



Jackson County  
Oregon



# Community Needs Assessment 2009

Working together to build a community where people  
share skills and resources to shape its own future.

# **JACKSON COUNTY COMMUNITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT January 2009**

## **I. INTRODUCTION:**

ACCESS, Inc, the Community Action Agency for Jackson County, Oregon provides various services to seniors, people with disabilities, low-income individuals and families, as well as the general population. In developing a Service Delivery Plan for Jackson County for the 2009-2011 biennium, ACCESS assessed the status of low and moderate-income individuals and families in Jackson County Oregon.

A Community Planning Committee (CPC) was established including representatives from Jackson County Mental Health, Jackson County Commission on Children & Families, City of Medford, The Salvation Army, United Way, and ACCESS, Inc. The CPC worked together to produce two separate surveys, one for clients/customers and one for service providers.

The Committee distributed surveys to human service providers and agencies throughout Jackson County requesting agencies to survey their clients as well as participate in the agency survey. The Committee felt that seeking information from both consumers and service providers would provide a broad perspective of critical community needs from both points of view.

40 agencies participated in the survey. 1,404 clients receiving services from participating agencies completed surveys. This report details the findings from those two surveys.

## **II. METHODOLOGY:**

This report provides information on the current most critical needs identified by both survey groups. A copy of the survey instruments sent to consumers and agencies is contained in the Appendix. Surveys were distributed with instructions by mail and email in addition to:

- In person at various community forums including the Jackson County Human Services Consortium and Jackson County Homeless Task Force.
- WebPages links
- Survey Monkey

Clients receiving services from participating agencies were asked to respond to the simple one-page consumer survey. Agencies were asked to complete the agency survey.

Surveys were designed to gather general information about community needs and to prioritize services based on responses from consumers and agencies to open-ended questions. The data was collected during November and December 2008. Raw data from the study was compiled from the surveys and reviewed by the CPC.

### III. CONSUMER SURVEY:

#### A. General Demographic Information of Survey and Number of Respondents

The following information highlights general demographic information gathered from the consumer survey. 1,404 surveys were completed by consumers.

Gender (1,400)	Age (1,321)	Employment (1,296)	Race (1,361)
67% - Female 33% - Male	0-17----- 3 % 18-23 --- 12 % 24-44 --- 49 % 45-54 --- 13 % 55-69 --- 13 % 70+ ----- 10 %	Employed ----- 36 % Unemployed -- 64 %	81 % - White 12 % - Hispanic/Latino 2 % - Black/African American 2 % - Am. Indian/Alaska Native 2 % - Multi Racial -1 % - Asian

#### Household Income:

Household Monthly Income (1,336 Responses)		Source of Income (1,170 Responses)	
0-\$500	22 %	Employment only	38 %
\$501-\$1,000	33 %	SSI	21 %
\$1,001-\$1,500	24 %	Social Security	14 %
\$1,501-\$2,000	12 %	No income	8 %
\$2,001-\$2,500	5 %	TANF	8 %
Over \$2,501	4 %	Employment + other source	4 %
		Unemployment Insurance	4 %
		Pension	2 %
		General Assistance	- 1%

#### Household Composition (1,145 responses)

Adults reported in household		Children reported in household (under 18)	
1 Adult	49 %	No Children	36 %
2 Adults	38 %	1 Child	24 %
3 Adults	7 %	2 Children	21 %
4 Adults	4 %	3 Children	12 %
5 Adults or more	2 %	4 Children	4 %
		5 Children or more	3 %

#### Working Poor

- **38%** of households report employment only as their only source of income. Up from **21%** in 2007.

#### Which Most Closely Reflects You?

1593 responses are tabulated below. The majority of all clients responding to the survey indicated the following that most closely reflects their situation:

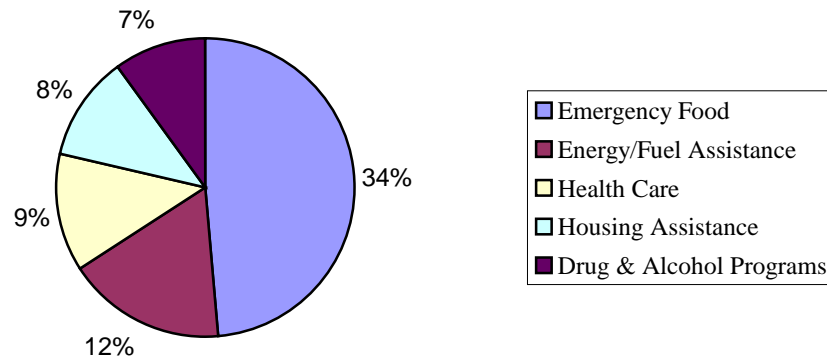
- **58 percent** indicated that they are low-income
- **22 percent** indicated that they are disabled
- **15 percent** indicated that they are seniors, and
- **5 percent** indicated that they are youth

## B. Consumer Question Responses:

### 1) During the last year, what service(s) have you received? (check all that apply)

There were 3,430 responses to this question and food assistance is identified as the number one service sought by consumers in need in our community.

#### The top five most sought after services in 2008:



#### Additional services sought the most during 2008:

- **6 percent** reported transportation
- **6 percent** reported mental health services
- **5 percent** reported childcare
- **5 percent** reported disability services
- **3 percent** reported financial counseling

The purpose of this question was to identify what are the most sought after services in our community. During the last year food assistance was the number one service received by consumers from agencies and organizations in Jackson County followed by energy assistance, housing and health care. These local needs are substantiated by other assessments conducted including the Oregon Food Bank's Hunger Factors Assessment

Each biennium the Oregon Food Bank (OFB) releases annual statistics for the OFB Network that looks at the state of hunger in Oregon. A Hunger Factors Assessment (HFA) is conducted to determine the economic, social, health, and other factors that combine to create the need for food assistance. The Jackson County emergency food pantry network participates in the studies. In the most recent report released by OFB for July 1, 2006 through June 30, 2007, OFB distributed almost 56 million pounds of food statewide. It is estimated that 192,000 people in Oregon eat meals from emergency food boxes each month. In Jackson County, it is estimated that more than 8,800 people eat meals from emergency food boxes each month.

The statewide survey found:

- **49%** of the households reported having children
- **37%** of those receiving emergency food are children.

According to the actual unduplicated numbers of ACCESS clients receiving assistance from Food Share during 2007, **38%** were children between the ages of 0-17. Most of the adult recipients of food are working, retired, or disabled.

Additional findings from the statewide OFB 2006 Hunger Factors Survey:

- **47%** of households had at least one member working. Up from **43%** in 2004 and **37%** in 1996.
- **30%** had one or more members working full-time. Up from **26%** in 2004 and **24%** in 2000.

**Hunger is an income issue:**

- **33%** of households reported incomes less than **50%** of Federal Poverty Line (FPL).
- **78%** of households reported incomes less than **100%** of the FPL.
- **38%** cite higher wages as critical to improving their situation.

100 percent of federal poverty is about \$21,200 for a family of four. The Economic Policy Institute created guidelines for calculating a basic family budget for essentials such as food, housing, childcare, and health insurance. Using the calculations for a typical Oregon family, a basic family budget is about 215 percent of federal poverty or \$43,116 for a family of four.

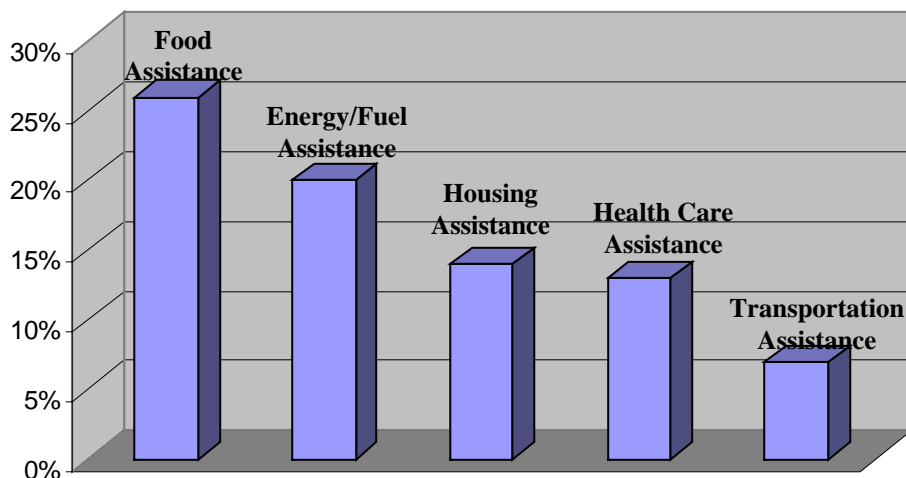
According to the most recent Census Bureau data for Jackson County, the median household income in Jackson County is \$43,446. More than 32,000 families in Jackson County earn less than \$35,000 and are trying to survive on well below 200 percent of the federal poverty line needed to sustain a family of four.

The largest group served continues to be two-parent families followed by individuals, single parent female, and couples with no children. **52%** of households report that they receive food stamps. **64%** say their monthly allotment lasts two weeks or less.

The need for emergency food boxes in Jackson County has dramatically increased over the past five years from 29,261 in 2003 to 38,473 in 2008. This is a **31.5%** increase.

**2) List the top three services you need the most. (Open-ended)**

There were 2,103 responses to this question and again food assistance is identified as the number one service needed the most by consumers in need in our community. The area identified are as follows:



### Additional services needed the most:

- **4 percent** of respondents reported childcare
- **3 percent** of respondents reported financial counseling and assistance
- **3 percent** of respondents reported mental health services
- **2 percent** of respondents reported drug and alcohol programs
- **1 percent** of respondents reported children's service

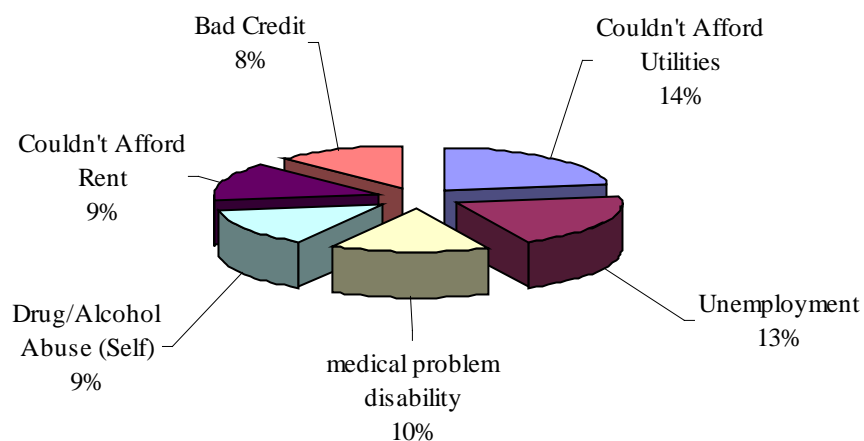
The top five (5) responses to this question should not be a surprise. These facts point to the importance of continuing to provide assistance with food, energy, and housing needs. Also health care and transportation are critical areas of need when working with low-income citizens including seniors, disabled, and the homeless population.

Medical-related concerns facing the populations we serve including the seniors and disabled is nothing new. Many lack health insurance and delay care. Some additional data from the HFA shows us:

- **38%** of adults in surveyed households had no health insurance.
- **20%** of children in surveyed households had no health insurance.
- **49%** of households indicate that they delay filling medical prescriptions due to cost.
- **58%** report medical/hospital debt.
- **24%** say that improved health could help prevent another crisis.

### 3) What caused you to need service(s)? (check all that apply)

There were 2,851 responses to this question. The following data highlights the top responses why people seek services in our community:



### Additional causes of why services were needed in 2008:

- **6 percent** of respondents reported domestic violence
- **5 percent** of respondents reported transportation
- **5 percent** of respondents reported criminal history
- **4 percent** of respondents reported drug and alcohol use (others in the home)

The primary purpose of this question was to determine from a consumer's perspective what caused them to seek services. This may help us understand they see as needed that are not available in our community.

## IV: AGENCY SURVEY

### A. General Agency Profile Information

The agency survey was designed to provide a different perspective of community needs based on service provider's experience in providing critical human services. 40 agencies participated in the survey and the following information summarizes their responses:

#### Primary services provided by participating organizations:

The purpose of this question was to ascertain the type of services participating agencies provide. As detailed in the responses, a wide range of service providers participated in this study. This provides a good overall sampling from a multitude of agencies in the community providing many different types of services:

Housing Services	Youth Development	Mental Health Services
Social Services	Food	Addiction Recovery (A&D)
Legal Services	Advocacy	After School Program
Counseling, Case Management	Senior & Disability Services	Dental Care
Education / Training	Health Services	Family Services
Critical Needs Grants	Domestic Violence	Disaster Relief

The number of people served from agencies participating in the survey ranged from as few as 20 to more than 45,000

#### Percentage of the populations served? (Please include all that apply)

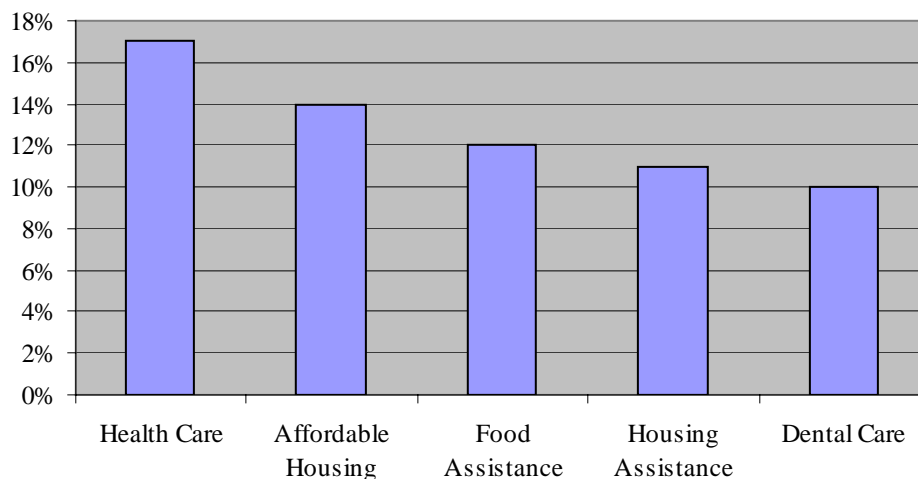
(These may add up to more than 100%)

- **83 percent** of agencies reported serving youth
- **77 percent** of agencies reported serving low-income
- **66 percent** of agencies reported serving the homeless
- **57 percent** of agencies reported serving disabled
- **51 percent** of agencies reported serving seniors

### B. Agency Question Responses

#### 1) What do you believe are the most critical needs/unmet needs in the community?

The data contained here is from an two open-ended question asking agencies to list what they believe are the most critical needs and unmet needs in the community. 40 agencies provided 129 responses identifying the following top five needs:



Additional responses include:

- **9 percent** of agencies reported mental health services
- **8 percent** of agencies reported employment services
- **8 percent** of agencies reported emergency shelter
- **7 percent** of agencies reported transportation services
- **5 percent** of agencies reported childcare / children services

**2) Please rate the following service categories under each topic.**

The data contained here is from an agency question designed to identify a priority list of services in four categories including, health care, senior/disabled services, housing services, and other community service needs. The following information identifies the top priority rankings in each category based on the percentage of agencies selecting that service category as the highest priority.

<b>Health Care Services</b>	<b>Senior/Disabled Services</b>
35% - Primary Health Care 23% - Insurance 18% - Mental Health 10% - Dental 10% - Drug & Alcohol Programs 5% - Medications/Prescriptions	42% - In-Home Care 12% - Family Caregiver Training & Support 10% - Facility Care 7% - Respite, Home Delivered Meals 5% - Developmental Disabled Services 5% - Adult Day Care, Adult Foster Homes
<b>Housing Services</b>	<b>Other Community Services</b>
60% - Permanent Affordable Housing 15% - Emergency Shelter 7% - Rental Assistance 7% - Down Payment Assistance 5% - Energy/Utility Assistance 2% - Renter/Homeowner Education 2% - Transitional Housing 2% - Housing Counseling	25% - Food 22% - Employment 20% - Transportation 12% - Child Care 7% - Financial Assistance

- These facts point to the importance of local groups aligning and working together to develop new and innovative ways for agencies within our community that focus on specific services identified to increase their capacity.
- Better communications among agencies that have a vested interest in our community will help eliminate essential time barriers that often face each agency when exploring alternatives to providing better services for our clients.
- The more that our community works towards coordinated collaborations to address the issues, the more successful we'll be in providing opportunities for our most vulnerable populations including the low-income, seniors, disabled, and the homeless.
- The ultimate goal is to provide the necessary support and tools to help our clients become less reliant on our services and move closer to self-sufficiency improving the quality of life for all citizens.

These types of community assessments show us that if issues our community identifies as most crucial are addressed, it is likely that low-income individuals and family's opportunities to improve their own lives will drastically increase. No one agency has the capacity or ability to solve all the problems alone. Together as a community we can achieve our goals of reducing some of the affects of long term problems associated with poverty. We must listen to what the community is saying and focus our energy on addressing issues that the community identifies.

This assessment points to the importance of developing more comprehensive approaches to meeting the health care and housing needs for targeted populations.

In order to put the need for services into perspective the following demographics of Jackson County are provided. There are a tremendous amount of individuals and families that at any given time may be in need of services.

Jackson County is the sixth most populous county in the State of Oregon. The County covers more than 2,800 square miles. The current population is estimated to be more than 200,000 and has had a steady growth rate of about two-percent for the last 18 years.

Nearly 70% of the Jackson County residents live in the eleven incorporated cities, which include Ashland, Butte Falls, Central Point, Eagle Point, Gold Hill, Jacksonville, Medford, Phoenix, Rogue River, Shady Cove, and Talent. According to the percentages compiled by the Oregon Economic & Community Development Department, almost 40% or close to 80,000 persons residing in Jackson County fall in the low to moderate-income population.

The most recent percentage of poverty from the 2000 Census data was 12.5. That equals 23,750 people living in Jackson County below the poverty level. Additionally, 2000 Census data shows that more than 36,800 persons in Jackson County are over the age of 60 and may be in need of services. The data also shows that over 26% of persons in Jackson County have some type of disability and more than 13% have a severe disability. The current employment data as of November 2008 from the Bureau of Labor Statistics ranked Oregon in the top five states for the worst unemployment rate at 8.1%.

The current economic conditions and information contained in this assessment affirms the need for organizations and agencies to continue their work in addressing the most critical human service needs for the low-income and most vulnerable populations living in our communities.