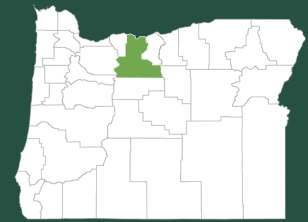




# WASCO COUNTY

## Oregon Voices Data Summary



County Total Population

**26,274**

### 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?*

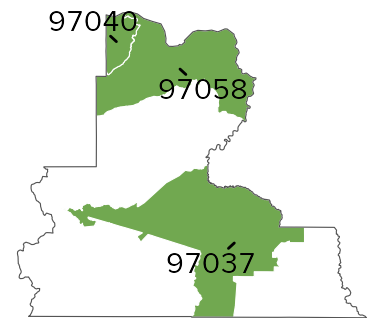
The following report provides a high-level summary of the survey data received from those who responded in Wasco County. Here the number of random household respondents outnumbered the Ford Family respondents. For clarity, the two data sets have been combined in the visualizations below, even though 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 Wasco County respondents: 85**  
Random household sample: 58, Ford Family sample: 27

### Key Highlights

- Located in the Columbia River gorge, Wasco County is home to Columbia Gorge Community College and half of the Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Reservation.
- Respondents express concerns about wildfire danger and climate change.
- Respondents love the natural beauty of the outdoors that surround them and find that people come together in times of need.

### All reporting zip codes

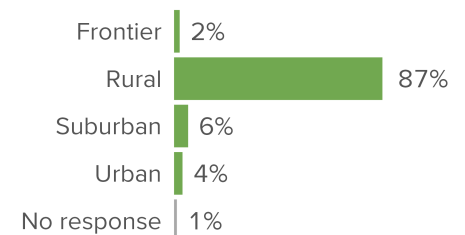


### Top 3 reporting zip codes

- 1 97058
- 2 97037
- 3 97040

### 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 Wasco 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



**Services/Economy**

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



**Community, People**

Culture, relationships conflict, size, leadership, change

*“I love seeing the Milky Way and experiencing total silence when in my yard most of the time.”*

*“I understand everything changes, but the cost of housing and taxes for housing have gone crazy over the last few years. Wages have not kept up so that families can afford child care, housing and food.”*

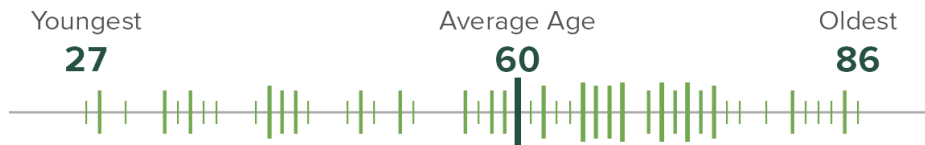
*“I’m concerned that our fire danger is increasing.”*

*“There’s a lack of investment in the community.”*

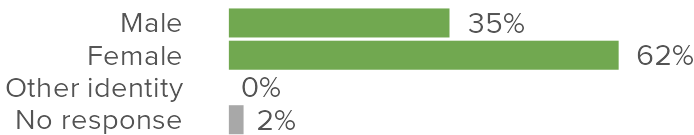
*“I appreciate the scenic beauty and easy access to the outdoors.”*

**Respondent Demographics**

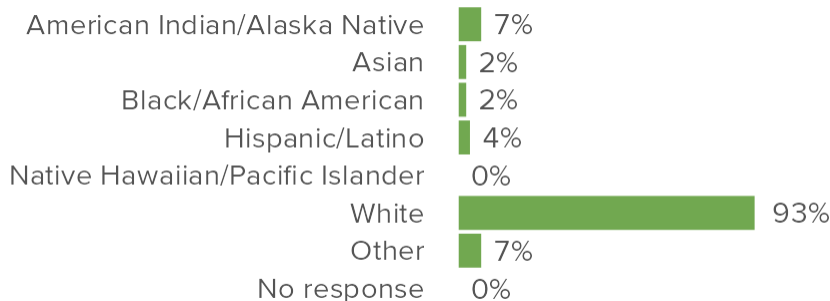
**Age of respondents**



**Gender**



**Race/Ethnicity**



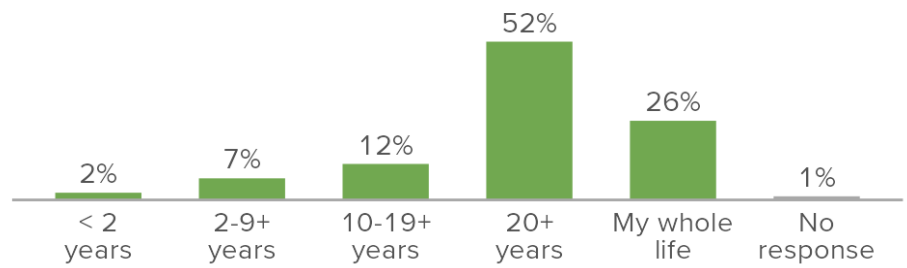
Percentages may sum to more than 100 if respondents selected multiple options.



**Years living in Oregon**

**78%**

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



**Homeownership**

**9 out of 10**

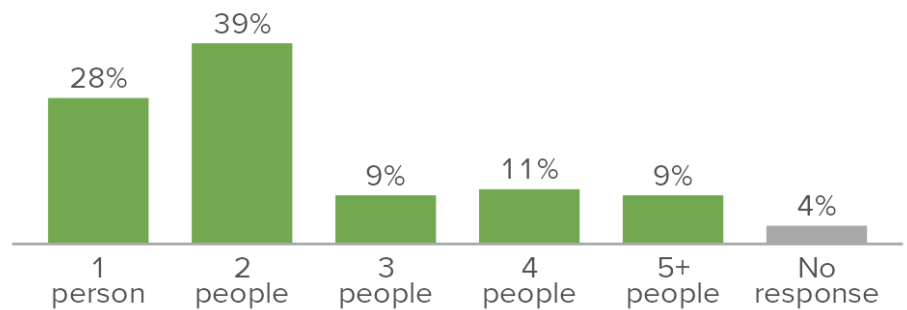
respondents own their home



**Household size**

**2.4**

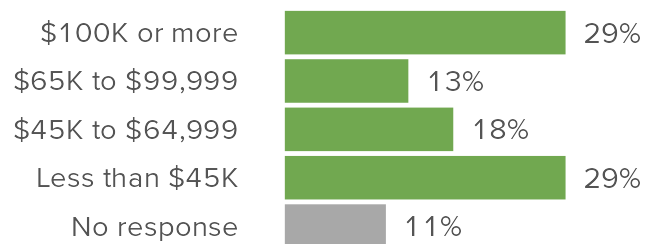
average number of people who live in the respondent's household



**Household annual income**

**29%**

of respondents reported household incomes falling under \$65K



**Emergency funds**

**14%**

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

**Trouble making ends meet**

**61%**

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

**Homelessness**

**66%**

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

*“It’s a smaller community, so it has a feeling of being connected, yet it’s large enough that anonymity is still possible.”*

*“We have the potential to help many different people work together in a gorgeous Oregon landscape.”*

*“Neighbors help their neighbors.”*

*“Being a rural community, people reach out to help others. People are very generous with their time and money.”*

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**

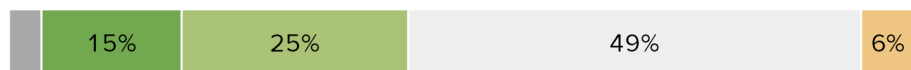
### Take care of each other during hard times



### Come together to solve community problems



### Attend community events



### Go to church



### Welcome newcomers



## Community traditions

**51%**

of respondents participate in community traditions or annual events

## Pride in community

**67%**

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

## Voting

**92%**

of respondents report that they “always” vote

## Community service

**45%**

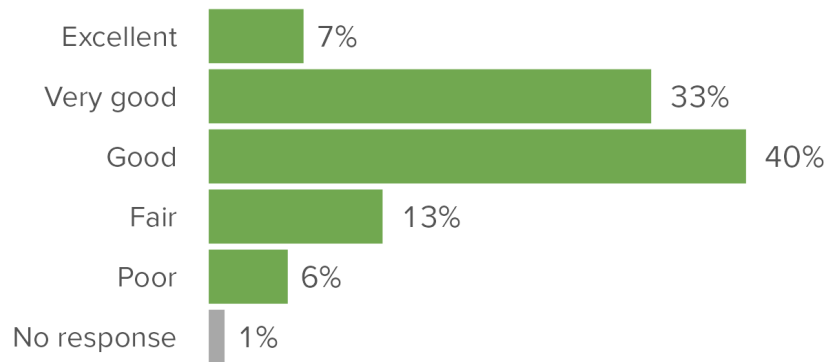
of respondents report that they volunteer at least once a month



**Physical health**

**80%**

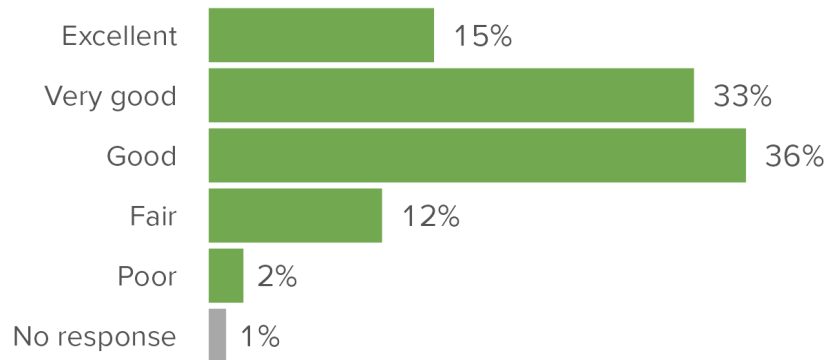
of respondents rated their physical health as “good” or better



**Mental health**

**85%**

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



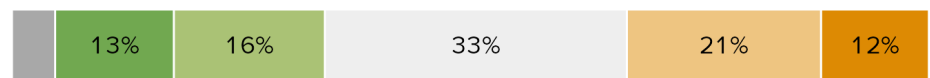
**Medical and dental care**

**29%**

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**

**25%**

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

**Substance abuse**

**56%**

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

**Mental illness**

**49%**

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



**Education**

**61%**

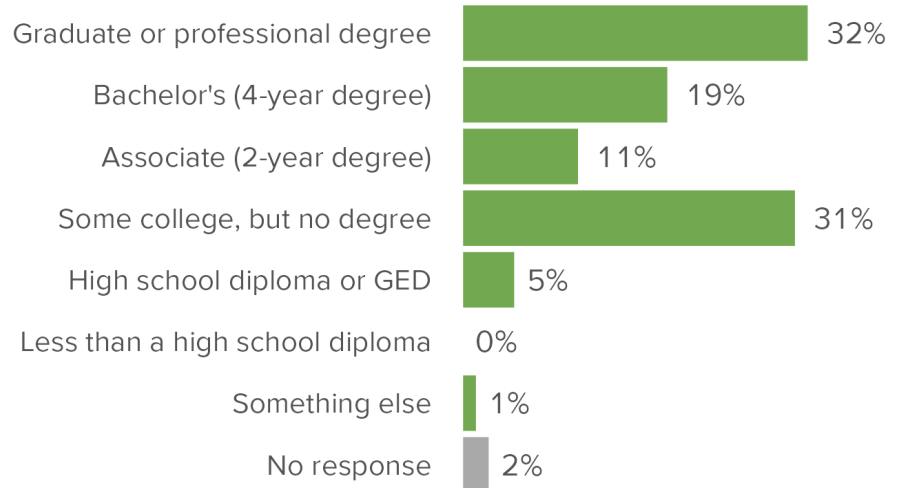
of respondents report having completed an associate degree or above

**Students**

**1%**

of respondents identified as a current student

**Respondents' highest level of education completed**



**Employment**

**Wages**

**53%**

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

**Perception of unemployment**

**35%**

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

**Self-employment**

**25%**

of respondents identified as self-employed

**Employment status of respondents**

<b>Employed</b>	<b>51%</b>
Full-time	33%
Part-time	18%
<b>Unemployed</b>	<b>4%</b>
Looking for work	1%
Not looking for work	1%
Unable to work due to disability	1%
<b>Other</b>	<b>42%</b>
Homemaker/manage your home	1%
Retired	35%
Something else	6%
<b>No response</b>	<b>4%</b>

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



**Services**

*“We are unable to grow due to zoning restrictions placed on us. This is exacerbating an already critical housing shortage.”*

*“If you want to go shopping for groceries, clothes or any parts, you have a 40-mile round trip to get anything.”*

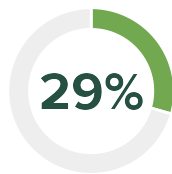
*“We really need better internet access.”*

*“Homelessness is being somewhat addressed. School meals are provided through the year.”*

*“There is a worker shortage in all sectors with many positions unfilled and businesses either reduce their hours or close.”*

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

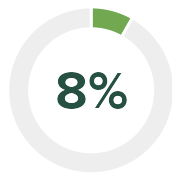
Good schools



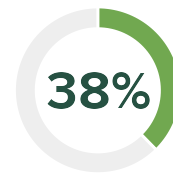
Enough places to shop



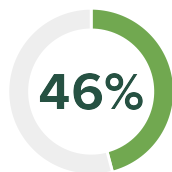
Affordable housing



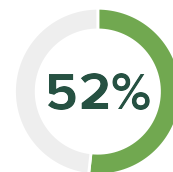
Good streets and roads



Reliable internet



Community-wide cell service



**Healthy food**

**58%**

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 Restaurants
- 3 Backyard or local garden

**Lack of child care**

**56%**

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

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

**69%**

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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