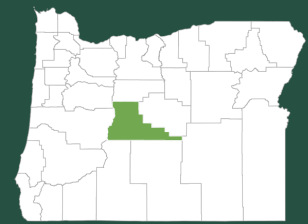




# DESCHUTES COUNTY

## Oregon Voices Data Summary



County Total Population

191,749

### 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?*

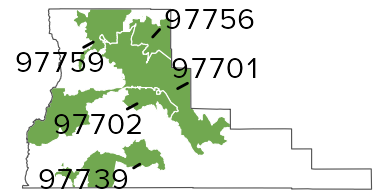
The following report provides a high-level summary of the survey data received from those who responded in Deschutes County. Here the number of Ford Family respondents outnumbered the random household respondents. For clarity, the two data sets have been combined in the visualizations below, even though 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 Deschutes County respondents: 144**  
Random household sample: 56, Ford Family sample: 88

### Key Highlights

- Deschutes County is home to Central Oregon Community College and Bend, one of Oregon’s fastest growing cities.
- Respondents from Deschutes County report enjoying a “small town feel” despite the rapid population growth and shifting political leanings.
- The natural beauty and abundant outdoor recreation drives tourism, yet survey respondents indicate that tourism is causing traffic, increasing political tensions and straining local resources, such as food and housing.
- Respondents want more reliable internet service.

### All reporting zip codes

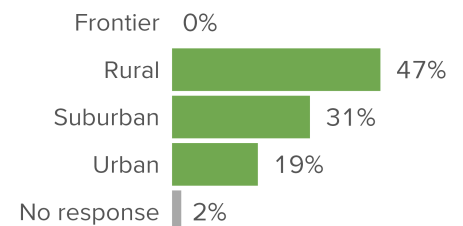


### Top 3 reporting zip codes

- 1 97703
- 2 97702
- 3 97756

### 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 Deschutes County.

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



**Natural Environment**

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



**Community, People**

Culture, relationships conflict, size, leadership, change

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

*“It’s a great town. Pretty landscapes, clean water, good weather.”*

*“We have so many options for outdoor activities. People are friendly. [It’s a] beautiful city.”*

*“One of the things I miss most about living in Central Oregon is the lack of any cultural events like live plays, classical music, choral music or orchestral music. It might determine if I continue living in this area.”*

*“I wish we had more restaurants with diverse food, more equity in our processes and our community, and a community vision. I love living here because of the access to nature it provides and because of my friends and family!”*

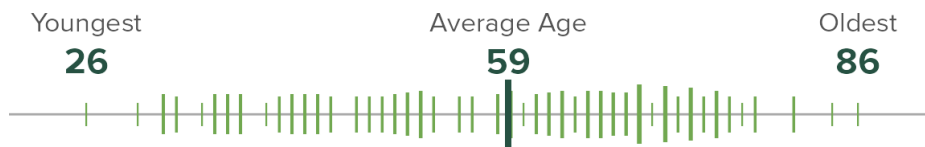
*“I’m concerned about growth that doesn’t consider environmental impact.”*

*“No good jobs and arrogant wealth”*

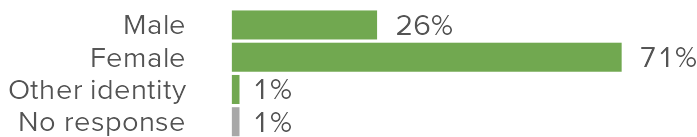
*“Climate change, specifically wildfires and smoke has been harmful to the community every summer for the past 5-10 years.”*

**Respondent Demographics**

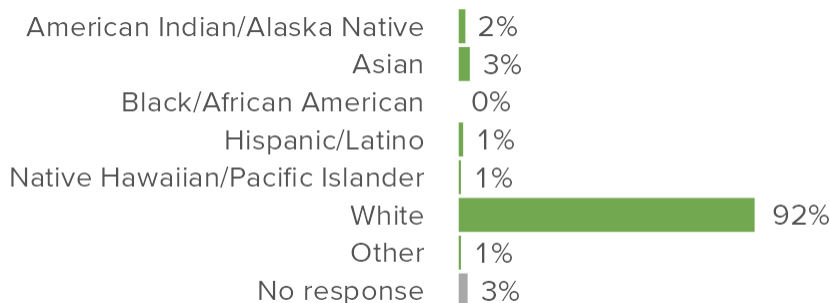
**Age of respondents**



**Gender**



**Race/Ethnicity**



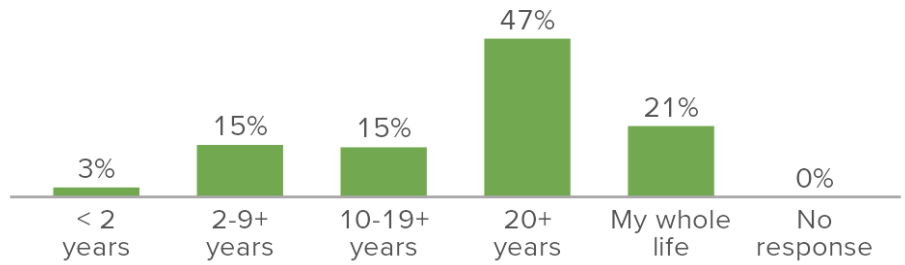
Percentages may sum to more than 100 if respondents selected multiple options.



**Years living in Oregon**

**67%**

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



**Homeownership**

**8 out of 10**

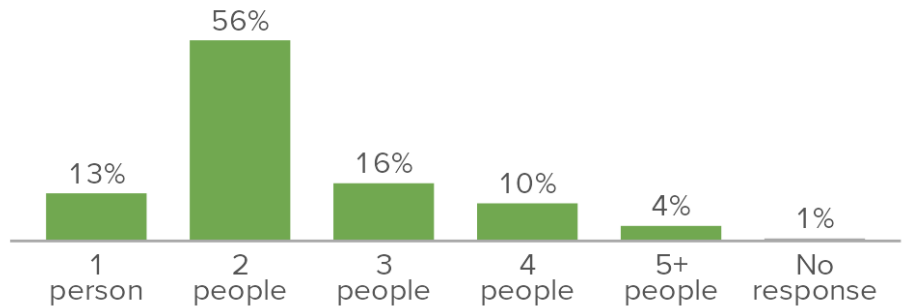
respondents own their home



**Household size**

**2.4**

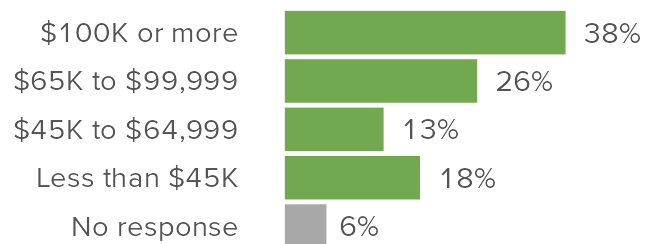
average number of people who live in the respondent's household



**Household annual income**

**18%**

of respondents reported household incomes falling under \$65K



**Emergency funds**

**9%**

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

**Trouble making ends meet**

**62%**

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

**Homelessness**

**88%**

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

*“As a tourist community, there’s a tension between serving wealthy tourists/part-time residents and full-time residents. This tension is evident everywhere from city council meetings to grocery stores. There’s not a strong sense of community among locals.”*

*“Insensitivity toward people of color and people who do not have a home.”*

*“I am in a cross-cultural, international, interracial marriage — I am consistently concerned about racism directed at my husband, children and family.”*

*“COVID-19 has been a very divisive issue in the community.”*

*“Great community involvement and financial contribution to the good of the community.”*

*“Everyone is so friendly and helpful.”*

*“Generally, people are nice and friendly. Lots love the mountains.”*

*“There is a core of folks who are engaged in efforts to build and maintain the community’s offerings.”*

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.

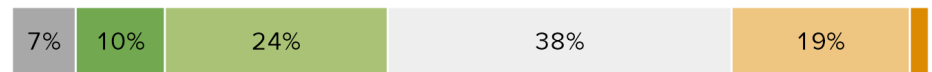
**STRONGLY AGREE**

**STRONGLY DISAGREE**

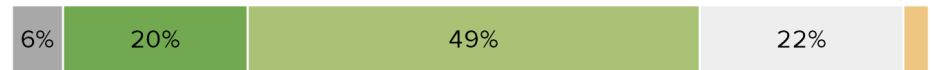
**Take care of each other during hard times**



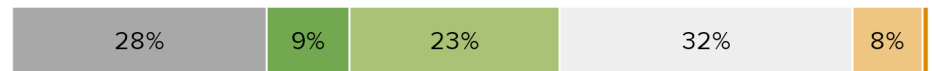
**Come together to solve community problems**



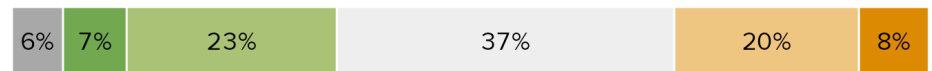
**Attend community events**



**Go to church**



**Welcome newcomers**



## Community traditions

**54%**

of respondents participate in community traditions or annual events

## Pride in community

**72%**

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

## Voting

**92%**

of respondents report that they “always” vote

## Community service

**50%**

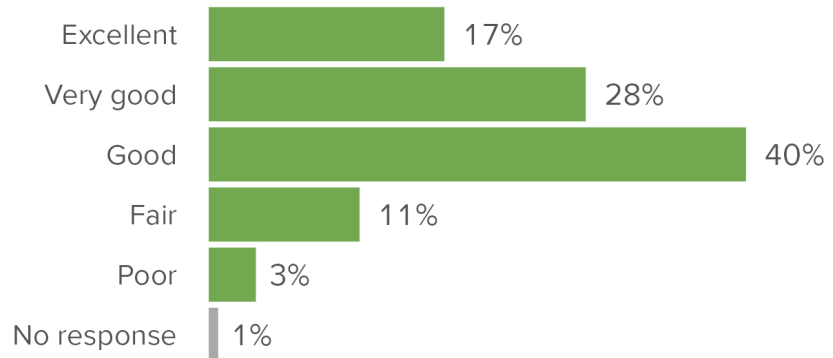
of respondents report that they volunteer at least once a month



**Physical health**

**85%**

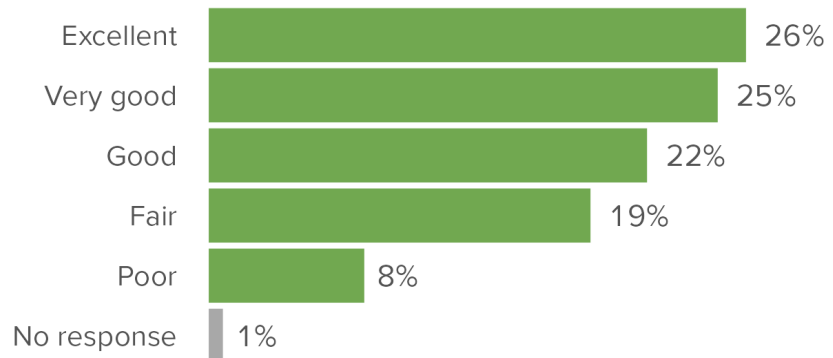
of respondents rated their physical health as “good” or better



**Mental health**

**73%**

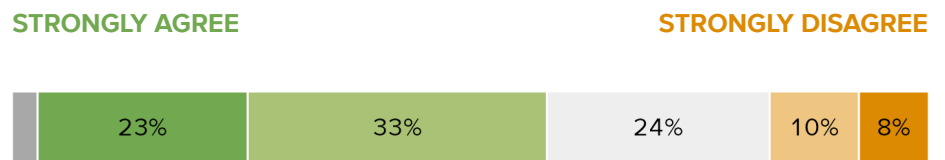
of respondents rated their mental health as “good” or better



**Medical and dental care**

**56%**

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



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

**Child abuse and neglect**

**31%**

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

**Substance abuse**

**37%**

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**

**83%**

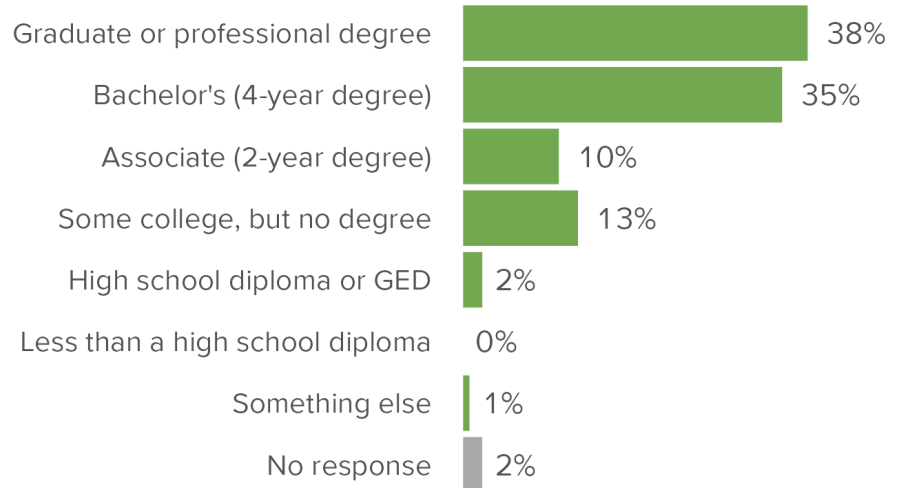
of respondents report having completed an associate degree or above

**Students**

**4%**

of respondents identified as a current student

**Respondents' highest level of education completed**



**Employment**

**Wages**

**67%**

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

**Perception of unemployment**

**30%**

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

**Self-employment**

**19%**

of respondents identified as self-employed

**Employment status of respondents**

<b>Employed</b>	<b>56%</b>
Full-time	45%
Part-time	11%
<b>Unemployed</b>	<b>5%</b>
Looking for work	3%
Not looking for work	0%
Unable to work due to disability	2%
<b>Other</b>	<b>38%</b>
Homemaker/manage your home	1%
Retired	33%
Something else	3%
<b>No response</b>	<b>1%</b>

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



**Services**

*“I don’t have access to high-quality internet at home. The internet at home is very low quality.”*

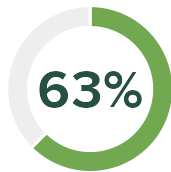
*“Extremely high housing costs; lack of housing choice; high rate of comparatively wealthy retirees live in the community, which makes it challenging for the needs of non-wealthy, working families to gain attention from elected officials.”*

*“I make more money now than I’ve ever made and cannot afford my own place to rent.”*

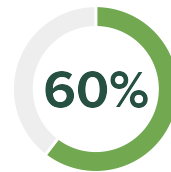
*“Bend has the only co-housing (intentional) community, which is so helpful for residents of all ages.”*

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

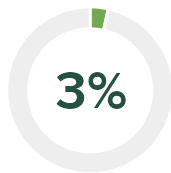
Good schools



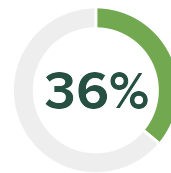
Enough places to shop



Affordable housing



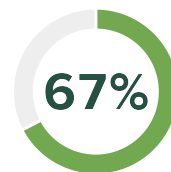
Good streets and roads



Reliable internet



Community-wide cell service



**Healthy food**

**78%**

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**

**59%**

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

**Lack of places for youth to hang out**

**33%**

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  
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April 2023

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*Oregon Voices*. [www.orvoices.org](http://www.orvoices.org).

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