthcare, education, jobs, industry, businesses, shopping, cultural events

“The beauty of the river, mountain views and wildlife”

“We do not have employment opportunities to allow folks to work local. There are not enough good restaurants or events. Our downtown has wonderful buildings that sit empty that could be used for events and to bring diverse activity and services to the area.”

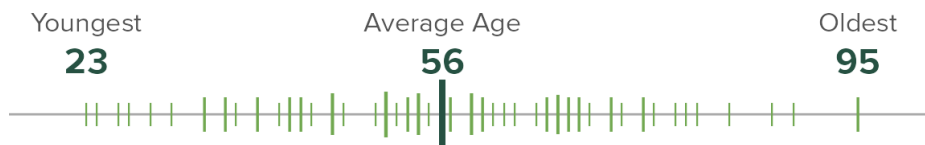
“Being able to have an effective voice when I choose to exercise it.”

“It’s a great place to live. It needs improvements in electric company billing, better cellular coverage, and better jobs that don’t revolve around mills and service industries that pay a living wage so folks can pay rent and bills.”

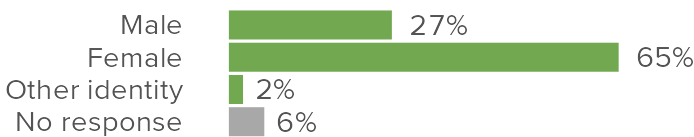
“I have nothing to complain about. I love it here and never want to leave.”

Respondent Demographics

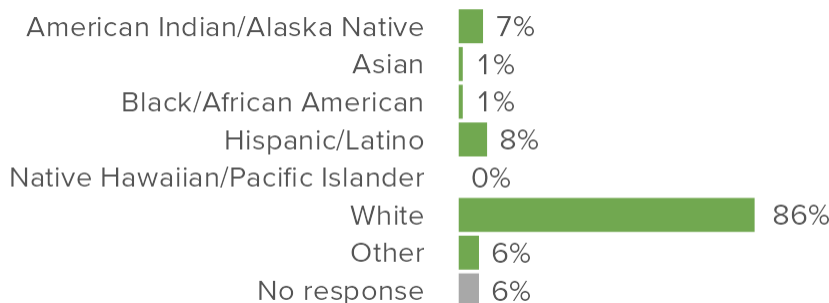
Age of respondents



Gender



Race/Ethnicity



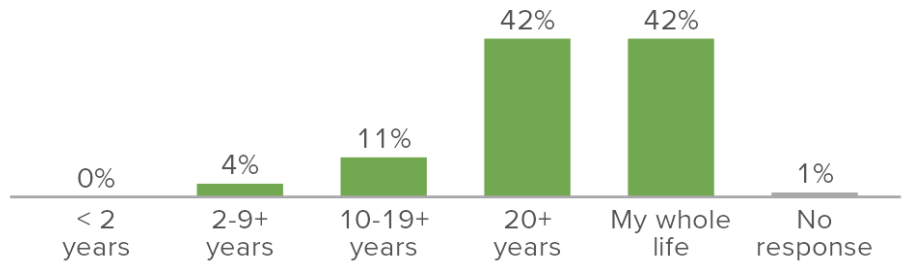
Percentages may sum to more than 100 if respondents selected multiple options.



Years living in Oregon

85%

of all respondents report living in Oregon for their whole life or 20 years or more



Homeownership

8 out of 10

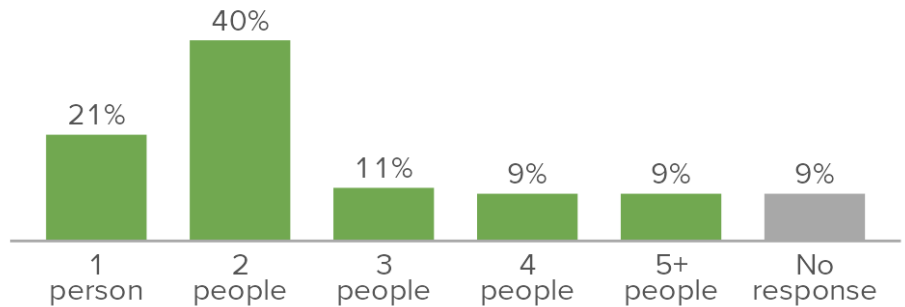
respondents own their home



Household size

2.5

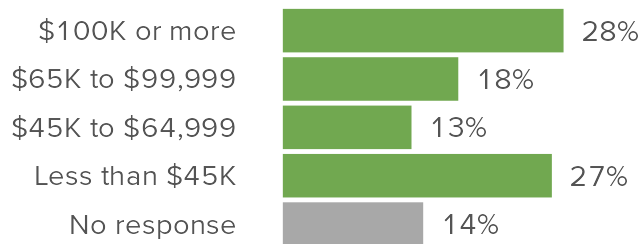
average number of people who live in the respondent's household



Household annual income

27%

of respondents reported household incomes falling under \$65K



Emergency funds

24%

of respondents would find it "difficult" or "very difficult" to get \$1,000 to pay for an emergency

Trouble making ends meet

53%

of respondents "agree" or "strongly agree" that "families are having trouble making ends meet"

Homelessness

34%

of respondents "agree" or "strongly agree" that "homelessness is a problem" in their community



5 out of 10

respondents
LOVE where they live



Community participation

“Everyone pretty much knows everyone and takes care of each other.”

“Lack of tolerance to change and diversity”

“Small community with many older neighborhoods where people care about and for each other. My neighbors actually know my name.”

“Everyone comes together in good or challenging times.”

“When I moved here it was very welcoming with close knit people working together to take pride in the community. After the flood, people worked together to put the town back together. People made sure their neighbors had what they needed. Then after the financial crash, it seems like a lot of people in the valley lost their homes and moved here or because housing was ‘affordable,’ not because they wanted to. It really seems like their attitude has been divisive and with a sense of entitlement. But perhaps that’s a sign of the times.”

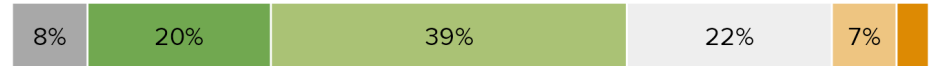
Respondents indicated the extent to which they perceive that people where they live participate in their community in the following ways:

Results below 5% are not labeled due to space constraints.

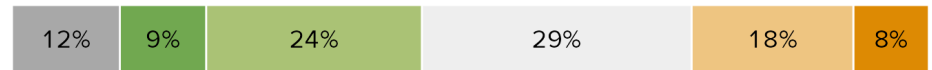
STRONGLY AGREE

STRONGLY DISAGREE

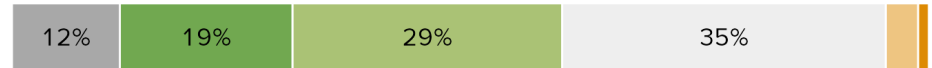
Take care of each other during hard times



Come together to solve community problems



Attend community events



Go to church



Welcome newcomers



Community traditions

47%

of respondents participate in community traditions or annual events

Pride in community

66%

of respondents are “often” or “always” proud to tell others where they live

Voting

79%

of respondents report that they “always” vote

Community service

45%

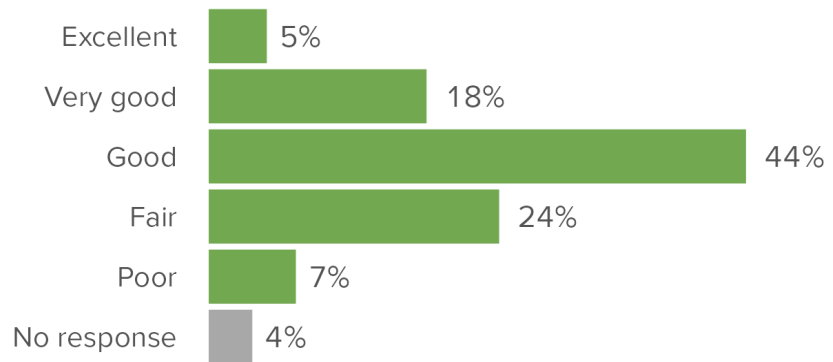
of respondents report that they volunteer at least once a month



Physical health

66%

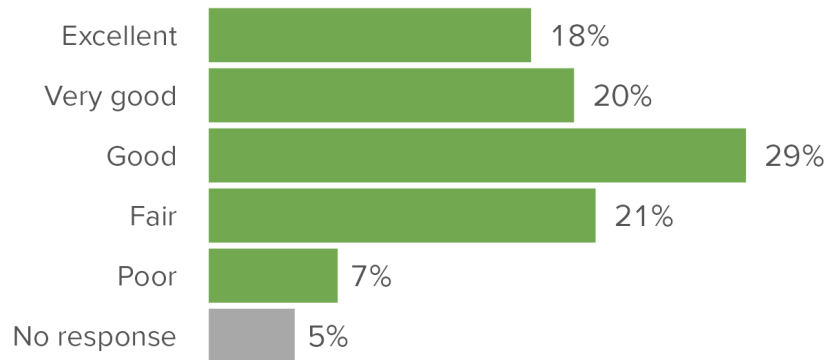
of respondents rated their physical health as “good” or better



Mental health

67%

of respondents rated their mental health as “good” or better



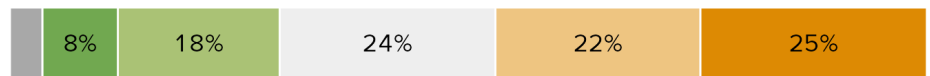
Medical and dental care

26%

of respondents “agree” or “strongly agree” that they have “enough medical and dental providers” in their community

STRONGLY AGREE

STRONGLY DISAGREE



Results below 5% are not labeled due to space constraints.

Child abuse and neglect

28%

of respondents “agree” or “strongly agree” that “child abuse and neglect is a significant problem” in their community”

Substance abuse

52%

of respondents “agree” or “strongly agree” that their community has “many residents struggling with substance abuse”

Mental illness

40%

of respondents “agree” or “strongly agree” that their community has “many residents struggling with mental illness”



Education

44%

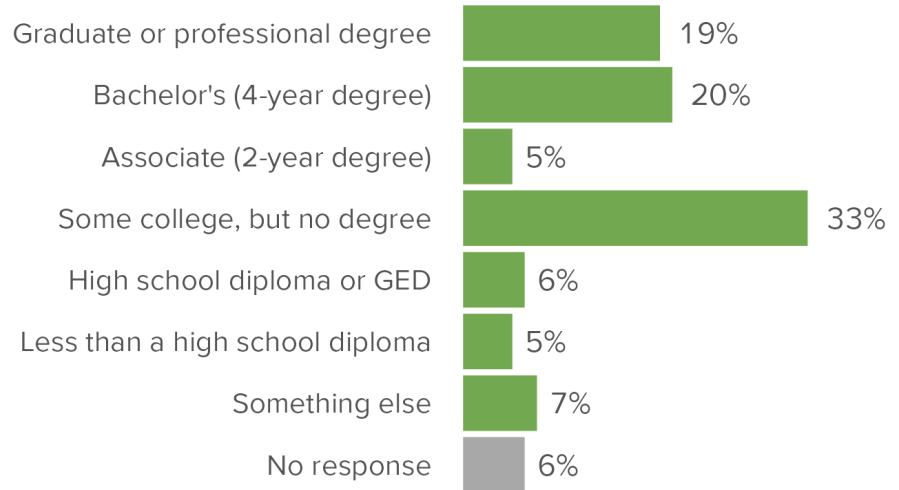
of respondents report having completed an associate degree or above

Students

4%

of respondents identified as a current student

Respondents' highest level of education completed



Employment

Wages

60%

of respondents “agree” or “strongly agree” that “jobs do not pay enough” in their community

Perception of unemployment

41%

of respondents “agree” or “strongly agree” that “a lot of people are unemployed” in their community

Self-employment

8%

of respondents identified as self-employed

Employment status of respondents

Employed	48%
Full-time	41%
Part-time	7%
Unemployed	11%
Looking for work	5%
Not looking for work	1%
Unable to work due to disability	5%
Other	36%
Homemaker/manage your home	6%
Retired	28%
Something else	2%
No response	5%

Due to rounding, percentages in grouped rows may differ from the sum of the individual rows below it.



Services

“Good internet is expensive and unreliable. Cell phone coverage is irregular because of the mountainous terrain, so there are null spots.”

“The recent surge in inflation is making life impossible for people to eat well if they are in the lower economic strata.”

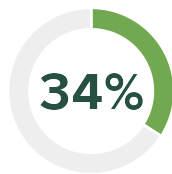
“While lacking many basics for living, we are close to urban areas that have more services available. For example, primary care providers are local but specialist[s] are located in the PDX and metro area.”

“My community, like many, need local jobs that pay enough to support a family, preferably in technology. Kids should be taught coding and STEM so we can develop as ready workforces for common future careers.”

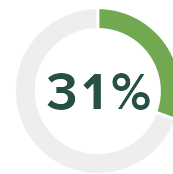
“Very nice community. Housing is way too expensive for young families. There is no hospital locally in Columbia County, which is a hardship for many elderly.”

Respondents who reported they “agree” or “strongly agree” the following services are available where they live:

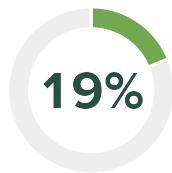
Good schools



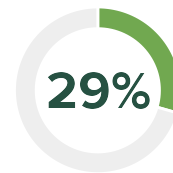
Enough places to shop



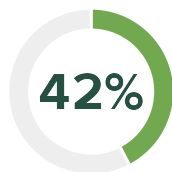
Affordable housing



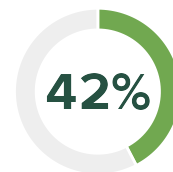
Good streets and roads



Reliable internet



Community-wide cell service



Healthy food

52%

of respondents “agree” or “strongly agree” that they have easy access to healthy foods

Top 3 places respondents get food for weekly meals

- 1 Grocery stores
- 2 Superstores
- 3 Restaurants

Lack of child care

40%

of respondents “agree” or “strongly agree” that “child care is hard to find”

Lack of places for youth to hang out

53%

of respondents “agree” or “strongly agree” that “youth do not have places to hang out”



For data summaries for each county in Oregon,
more research and to explore the data on your own, visit

orvoices.org.



Research conducted in partnership with ECONorthwest and
the Regional Research Institute for Human Services at Portland State University



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Oregon Voices. www.orvoices.org.

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