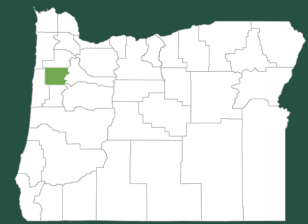




POLK COUNTY

Oregon Voices Data Summary



County Total Population

84,730

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?*

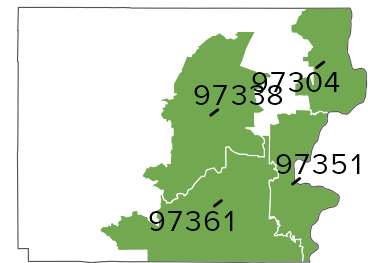
The following report provides a high-level summary of the survey data received from those who responded in Polk County. Here the number of random household respondents outnumbered the Ford Family respondents. For clarity, the two data sets have been combined in the visualizations below, even though the 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 Polk County respondents: 86
Random household sample: 46, Ford Family sample: 40

Key Highlights

- Polk County is home to the government headquarters of the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde.
- Respondents are overwhelmingly concerned about the prevalence of homelessness and unaffordable housing in their communities.
- Respondents have tight-knit relationships with immediate neighbors but distrust other groups, particularly along political lines.

All reporting zip codes

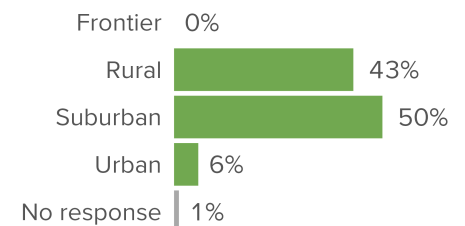


Top 3 reporting zip codes

- 1 97304
- 2 97338
- 3 97351

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 Polk County.

What respondents **APPRECIATE** 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

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



Services/Economy

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



Community, People

Culture, relationships conflict, size, leadership, change

“We have great river access, a small-town feel and a walkable downtown area.”

“There is some tension between growth and new opportunities and people who have lived here a long time not wanting to see change.”

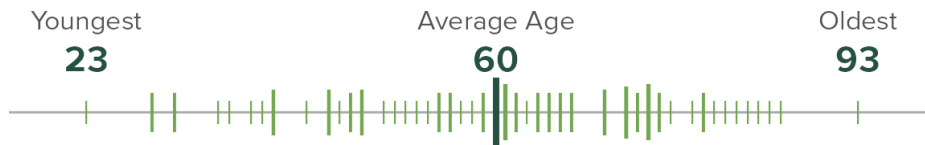
“I’m concerned by the lack of diversity.”

“I appreciate the uniqueness of a rural community that is home to a state university. This makes for a great and somewhat diverse community.”

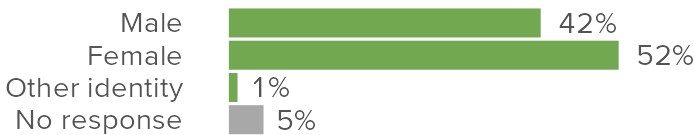
“There are clear divides in social/economic class in addition to racial divides.”

Respondent Demographics

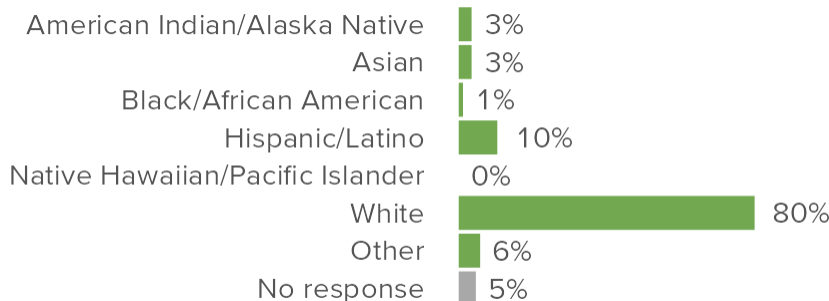
Age of respondents



Gender



Race/Ethnicity



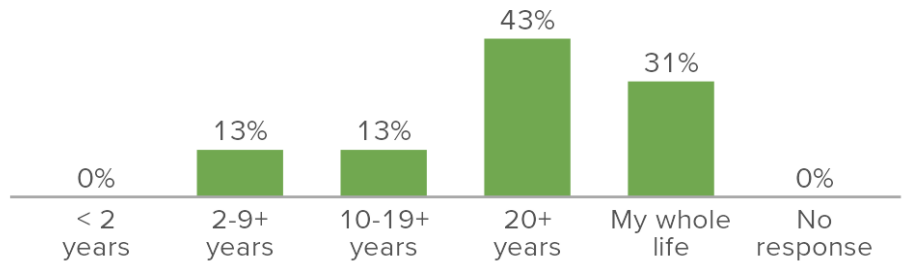
Percentages may sum to more than 100 if respondents selected multiple options.



Years living in Oregon

74%

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



Homeownership

8 out of 10

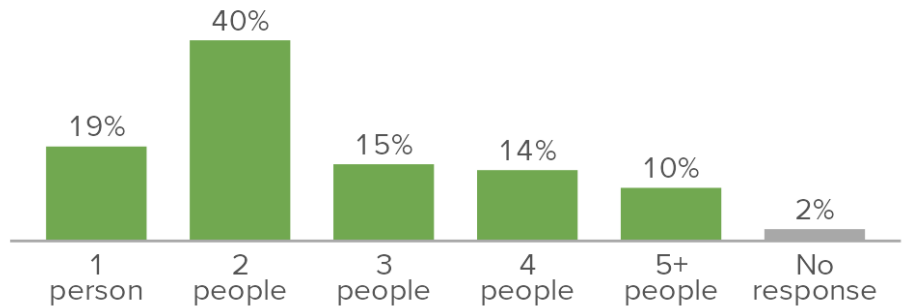
respondents own their home



Household size

2.6

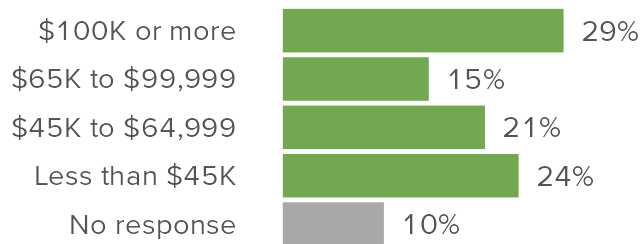
average number of people who live in the respondent's household



Household annual income

24%

of respondents reported household incomes falling under \$65K



Emergency funds

17%

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

Trouble making ends meet

51%

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

Homelessness

60%

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



2 out of 10

respondents
LOVE where they live



Community participation

“I love living in a small town where people know each other and are connected to each other.”

“I like small communities, but where I live has a hard time accepting people who are different. I would like to see more involvement by a larger swath of the community.”

“The presence of a university leads to a more open-minded populace than stereotypes might lead one to expect.”

“We are a tight knit community but with groups of opposing viewpoints.”

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



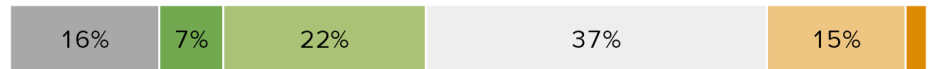
Attend community events



Go to church



Welcome newcomers



Community traditions

60%

of respondents participate in community traditions or annual events

Pride in community

57%

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

Voting

86%

of respondents report that they “always” vote

Community service

44%

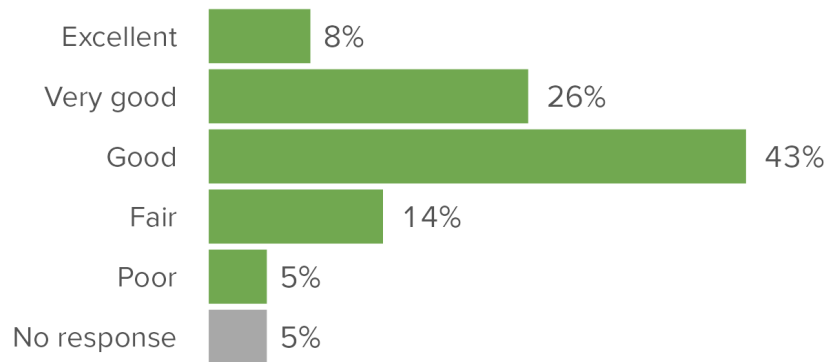
of respondents report that they volunteer at least once a month



Physical health

77%

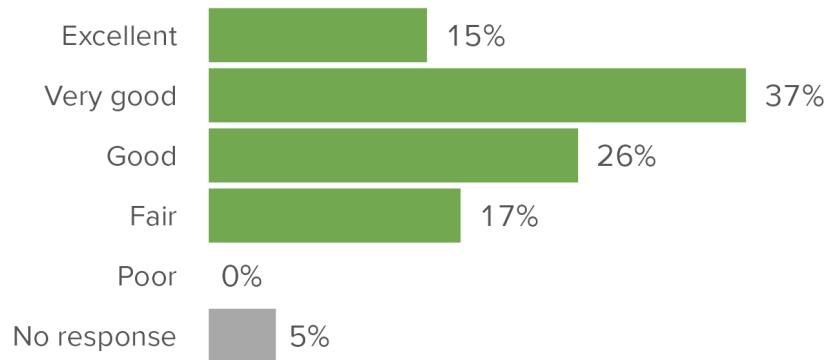
of respondents rated their physical health as “good” or better



Mental health

78%

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



Medical and dental care

49%

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

37%

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

Mental illness

38%

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



Education

70%

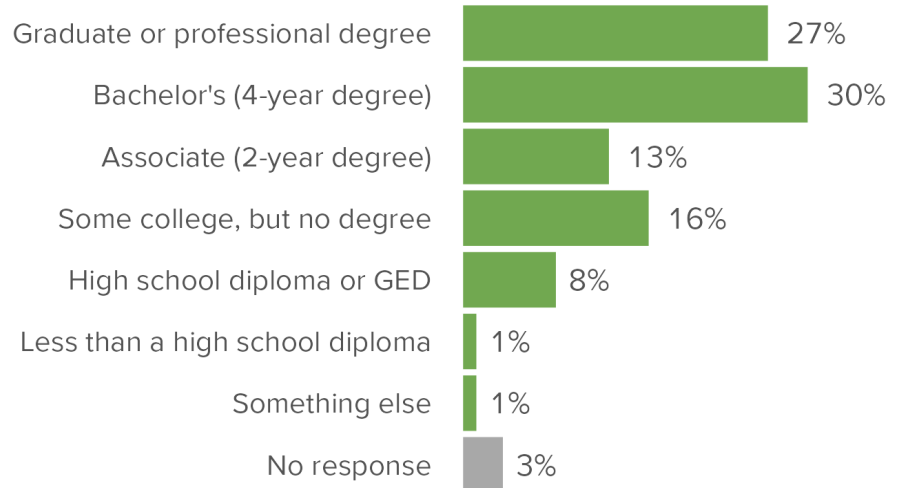
of respondents report having completed an associate degree or above

Students

2%

of respondents identified as a current student

Respondents' highest level of education completed



Employment

Wages

49%

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

Perception of unemployment

29%

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

Self-employment

14%

of respondents identified as self-employed

Employment status of respondents

Employed	59%
Full-time	48%
Part-time	12%
Unemployed	2%
Looking for work	1%
Not looking for work	0%
Unable to work due to disability	1%
Other	34%
Homemaker/manage your home	0%
Retired	33%
Something else	1%
No response	5%

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



Services

“I have access to clean and safe parks.”

“We need better public transit to surrounding communities. Many people have doctors and needs in Salem and public transit is inconvenient to utilize.”

“I see a reluctance to invest in the things that matter, like improvements to our schools or programs to help families who are struggling. Many of our families don’t make a living wage — especially with the high cost of housing.”

“Services in our area have declined tremendously since 2019: city, county, healthcare, child care, addiction recovery, even basic emergency services.”

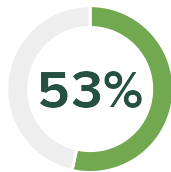
“We need more supermarkets, convenience stores, restaurants, etc. and infrastructure improvements — especially for our roads.”

“If rent gets much higher, I will be forced to live on the streets.”

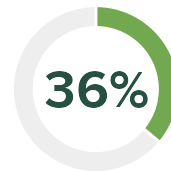
“It feels like there are not a lot of social services available here, particularly for teens. There is a lack of city-run recreation for kids, youth and families — swimming pools, sports fields — as compared to other communities of our size.”

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

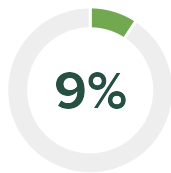
Good schools



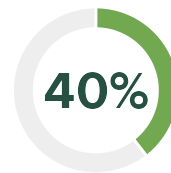
Enough places to shop



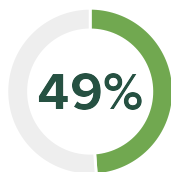
Affordable housing



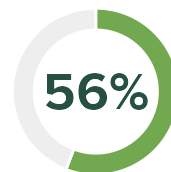
Good streets and roads



Reliable internet



Community-wide cell service



Healthy food

74%

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

35%

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

Lack of places for youth to hang out

57%

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



April 2023

Preferred citation:

The Ford Family Foundation. (2023). Oregon Voices Data Summary: Polk County.
Oregon Voices. www.orvoices.org.

Contact: orvoices@tfff.org



@FordFamilyFound
www.tfff.org