



# **Hood River County Needs Assessment**

**Prepared by  
Tom Eiland  
Conkling Fiskum & McCormick, Inc  
Portland, Oregon**

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# Methodology

Three phase research project

- 14 one-on-one interviews with county stakeholders in October/November, 2004
- 438 telephone interviews among county residents in November 2004
- 137 self administered surveys among social service recipients, February 2005
- 156 total interviews among Latinos. Spanish used when necessary or requested



# Community Attributes

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# Hood River County has a lot to offer residents

- 93% say it is an excellent or very good place to live
- Its attributes include:
  - Natural beauty
  - Traditional community values
  - Good medical services
  - Solid network of social services
  - Proximity to Portland

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***“It’s a community where people look out for each other.”***

# Hood River's core values are important

- Agriculture remains an important industry
- Recreation has long been a key activity in the area
  - Hiking, biking, skiing and wind surfing are now probably more important than camping, fishing and hunting
- Festivals, special events and cultural fairs maintain a family-friendly atmosphere.

***“Families in the Park, the high school spaghetti feed, Friday night football – those are the real identifiers of the community.”***



# Problems Facing the County

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# Hood River is a great place but not without problems

There is a general consensus about the top problems facing people in Hood River

- Jobs and the economy
- Affordable housing
- Health care

# Top-rated problems in the county

Issues rated top problems are:\*

Availability of family wage jobs	83%
Lack of affordable housing	78%
Affordable health insurance	75%
Affordable medical care	63%
Lack of youth activities	62%
Alcohol and drug use among adults	62%
Lack of English skills	62%
Poverty	60%
Alcohol and Drug abuse in schools	60%

\* % major/moderate problems from community telephone survey

# Top-rated problems in the county

Other top problems include:\*

Availability of low income housing	59%
Affordable dental care	58%
Access to transportation to Portland	53%
Crime (general)	49%
Juvenile crime	49%

\* % major/moderate problems from community telephone survey

# Top-rated problems in the county

Problems among those receiving assistance also include housing, jobs and health care:

Finding housing you can afford	76%
Finding a family-wage job	73%
Getting education or training for a better job	67%
Getting dental care	66%
Getting medical care for yourself	65%

\* % major/moderate problems from self administered survey

# Top-rated problems in the county

Top-of-mind concerns include:

## Growth and development

- Too many new people/not enough jobs
- Demand for housing is driving up prices
- Economic development too focused on tourism

## Public schools

- More funding
- Smaller classes
- More after school activities



# Community Needs

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# For what problems do residents need help?

*Have you or someone you know needed help during the past 12 months with:*

	<b>% Need Help Often/ Sometimes</b>
Finding family wage job	46%
Money for housing	42%
Anxiety, stress or depression	42%

***Financial issues and emotional problems are probably related.***

\* % major/moderate problems from community telephone survey

# For what problems do residents need help?

At least one in four need help in 11 other areas

	<b>% need help often/ sometimes</b>
Find housing to meet needs	33%
Assisting person with disability	32%
Money for utility bills	31%
Assisting an elderly person	29%
Children with behavioral problems	28%
Problems with alcohol	27%
Money for food	26%
Money for child care	26%
Money for clothes/shoes	26%
Unable to get dental care	26%
Unable to get medical care	25%

% who need help often/sometime from community telephone survey

# Who needs help?

Needs are more prevalent among:

Households with five or more

Those with no health insurance

Women age 18 to 44

Residents under age 55

People of color

Incomes less than \$30K

Households with children

*Stakeholders say there are geographic areas where need is greater: Cascade Locks, Odell, Central Valley, the Heights, Tucker Road and Parkdale.*

# Where do people get information for help?

Key sources of information about community services include:

	Preferred Source*
A private, non-profit group	49%
A local government social service agency	25%
Church, priest or minister	24%
Somewhere else	2%

\* from self administered survey

***Private organizations are key sources of information about social services.***



# Issues Related to Health Care

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# Health care services are not equally available

18% in Hood River County don't have health insurance:

- Five points higher than state average
- Four points higher than national average

## Those least likely to be insured

	% no health insurance
Hispanics	39%
All people of color	36%
Large households	36%
Residents age 18 to 34	36%
Renters	33%
Incomes < \$30K	33%

# Meeting health care needs

65% say their their health care needs are completely met in Hood River County.

## Best served

% needs completely met

Seniors

80%

Whites

70%

## Underserved

% somewhat/  
not at all met

Hispanics

43%

All people of color

42%

Men 18 to 44

41%

Age 18 to 34

39%

Incomes < \$30K

36%

Women 18 to 44

35%

# Affordability is an issue in health care

Hood River County residents are more likely to defer seeing a doctor due to cost than are people in the rest of Oregon and the U.S.

	<b>% who avoided seeing doctor because can't afford it</b>
Hood River Co. residents	22%*
Oregonians	13%**
U.S.	10%**

\* Hood River 2004 Needs Assessment Survey

\*\*2000 Centers for Disease Control Behavior Risk Factor Surveillance System survey

# Affordability is an issue in health care

Hood River County residents most likely to defer medical care due to cost are

	<b>% who avoided seeing doctor because can't afford it</b>
No insurance	56%
Women 18 to 44	43%
Renters	37%
Larger households	35%
Income < \$30K	35%
People of color	35%
Age 18 to 54	33%
Households with children	30%

# Affordability is an issue in health care

Hood River County residents are also likely to defer buying prescription drugs.

	<b>% who avoided buying because can't afford it</b>
All residents	15%
No insurance	39%
Women 18 to 44	29%
Renters	27%
Larger households	25%
Income < \$30K	25%
People of color	23%



# Issues Related to Cultural Diversity

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# Changing demographics is creating tension

- The county's Hispanics population more than doubled from 1990 to 2000
- Efforts are being made to bridge cultural gaps with festivals, high school activities and others but...
- 48% of Hispanics say racial discrimination is a problem compared to 28% of whites

*Being aware of a problem is the first step to solving it.*



# Key Findings

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# What we learned

- There is general agreement about the major problems facing Hood River County: jobs, the economy, affordable housing, health care.
  - Concerns about education, youth and growth should not be overlooked.
- The needs of individual residents match major problems. Stress and anxiety is widespread. More information is needed to understand how stress is affecting families and the community.

# What we learned

- Residents are deferring health care because they can't afford it.
  - Programs that offer preventive care may be effective in reducing larger, more complicated medical problems.
- People in need tend to be lower income, women age 18 to 44 and people of color.
- People in need are more likely to get information about local services from private sources than from government agencies.



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