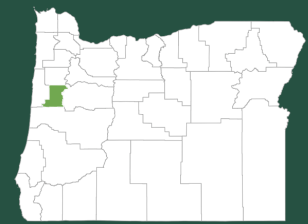




BENTON COUNTY

Oregon Voices Data Summary



County Total Population

92,168

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?*

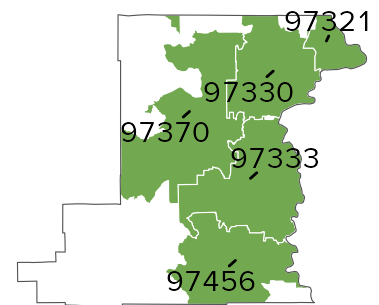
The following report provides a high-level summary of the survey data received from those who responded in Benton County. Here the number of random household respondents outnumbered the Ford Family respondents. For clarity, the two data sets have been combined in the visualizations below, even though 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 Benton County respondents: 114
Random household sample: 75, Ford Family sample: 39

Key Highlights

- Benton County is home to the state’s land grant university, Oregon State University, where over 35,000 students are enrolled. Respondents appreciate the university’s impact on the community.
- Respondents appreciate their community’s easily accessible, walkable and bike-friendly transportation options and are concerned that population growth is placing a strain on infrastructure and traffic.
- Respondents indicated significant concern about the increase in the cost of living and unaffordable housing, and nearly 75% of respondents echoed that “homelessness is a challenge” where they live.

All reporting zip codes

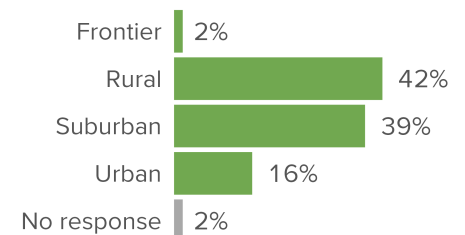


Top 3 reporting zip codes

- 1 97330
- 2 97333
- 3 97370

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 Benton 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



Services/Economy

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



Community, People

Culture, relationships conflict, size, leadership, change

“The gap between the professional class and service sector class is widening. We have many more houseless families who seek shelter in public parks and forest land.”

“Great neighbors, greenspace, and access to what Oregon and our region have to offer.”

“Overpopulation, overdevelopment, noise, stress and strain”

“Life is hard for most people and there should be a fairer wealth distribution. How can anyone live on \$1,500 a month if rent is \$1,200?”

“High education levels, cultural and outdoor opportunities, tolerance of diversity, and science and environmental awareness”

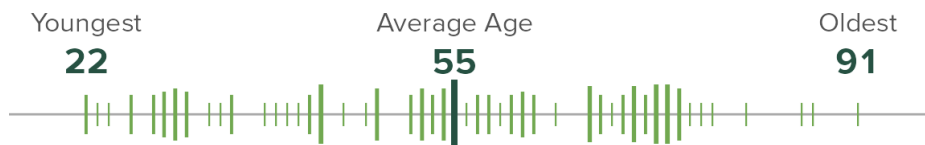
“Constantly overrun by city and urban voters who affect our quality of life with their ideas.”

“Many of our youth are struggling with depression, anxiety and other mental health issues exacerbated by the pandemic.”

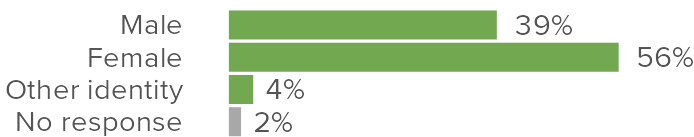
“Small town, beautiful area, friendly people”

Respondent Demographics

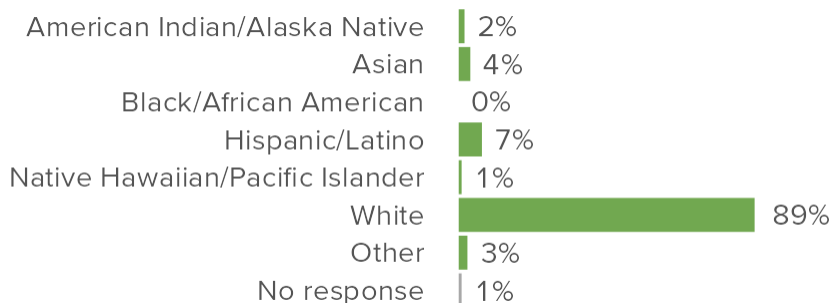
Age of respondents



Gender



Race/Ethnicity



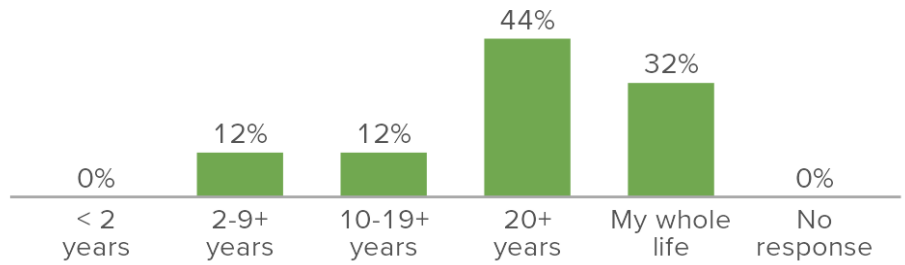
Percentages may sum to more than 100 if respondents selected multiple options.



Years living in Oregon

75%

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



Homeownership

7 out of 10

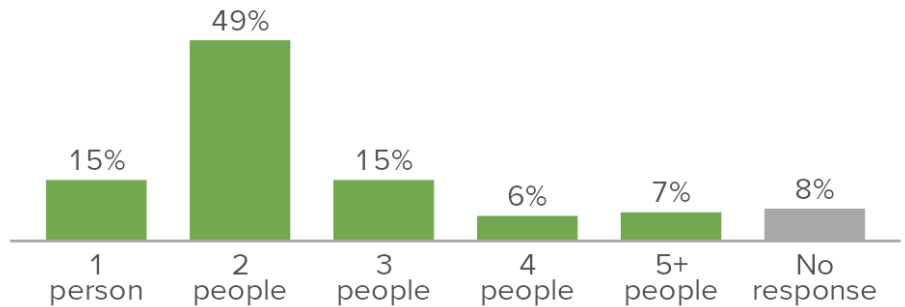
respondents own their home



Household size

2.4

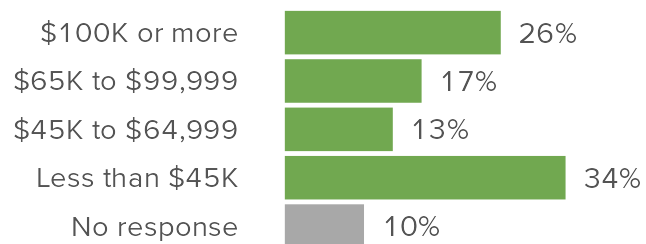
average number of people who live in the respondent's household



Household annual income

34%

of respondents reported household incomes falling under \$65K



Emergency funds

16%

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

Trouble making ends meet

46%

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

Homelessness

72%

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

“There is a strong sense of community and the way people take care of each other, including disadvantaged members of the community.”

“Everyone is always eager to chat when walking around the neighborhood, and there is generally a sense of belonging.”

“We are a privileged community — well educated, stable finances, active retired people, positive view of the world — in general. What distresses me is the increase in uncivil discourse and behavior, even here and much more in other parts of the state. That we are a less civil society and that individuals seem to have less regard for how we are tied together concerns me for our future.”

“There seems to be new growth and energy in this small rural town that has become a bedroom community.”

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

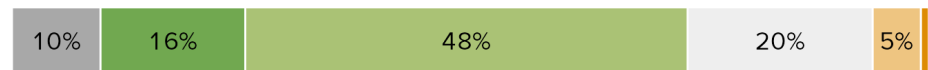
Take care of each other during hard times



Come together to solve community problems



Attend community events



Go to church



Welcome newcomers



Community traditions

46%

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

85%

of respondents report that they “always” vote

Community service

44%

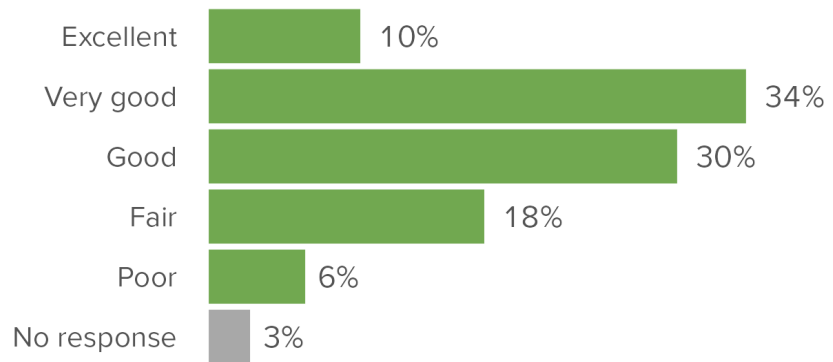
of respondents report that they volunteer at least once a month



Physical health

74%

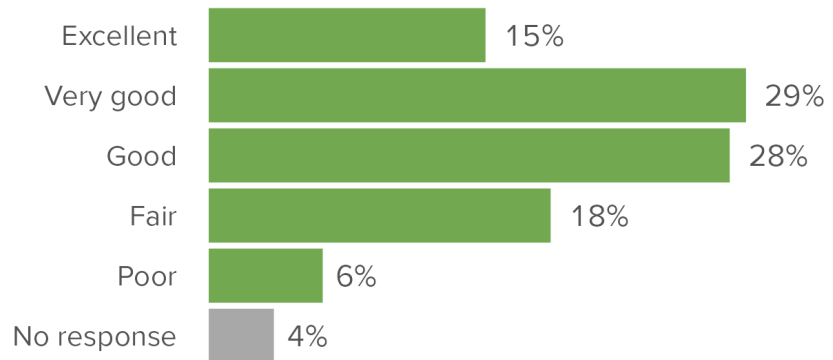
of respondents rated their physical health as “good” or better



Mental health

72%

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



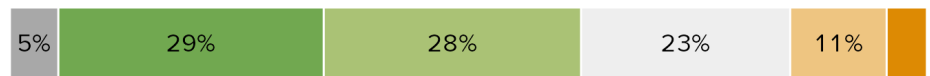
Medical and dental care

57%

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

23%

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

Substance abuse

32%

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

Mental illness

33%

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



Education

80%

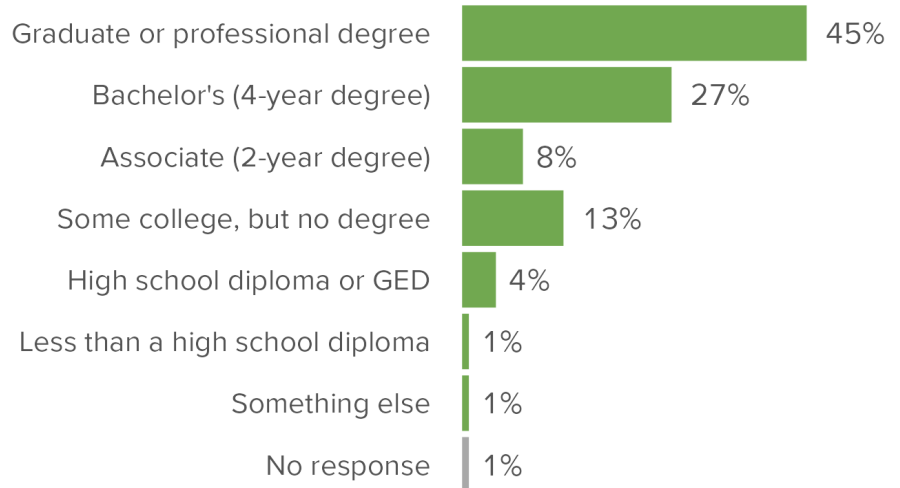
of respondents report having completed an associate degree or above

Students

7%

of respondents identified as a current student

Respondents' highest level of education completed



Employment

Wages

46%

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

Perception of unemployment

19%

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

Self-employment

16%

of respondents identified as self-employed

Employment status of respondents

Employed	56%
Full-time	44%
Part-time	12%
Unemployed	8%
Looking for work	4%
Not looking for work	2%
Unable to work due to disability	2%
Other	34%
Homemaker/manage your home	2%
Retired	30%
Something else	3%
No response	2%

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



Services

“I feel that mental health services for children and adolescents are underfunded and simply not available at the level they need to be.”

“En ocasiones no completo para el pago de la renta.” (“Sometimes I do not have enough money to pay rent.”)

“I would like to have more department stores in Corvallis and restaurants like Olive Garden or Texas Roadhouse and more housing in rural areas where there could be trails and a place to garden.”

“No real internet options”

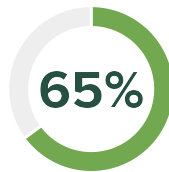
“Lack of basic needs jobs, housing and quality education”

“Jobs do not pay enough for the cost of living in this community.”

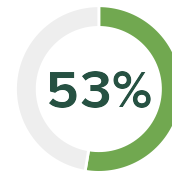
“We lack supports for the growing number [of] Latino families. All local jobs are either agricultural work or in the service industry, meaning they are low paying.”

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

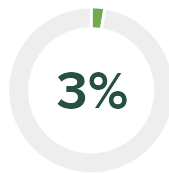
Good schools



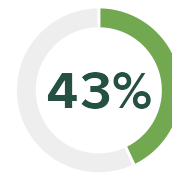
Enough places to shop



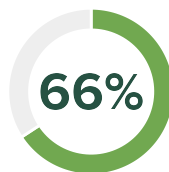
Affordable housing



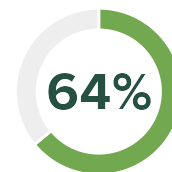
Good streets and roads



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 Restaurants
- 3 Backyard or local garden

Lack of child care

39%

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

Lack of places for youth to hang out

30%

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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