



APPENDIX D: COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

2023-2028



Northeast Oregon Economic Development District

GROWING BUSINESS :: STRENGTHENING COMMUNITIES



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Lea Hoover, Oregon Trail Electric Coop

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APPENDIX D: CEDS DEVELOPMENT & INPUT

This appendix provides an overview of how we developed the CEDS, along with the written responses we received from partners and the public. These responses, plus feedback from in person workshops, informed the creation of the strategic priority areas and the action plans.

ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

To develop this CEDS, we engaged with community members and economic development partners in the following ways, presented in chronological order.

PHASE 1: KICKOFF AND CURRENT CONDITIONS (SEPTEMBER – DECEMBER 2022)

CEDS Kickoff Meeting | September 2022 - We reviewed the process and timeline for the CEDS update, soliciting some initial details about priorities for the region.

Who was involved?

- NEOEDD Board
- NEOEDD Staff
- Consultants

How did it contribute to the development of the CEDS?

- We identified would outcomes the Board and staff wanted to see from the process, both in terms of topics to cover in the CEDS, and how the final strategy should be used in the region.

Interviews with Organizations Representing Key Populations | October 2022 - January 2023 - We asked economic development partners to share what they felt were the biggest opportunities and challenges for the region.

Who was involved?

- Consultants

- Representatives from organizations with insight into the needs/concerns of the following groups:
 - Those dealing with mental health concerns
 - Those with limited access to health care and health insurance, especially those whose first language is Spanish and recent immigrants
 - Students: both high school and post-secondary
- *Missing groups - we reached out to several additional organizations, but staff were too busy to schedule interviews with us. Perspectives we hoped to learn more about but were unable to interview included:*
 - *Those struggling to find and afford housing*
 - *Labor unions*
 - *Aging and elderly populations*
 - *Veterans*
 - *Those with disabilities*
 - *Low-income populations (those receiving services from local nonprofits and faith-based organizations)*

How did it contribute to the development of the CEDS?

- We gained insight into the top concerns and issues of some of the populations in our region who struggle the most economically.
- We used this information to begin identifying priority areas to cover in the CEDS and develop ideas for projects/initiatives that would benefit some of our region's more vulnerable populations.

SWOT Survey for Community Members | November - December 2022 - We asked community members to share what they felt were the biggest opportunities and challenges for the region.

Who was involved?

- NEOEDD Staff
- Consultants
- Community members (survey was widely publicized to anyone living/working in the region)

How did it contribute to the development of the CEDS?

- We gained an understanding of what community members see as the most pressing issues in the region that should be addressed in the CEDS.
- We gained an understanding of what opportunities community members would like to prioritize over the next five years.
- We used this information to begin generating a SWOT analysis and to build out strategic priority areas for the CEDS.

SWOT Survey for Partners | November - December 2022 - We asked economic development partners to share what they felt were the biggest opportunities and challenges for the region.

Who was involved?

- NEOEDD Staff
- Consultants
- Economic development (or economic development adjacent) professionals in the region (we publicized this survey to NEOEDD's partners)

How did it contribute to the development of the CEDS?

- We identified top priorities for each responding organization.
- We gained an understanding of what partners see as the most pressing issues in the region that should be addressed in the CEDS.
- We gained an understanding of what opportunities partners would like to prioritize over the next five years.
- We used this information to begin generating a SWOT analysis and to build out strategic priority areas for the CEDS.

PHASE 2: PRELIMINARY ACTIONS (JANUARY - APRIL 2023)

Workshop 1: Current Activities & Future Desires | January 2023 - Approximately 40 partners who work in or adjacent to economic development in the region convened on Zoom to build connections with each other and identify (1) what they are currently working on and (2) what they think the region should work on over the next five years.

Who was involved?

- NEOEDD Staff
- Consultants
- Economic development (or economic development adjacent) professionals in the region, from local through State-level organizations

How did it contribute to the development of the CEDS?

- We captured an initial list of who is doing what currently in the region.
- We brainstormed needs and gaps within each of the four strategic priority areas.
- We brainstormed ideas for projects that could help meet these needs and fill these gaps, identifying leaders/champions where possible.
- We used this information to draft a preliminary set of projects/initiatives in each of the four strategic priority areas.

Follow-Up Survey for Partners | February - April 2023 - We shared the preliminary list of projects/initiatives with economic development partners in a survey and asked them to provide additional details and feedback.

Who was involved?

- Consultants
- Economic development (or economic development adjacent) professionals in the region (mostly individuals who were unavailable to join Workshop 1)

How did it contribute to the development of the CEDS?

- We gained additional insight into what organizations are currently working on.
- We gained additional insight into gaps and priorities for the region.
- We used this information to refine the priorities/initiatives into a first draft of the CEDS action plans.

Partner Interviews | January - June 2023 - We interviewed 13 individuals who work in economic development in our region to identify their priorities for the region and how they thought partners across the region should be working together.

Who was involved?

- Consultants
- Economic development (or economic development adjacent) professionals in the region, from local through State-level organizations

How did it contribute to the development of the CEDS?

- We gained additional insight into what organizations are currently working on.
- We gained additional insight into what partners think we should be focusing on in the region, and how they think we should be working together.
- We used this information to refine the priorities/initiatives into a first draft of the CEDS action plans and seed initial ideas about how to improve regional collaboration.

PHASE 3: PRIORITIES & COLLABORATION (APRIL - JUNE 2023)

Workshop 2 Series: Priorities and Implementation | April 2023 - We hosted three in-person workshops, one in each county, to review the draft action plan and identify top priority "current/ongoing projects" (things that are already happening) and top priority "wishlist projects" (things that should happen, but don't currently have resources or leads identified to support them).

Who was involved?

- NEOEDD Staff

- Consultants
- Economic development (or economic development adjacent) professionals in the region, from local through State-level organizations
 - 6 participants in Wallowa County
 - 10 participants in Union County
 - 10 participants in Baker County

How did it contribute to the development of the CEDS?

- We gave partners an opportunity to review the draft action plan and provide feedback.
- We engaged partners in an activity of identifying priorities from within the action plan, as well as discussion around how we might actually implement those priorities.
- We used this information to create an updated action plan draft, with more detailed information about projects/initiatives and leads/partners involved in implementation.

Workshop 3: Priorities and Collaboration | June 2023 - Approximately 20 partners who work in or adjacent to economic development in the region convened on Zoom to review the priorities identified in Workshop 2 and discuss how to collaborate around implementation of these priorities.

Who was involved?

- NEOEDD Staff
- Consultants
- Economic development (or economic development adjacent) professionals in the region, from local through State-level organizations

How did it contribute to the development of the CEDS?

- We gave partners the opportunity to identify their top priorities from within the priorities previously identified.
- Partners shared how they wanted to collaborate around implementation, discussed who might be a lead convenor, and how involved partners might work together.
- We used this information to update and finalize the action plans and provide details about collaboration and implementation in the CEDS.

PHASE 4: FINALIZING AND ADOPTION (JULY - SEPTEMBER 2023)

Infrastructure Interviews | July - August 2023 - We contacted jurisdictions to gather information about current infrastructure conditions, planned projects, and barriers to economic development created by infrastructure needs.

Who was involved?

- Consultants
- Jurisdiction (City and County) infrastructure representatives (public works, planning, administration)

How did it contribute to the development of the CEDS?

- We captured important infrastructure needs and limitations for jurisdictions within our region.
- We used this information to alert NEOEDD and other regional partners to projects that will require attention and funding over the next several years.

Follow-Ups with Partners | August 2023 - We shared the nearly finalized action plans with partners and asked them to correct any errors and fill in blanks or clarify project leads and partners where they could.

Who was involved?

- NEOEDD staff
- Economic development (or economic development adjacent) professionals in the region (anyone who participated in any of the workshops)

How did it contribute to the development of the CEDS?

- We clarified projects/initiatives that were missing information.
- We used this information to finalize the CEDS action plans.

Public Comment | August - September 2023 - We posted a draft version of the CEDS on NEOEDD's website and solicited feedback from community members and economic development partners.

Who was involved?

- NEOEDD staff
- Community members
- Economic development (or economic development adjacent) professionals in the region

How did it contribute to the development of the CEDS?

- We gathered any additional feedback from anyone in our region who has an interest in the CEDS.
- We used this information to finalize the full CEDS document.

SURVEY FEEDBACK

This section includes the responses from the two surveys we conducted: SWOT Survey for Partners and SWOT Survey for Community Members.

NEOEDD ED Players Survey Responses (1/4/23)

Q1 - Part 1: About your organization: Organization Name (n=10)

- Business Oregon
- Wallowa Resources
- Jacksons food stores
- Essentially Loved LLC
- Regional Solutions
- Oregon Trail Electric Cooperative
- Wallowa County
- BMCC
- Oregon Trail Electric Cooperative
- City of La Grande

Q2 - Part 1: About your organization – Organization Type (n=10)

#	Answer	%	Count
1	Local government	17%	2
2	Regional/County government	8%	1
3	State government	17%	2
4	Federal government	0%	0
5	Tribal government	0%	0
6	Business association/ downtown association/ chamber of commerce	0%	0
7	Trade association/ specific industry developer	0%	0
8	Small Business Development Center	8%	1
9	Business incubator/ accelerator	8%	1
10	Tourism/ Destination Marketing Organization	0%	0
11	Workforce development	0%	0
12	University/ research institution	8%	1
13	Utility company/ organization	17%	2
14	Other community development-related nonprofit	8%	1
15	Other	8%	1
	Total	100%	12

Q2 - TEXT - Other

Other - Text

Convenience Store

Q3 - Part 1: About your organization – Your Position Title (n=10)

Regional Development Officer - Operations Policy Analyst 4

Executive Director

Regional Manager

Owner, creator, operator

Regional Solutions Coordinator

Director of Member and Strategic Services

Natural Resource and Economic Development director

Director of Baker County and Small Business Adviser

Manager of Government Affairs, handle economic development as well

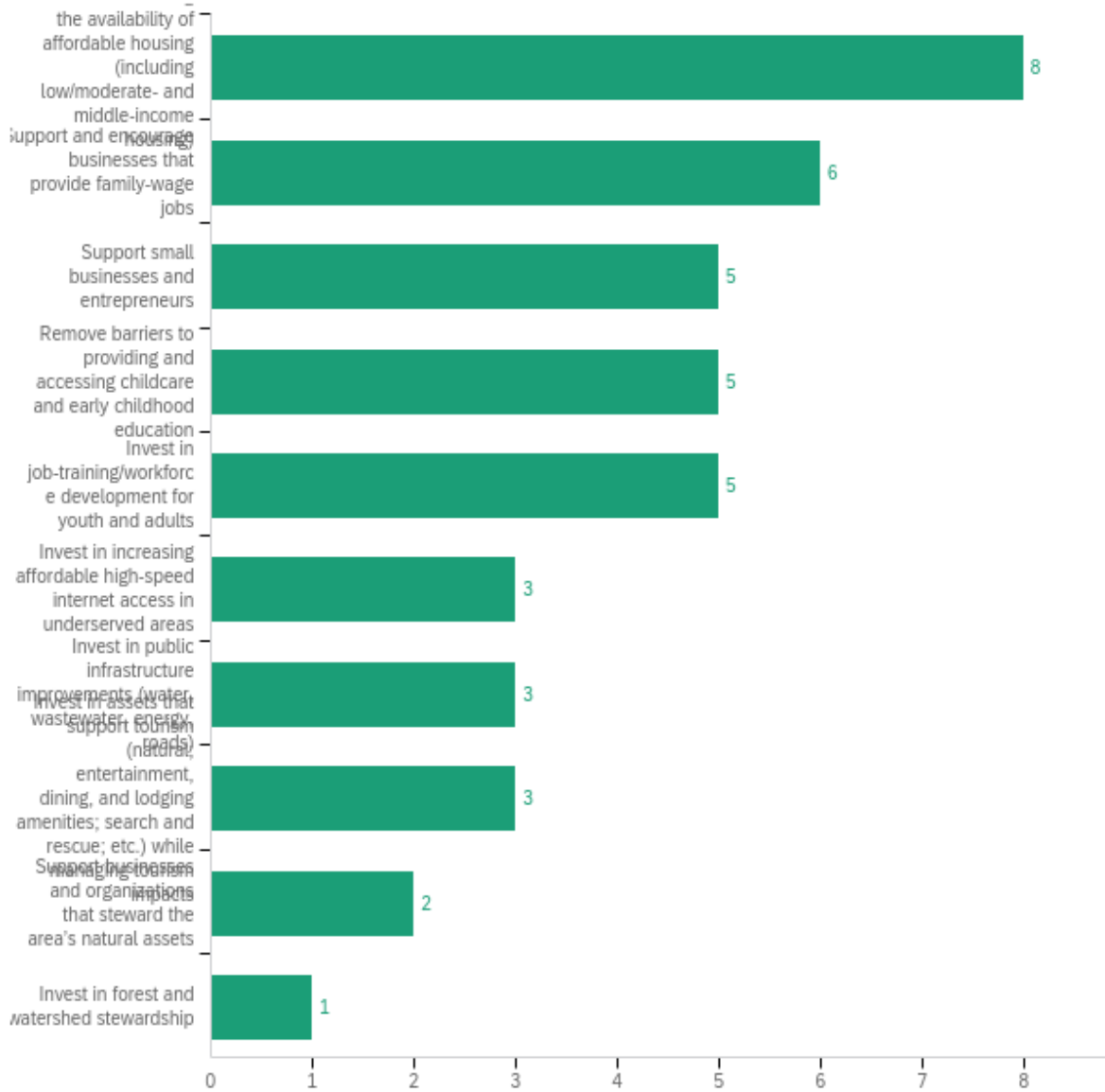
Economic Development

Q4 - What are your organization’s top economic development-related priorities right now? Summarize up to 5 main priorities you are currently working on. (n=8)

Business Oregon	Innovating Oregon's Economy; Growing Small and Middle Market Companies; Cultivating Rural Economic Stability; Championing Economic Opportunity for Underrepresented People; and Ensuring an Inclusive, Transparent, and Fiscally Healthy Organization.
Wallowa Resources	Workforce housing Workforce Training and Development - esp in NR related fields, but generally as well Continued innovation in NR / Ag / Forest space to generate value to working lands, more jobs, and more local value added processing and services. Energy efficiency and renewable energy production - build energy reliability, resilience, and affordability
Regional Solutions	<p>These are the regional priorities for NE Oregon from the Regional Solutions Advisory Committee: Competitive and sustainable rural communities Creating competitive and sustainable rural communities is the key to success for the Northeast Oregon region.</p> <p>The following priorities are all required to advance the regional economy and help support current and emerging businesses. Key to creating competitive and sustainable rural communities includes promoting economic diversification and resiliency. Focus on the following areas is prioritized:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing availability and affordability- Increase housing availability across types and values. • Broadband accessibility and affordability- Acknowledging the increased importance of all individuals having high speed broadband that is affordable. • Food Security- Focusing on creating and encouraging a regional food supply and increasing the ability for locally produced products. • Childcare services to address workforce challenges- As the workforce challenges continue across the region, focusing on childcare services to address the needs of both families and employers will remain crucial. • Promoting workforce development and stability- Helping promote the regional workforce development opportunities to meet current and future industry needs and address issues related to workforce availability such as child care, training, education, housing and transportation. • Natural resources utilization- Support forestry, agriculture, mining, and recreation sectors. Be proactive in reducing the threat of wildfire across the region through efforts at the local, state and federal levels. • Water security, management and development - Secure agricultural, industrial, and municipal water supply. • Enhance local infrastructure- Increase availability of broadband, sewer, water, roads, and other investments to be competitive in attracting business development opportunities. • Working lands recreation economy- Support the working lands recreation economy of the region by enhancing and supporting projects that capitalize on the natural landscape of our working lands and history of the region.
OTEC	Housing, Workforce development, broadband, adequate infrastructure (broadband and energy)
Wallowa County	Housing
BMCC	Help Small Business development Create educational programs that will help the local economy Workforce/student housing

OTEC	Workforce development, broadband deployment, energy innovation, community partnership and support, and positioning for the future.
City of La Grande	Business Retention and expansion Attraction of small Scale Manufacturing Supporting local entrepreneurship Adequate supply of commercial and industrial land

Q5 - Opportunities for Our Economy (n=9)



#	Answer	%	Count
1	Support small businesses and entrepreneurs	12%	5
2	Support businesses and organizations that steward the area's natural assets	5%	2
3	Support and encourage businesses that provide family-wage jobs	15%	6
4	Remove barriers to providing and accessing childcare and early childhood education	12%	5
5	Invest in increasing the availability of affordable housing (including low/moderate- and middle-income housing)	20%	8
6	Invest in increasing affordable high-speed internet access in underserved areas	7%	3
7	Invest in public infrastructure improvements (water, wastewater, energy, roads)	7%	3
8	Invest in assets that support tourism (natural; entertainment, dining, and lodging amenities; search and rescue; etc.) while managing tourism impacts	7%	3
9	Invest in forest and watershed stewardship	2%	1
10	Invest in job-training/workforce development for youth and adults	12%	5
	Total	100%	41

Q6 – Please explain your selections (n=8)

For NEO to position for some desired long-term growth, increasing availability of affordable and middle market housing options as well as childcare capacity will be required. Access to highspeed internet that enables public/private/EMS engagement, such as for schooling, telemedicine, inventory management, and 9-1-1 calling center, is another bedrock for all business opportunities. Tourism is a relatively low investment with increasingly high payoff for the region, if desired. Ensuring every area is picking low hanging fruit begins to maximize attracting new money that can be used to build in other areas.

Focus on smaller local businesses that are providing good paying jobs, and provide the support needed for them to succeed, and grow if relevant - TA, FA, and investments in supporting needs such as workforce housing, and child care. Focus as well on natural resource stewardship related businesses, including family farms and ranches, and any value added goods and services that we can produce from our working landscapes - investing in a sector that generates broad local, state, and national benefits from the quality of NR related products, to the environmental services that good stewardship of working lands provide.

These address some of the biggest issues and challenges that the region currently has, and while all of the responses above are important, these are the top challenges for the region.

It's often a "chicken or the egg" conversation when it comes to housing and workforce... I think they need to be worked on simultaneously and both these problems need to be solved to foster growth.

I want to add broadband access, but I can't choose which to swap it out for.

I believe all of the selections are needed to help the economy.

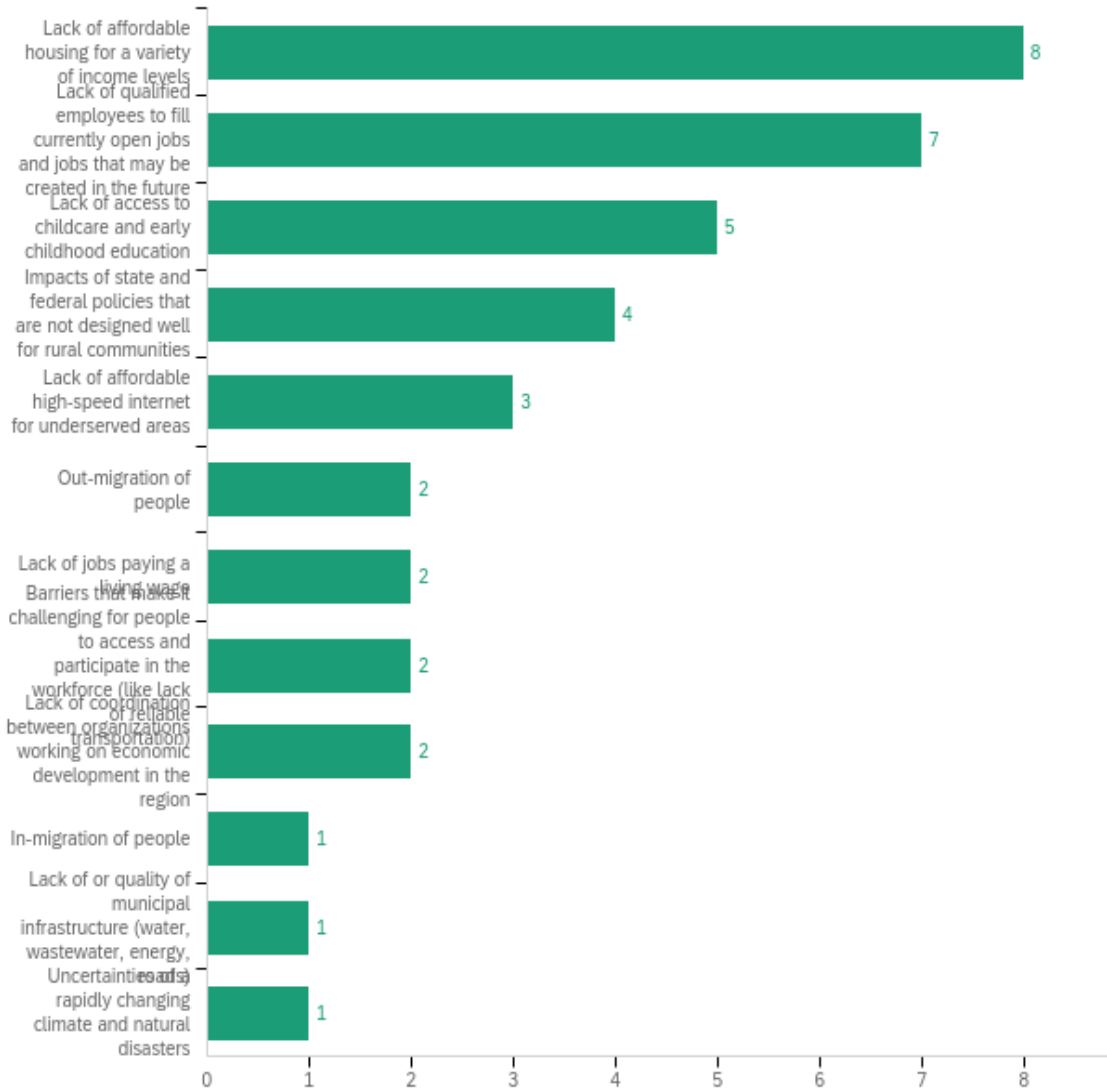
Support business retention and expansion, be a leader in energy innovation, connect businesses with workforce developers, be a part of the housing solution.

Facilitate growth of local entrepreneurship

Q7 – Additional Opportunity Ideas (n=2)

Consider a strategic effort to build out the area with much higher virtual reality and Metaverse capacity so that the region can tap into this emerging industry opportunities while preserving the desired cultural balance, locally. I think investments in, and innovation in, our local infrastructure is a worthy priority - especially around water and energy, including renewable energy.

Q8 - Challenges for Our Economy (n=8)



#	Answer	%	Count
1	Out-migration of people	5%	2
2	In-migration of people	3%	1
3	Lack of affordable housing for a variety of income levels	21%	8
4	Lack of jobs paying a living wage	5%	2
5	Lack of qualified employees to fill currently open jobs and jobs that may be created in the future	18%	7
6	Barriers that make it challenging for people to access and participate in the workforce (like lack of reliable transportation)	5%	2
7	Lack of affordable high-speed internet for underserved areas	8%	3
8	Lack of or quality of municipal infrastructure (water, wastewater, energy, roads)	3%	1
9	Lack of access to childcare and early childhood education	13%	5
10	Impacts of state and federal policies that are not designed well for rural communities	11%	4
11	Uncertainties of a rapidly changing climate and natural disasters	3%	1
13	Lack of coordination between organizations working on economic development in the region	5%	2
	Total	100%	38

Q9 - Please briefly explain your selections (n=7)

Population decline in the region due to lack of competitive middle housing coupled with work and life opportunities in Urban areas is making it a challenge to slow migration out. Additionally, barriers to access and participate in workforce can be exacerbated in rural and frontier areas compared to more urban areas due to less available resources. State and federal policies typically have a significant unintended negative impact to rural Oregon, especially in areas such as land use and development.

There are a significant number of job vacancies across the public and private sector, many that have remained vacant for a considerable time, including jobs that are higher paying. Need to address constraints to recruiting and retaining employees, and also seek to train and build local workforce that already lives in our region. On the infrastructure side - it strikes me that the greatest need is with regard to energy.

Again, these comprise some of the biggest challenges that our businesses face in growing their workforce or even keeping their business afloat.

My top selection would be impact of state and regional policies not designed well for rural communities. Even broader, these policies are not designed for business as a whole and we are especially susceptible being near the state border.

The in-migration doesn't "concern" me - but it means we need more housing for people coming to fill our job vacancies and we need to ensure our sewer, water, streets can handle more development.

The nursing shortage in Baker County, to being able to clean up the forest and harvest natural resources. We have more jobs than people looking. People want to move here but cant find an affordable house.

affordable housing is an economic development issue employers can not hire if employees can't find housing. Labor/ workforce availability is still a key issue with a tight labor market. Employers also need to figure out how to be more competitive at retention and attraction.

Q10 – Additional Challenge Ideas (n=2)

National trend

We can pay less and employees will be happy with less because it's cheaper to live here is no longer true.

Q11 - Measuring Success: we'd like your thoughts on what type of metrics would be helpful for us to track to understand economic development progress in our region. (n=4)

Demographic data - average and median age, percentages within 18-45 age group or something similar, etc.
Second home, and or absentee, home and property ownership Median wages - distinguish between wages earned in job versus income earned from investments / transfer payments. I'd be interested in seeing the data and the trends for the metrics you have been tracking.

A customer service survey might be helpful as well as number of communities/interactions served through services (I'm thinking of trying to track the amount of grants written vs. received, or something like that)

Potentially a metric showing AirBnb vs. rental - I think this is a growing "issue" in our region.

No

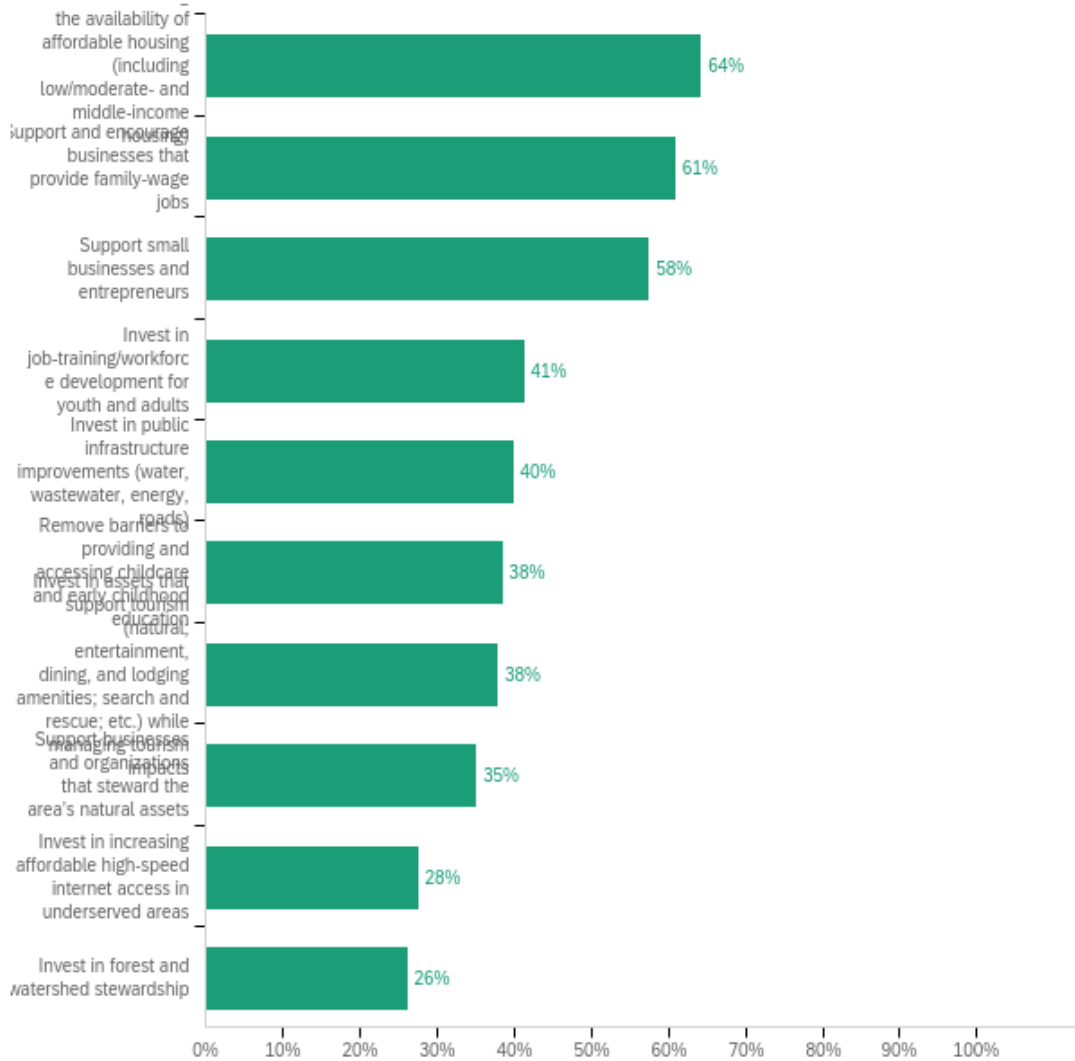
Q12 - Is there anything else you would like us to know about economic development in our region? (n=2)

No. Thanks for asking. Appreciate your leadership in this process

Having all agencies working together has the best impact. Bryan in Baker County does a good job in communicating the progress and needs for our projects.

NEOEDD SWOT Survey Responses (1/4/23)

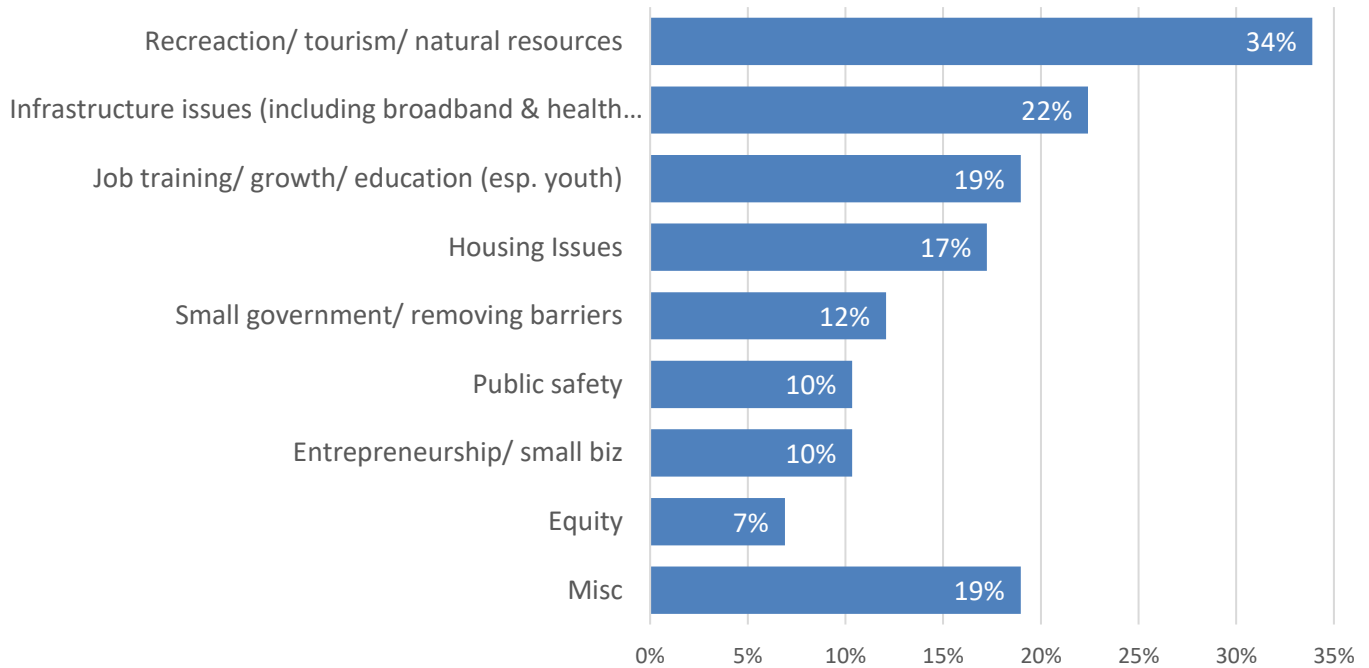
Part 1: Opportunities for Our Economy (n=356)



#	Answer	%	Count
5	Invest in increasing the availability of affordable housing (including low/moderate- and middle-income housing)	15%	229
3	Support and encourage businesses that provide family-wage jobs	14%	217
1	Support small businesses and entrepreneurs	13%	205
10	Invest in job-training/workforce development for youth and adults	10%	147
7	Invest in public infrastructure improvements (water, wastewater, energy, roads)	9%	142
4	Remove barriers to providing and accessing childcare and early childhood education	9%	137
8	Invest in assets that support tourism (natural; entertainment, dining, and lodging amenities; search and rescue; etc.) while managing tourism impacts	9%	135
2	Support businesses and organizations that steward the area's natural assets	8%	125
6	Invest in increasing affordable high-speed internet access in underserved areas	6%	98
9	Invest in forest and watershed stewardship	6%	93
	Total	100%	1528

Part 1: Opportunities for Our Economy - (Optional) What other opportunities should we be focusing on? (n=58)

Opportunity Comments
(n=58)



(Optional) What other opportunities should we be focusing on?

Innovations

Better support for our aging population. Quality, accessible healthcare and affordable housing designed for the elderly and handicapped.

More options for people with anxiety and depression disorders

community security

Light industrial

Removing blight

Legal aid , over site monitoring of local governments and public safety and response by those in authority

A Library.

For Wallowa County, nothing else but affordable housing, rent, or purchase matters. Without additional housing opportunities, qualified personnel has no avenue to live in our county unless they share a place or live in RVs. So far, we have lost more than we gained on housing. Every development/renovation downtown Enterprise and at the outskirts of Joseph has been turned into vacation rentals or rentals that are simply not affordable for the average wages paid in our county.

If housing is not affordable for both employee wage earners or small business owners nothing else really matters. Right now people trying to stay or move here are competing for half to million dollar homes against folks who are not or did not make that money by living here in the county. There is no balance and soon the folks wanting to move here will not be serviced by those who can not afford to live here.

Seniors in this area are not being hired even though they have more experience than younger workers. Please help our seniors who cannot survive on planned retirement income.

Affordable housing but NOT Section 8! It drives down property values and degrades need neighborhood safety and security.

Invest in public health facilities.

Attract more "digital nomads" -- the people who spend their incomes here but don't require community/taxpayer support and don't take jobs from current locals.

Creating job opportunities

Marketing the quality of life attributes of Union County, due especially to the Mt Emily Recreation Area, EOU and Anthony Lakes, as a means to attract qualified people to work in agriculture, timber, RV manufacturing, etc.

Rental housing for working people is needed. Everything' is being turned into an Airbnb leaving nothing available for people filling job positions and not ready to commit to buying overpriced/subpar housing.

Keeping our children home with job opportunities.

Anti racism/ cultural barriers

Help develop something like an "Innovative institute", that would work to develop new ideas directed to utilize the local resources that are available within our community. Create Secondary or Tertiary products of local commodities. Develop, create incentives and promote business development of these innovations. Energy is one of our most important and valuable resources. We should work to utilize our local energy resources vs reliance on outside energy sources. It would make economy more secure, keep money locally and while providing sustainable jobs and future.

Invest in green and sustainable industries

Promote La Grande as the recreation mecca that it could be while preserving it's forests, clean waterways, wildlife, and native plants.

Helping the families impacted by the storm in Wallowa

Affordable housing supply could be increased by encouraging private investment thru improving landlord rights which have been taken away from them over the past 8 years. An increase in supply usually results in a decrease in price, law of supply and demand.

We live in an area that is very livable, and provides a abundant variety of activities. We should encourage internet and work from home types of jobs.

Housing renovations for mid to moderate income homeowners

More Gun Control, Disband Police departments and Government abuse so people LEAVE Oregon...

Invest in activities for youths and teens

Focus on what helps people who already live here: road repairs (the first impression for any tourists & certainly for the good of citizens!); healthcare access & keeping providers with broad education & skills interested in rural patients; preventing building of new factories, businesses and dwellings on farmable or forested lands (allow them on less desirable areas that don't take away from the above); be sure state & federal governments and laws are truly appropriate for this region; make it easier & more affordable to use internet communication to encourage participation in policy processes that affect us here. Concentrate on strong education by providing monetary support & encouraging community involvement in the schools and universities, & technical schools, so students can expect to stay here for their education, and for their careers. Increased local public &

affordable transportation is going to be more imperative as our population ages, and more people choose not to drive for several reasons. More generally, public transportation is a high priority for connection with families, friends, medical care and to hubs further away - by railway, bus and air. Overall, let's take care of the people and resources we already have here, and keep the growth small so we don't stretch too thin. Tourism is important but let it happen naturally, and not at the expense of those who already call this area home. Thank you.

Emergency Services

Foster the relationship among all of the industries to help them recognize the value each one of them brings to a strong economy.

This area has suppressed large companies like Costco from coming in the area. This as well as others well paying jobs are needed to help our area grow. We can no longer rely on small mom and pop stores, nor can we allow farmers to rule what our next generations need and what. Both can survive in this valley. Quit suppressing this area because of old ideas and thoughts. We can not keep new Dr.s if we can only offer low income or Medicare. Get rid of old thoughts and let our younger generations thrive.

Lower taxes

Focus on bringing businesses downtown.

Union County has been stagnant in it's economy and growth for a very long time. We need to think of the future and start growing tourism and jobs.

Letting more business into the valley. Promoting shopping that isn't Walmart. Increasing competition for groceries and home goods.

Troubled or neglected youth outreach and intervention programs, public transportation in undeserved areas.

Job opportunities

Invest in supporting tourism

Mera

Invest in local startup businesses especially local makers and small-scale manufacturers.

We should also pay attention to the problem of environmental protection.

Resources to provide a shelter for cats and dogs that have been displaced. There are no animal shelters in Baker County, and we need at least one.

Affordable entertainment for all seasons for local children and teens.

Grow and sustain EOU

Forest Service transparency on outfitting opportunities for local businesses. Specifically removing red tape that would allow existing outfitters additional opportunities on unused recreational opportunities that help build small, rural businesses.

How to support natural resource businesses - including livestock related businesses. Local packing houses are needed.

Tax items that could be seen as vices and earmark those funds to specific local services.

Indigenous stewardship and small business should always be your equity priority

Invest in vocational training for youth and adults

For all of the above, the focus should be deregulation, streamlining processes, and unleashing the economy by removing barriers to success (primarily unnecessary regulation). We don't need to spend more to have a vibrant economy.

Work to remove barriers to accessing our county in the winter. Repeated road closures cause severe impact to those traveling to Union Co. for recreational/tourist opportunities.

Moving Oregon's border west to Portland.

Get wages, housing, and health care in line and business will take care of itself

Job training programs, manage the negative impacts of tourism on the local residents-example internet becomes overwhelmed negatively impacting at home workers.

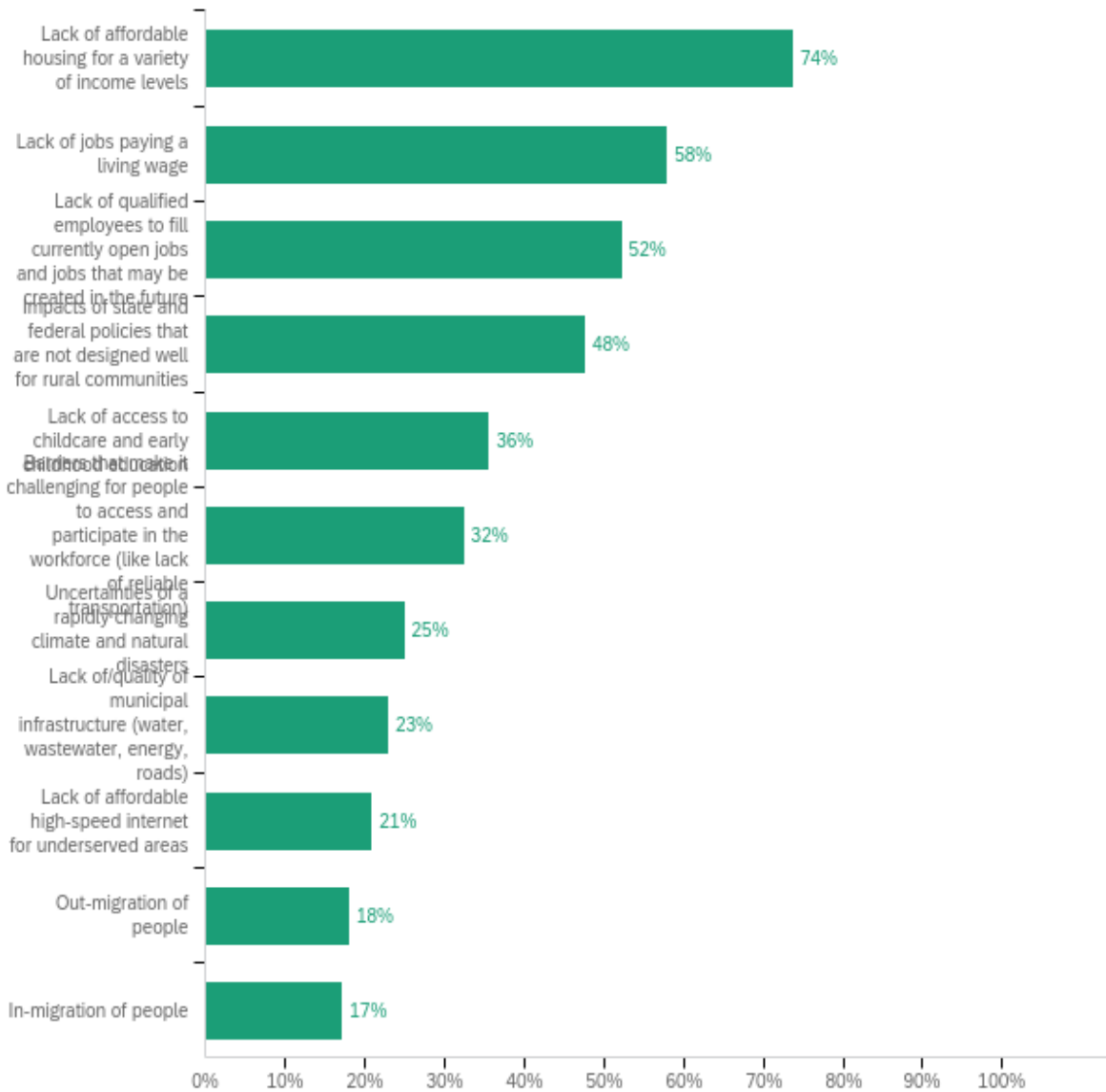
housing options for seasonal employees should be a top priority

I believe managing the impacts of tourism is critical, given the dramatic increase in tourism in our region, and the negative impacts that is having on affordable housing and on businesses and organizations that are struggling to hire workers due to the housing shortage.

A Recreation center /fitness center in Wallowa County

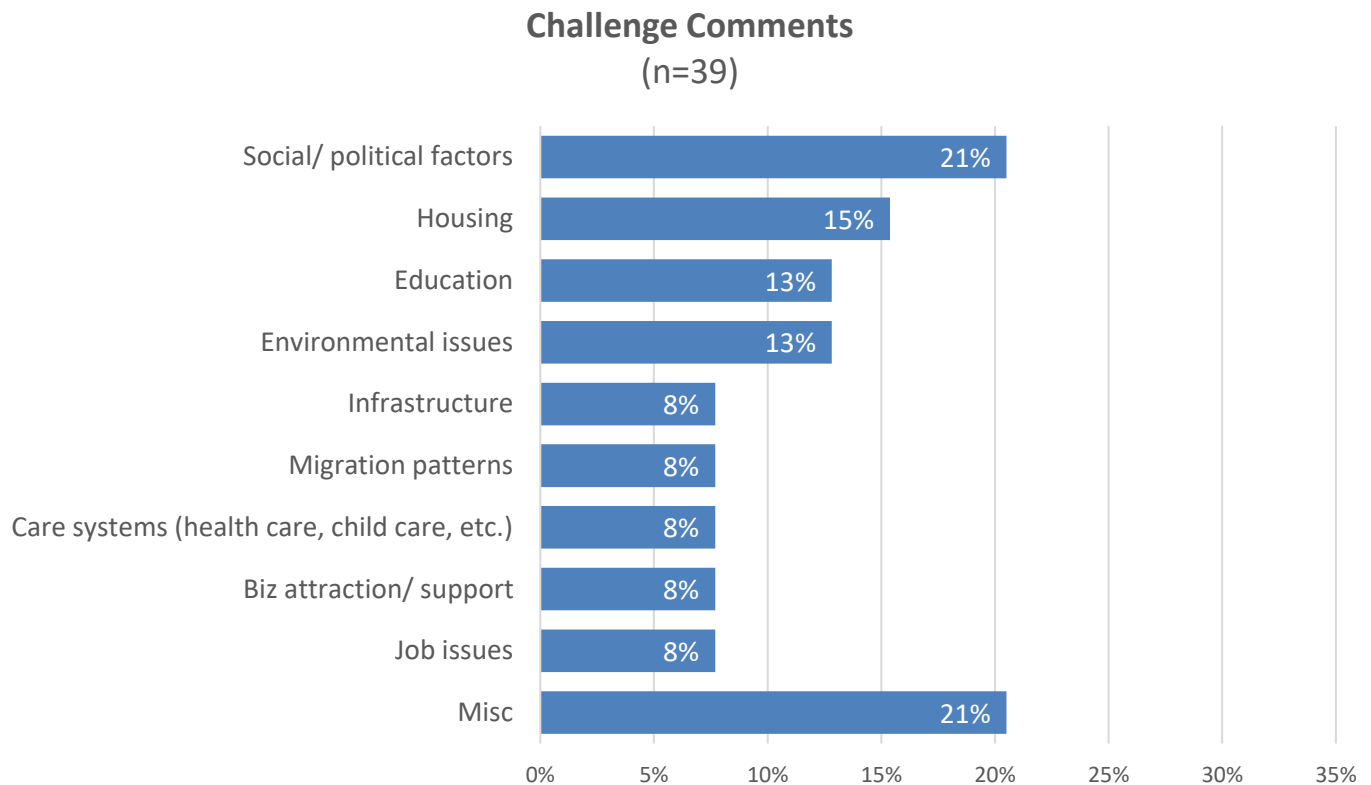
Working with tribal organizations to inform decision making of natural resources

Part 2: Challenges to Our Economy (n=348)



#	Answer	%	Count
3	Lack of affordable housing for a variety of income levels	18%	257
4	Lack of jobs paying a living wage	14%	202
5	Lack of qualified employees to fill currently open jobs and jobs that may be created in the future	13%	182
10	Impacts of state and federal policies that are not designed well for rural communities	12%	166
9	Lack of access to childcare and early childhood education	9%	124
6	Barriers that make it challenging for people to access and participate in the workforce (like lack of reliable transportation)	8%	113
11	Uncertainties of a rapidly changing climate and natural disasters	6%	87
8	Lack of/quality of municipal infrastructure (water, wastewater, energy, roads)	6%	80
7	Lack of affordable high-speed internet for underserved areas	5%	73
1	Out-migration of people	4%	63
2	In-migration of people	4%	60
	Total	100%	1407

Part 2: Challenges to Our Economy - (Optional) What other challenges should we be focusing on? (n=39)



(Optional) What other challenges should we be focusing on?

Artwork

Funding is a big thing too. New businesses or businesses hit by covid shutdowns in rural areas are not recovering. Small businesses that are opened by white males are discriminated against now.

End the "good old boys" mentality, "this is the way we have always done it" thought process. Old money should not dictate growth (or lack thereof). Another issue is the meth problem in our community and the associated crimes that go along with meth addiction.

We have one planet. We have to do everything possible to save it. There is no Planet B. Earth is it. It should be the highest priority for all peoples/governments in the world. This is a shared world problem. ONLY ONE EARTH

Access to high speed internet

Comprehensive and professional medical organization

Lack of quality jobs

Rural communities have a definitive set of disadvantage for resources due to travel cost and availability of services

Our townspeople know of no real emergency plans for our little city if one were to occur. When asked at city hall if we had a city plan, the answer was: well, not really".

As said in the first comment. Wallowa County does not stand a chance to move forward without affordable housing.

People like to live here and job skills will reflect what is available job wise if they can afford to live here. Local real estate investments competing with previous wealth obtained outside the area and by those investing in hotel type accommodations on what was once affordable family housing is not sustainable. Even a few hundred units taken out of the family wage earner reach has a huge affect on not only those that would have been available to families but pushes up everything else. We either need to grow or limit taking housing to a different use both to decrease demand and increase affordability.

shelters and local policies for the homeless.

Total integration of EOU into Union County. Having a university in Union County is a great asset, but it needs to be a part of our culture.

For Baker: bringing in a different grocery store. That's wrong to have 2 of the same store and no competition. Makes the area less desirable to live in. Get a winco/waremart!

Provide a more flexible and business environment for local business development and innovation. Establish a fair, safe and flexible process to help businesses to get established and succeed. That would include governmental guidelines, regulations and procedures. While assisting with to various resources important in the success of business; educational, financial and governmental guidance. We must learn to embrace innovation. Create an environment that promotes it, not discourages. Provide an atmosphere to encourage our youth to be involved. Challenge their creativity, ideas and energy.

There should also be concerns about the lack of certain technical expertise

Cultural sensitivity training!

Migration of people taking advantage of low income housing, while long time residents get left out. Services in our area should be for people in our area.

Raise taxes. Tax businesses out of business...

IT seems that local business don't know how higher or train.

We need to place pressure on families (first) and school districts (second) to set higher standards for education for all ages. Our students are behind, as is all in education, due to Covid but it was a problem before COVID. Investment in the whole child is critical.

Lack of jobs available.

Lack of a large shipping hub in the are to support new businesses. It takes additional time and money to get resources when those resources pass through to major hubs ie UPS, FedEx etc.

I think middle class housing and childcare is absolutely missing from the community.

Local economy being destroyed by Amazon like businesses.

Outmigration of population

Local leadership that is more focused on fighting partisan battles rather than finding solutions to real economic development issues.

We should also pay attention to the problem of social order caused by unbalanced economic development to avoid social disorder.

Water quality, environment

A regional medical center is needed badly. Right now people in Baker County and other nearby areas are forced to go to Boise, Idaho for major medical treatment. That is unacceptable.

Degradation of natural resources assets (Grande Ronde river watershed, MERA, Wallowa Lake, etc.) from lack of use management. The very things that draw people need careful preservation/conservation.

I think the biggest challenge is the increasing crime and drug use.

We should also be concerned about migration

Inflation (running rampant currently due to COVID over-spending and new regulations killing economic growth), lack of industry (production of goods, not just services). Unstable supply chains.

The stranglehold that agriculture and ranching have on local politicians is killing the quality of life for NE Oregon citizens. Without new laws, agriculture and ranching interests will continue to pollute our waterways and air with hazardous chemicals from field runoff and heavy smoke from industrial burning of fields and forests. Also, there is widespread wild game animal poaching throughout NE Oregon. ODFW must increase its game warden enforcement resources. ODFW should also halt its agriculture "damage" hunts - these are not hunts, they are six months of legal slaughter of wild elk herds that have no where else to winter, and are not fed in the vast majority of areas where they do winter.

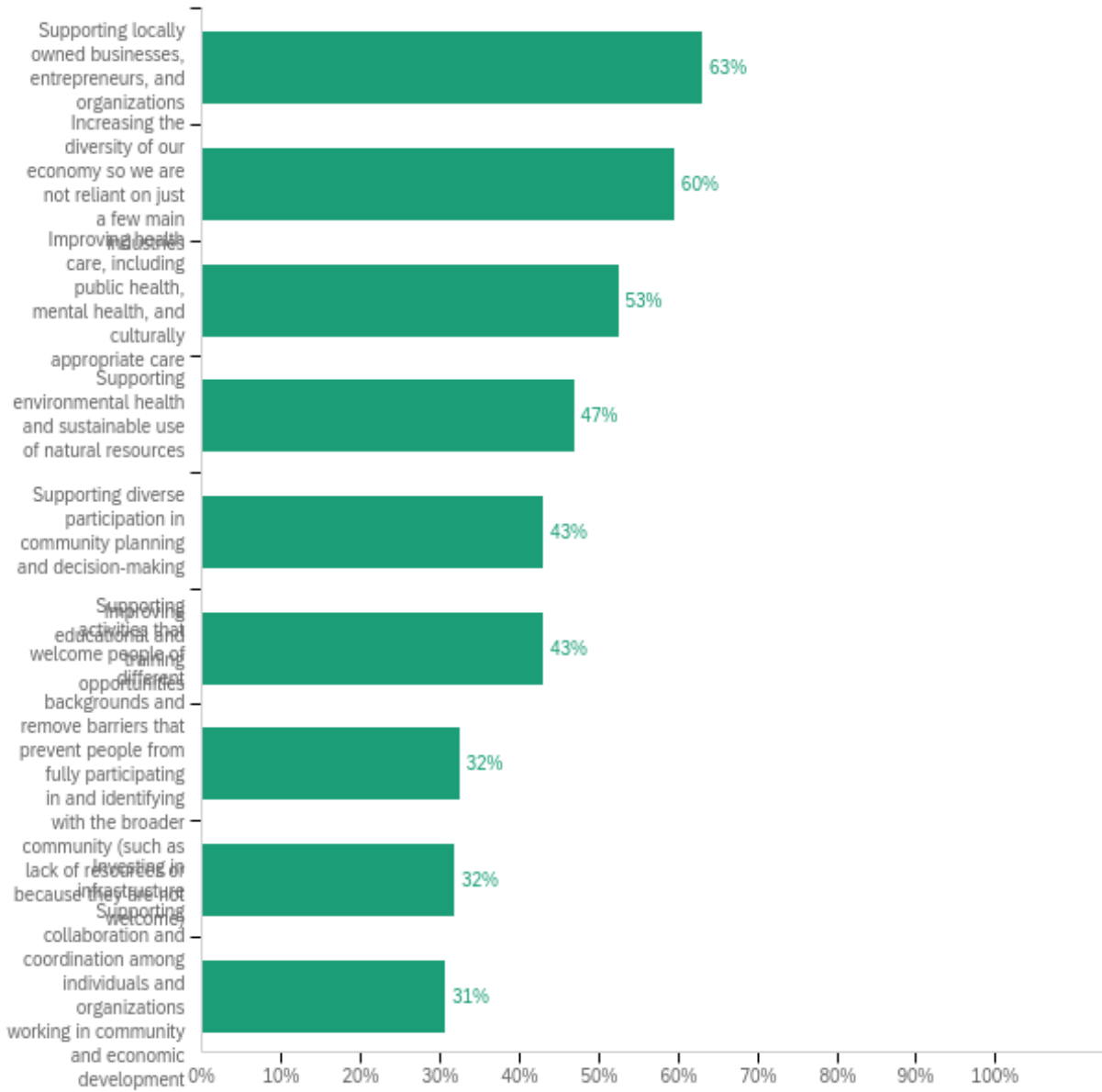
Need to look at ways of attracting businesses and companies to the region that provide more than a handful of jobs that are long term employment. Focus on what the barriers are that prevent companies from moving to and investing in the region i.e. transportation costs, taxes, incentives, lack of existing facilities/properties and what can be done to alleviate those barriers.

The class war that the democrats are waging on rural residents.

Creating a welcoming atmosphere for people of color, LGBTQ+ people, and other minorities Supporting local food systems: Moving away from commodity crops and supporting local growers and businesses

Lack of affordable housing seems to be the biggest hurdle in preventing economic growth in Wallowa County

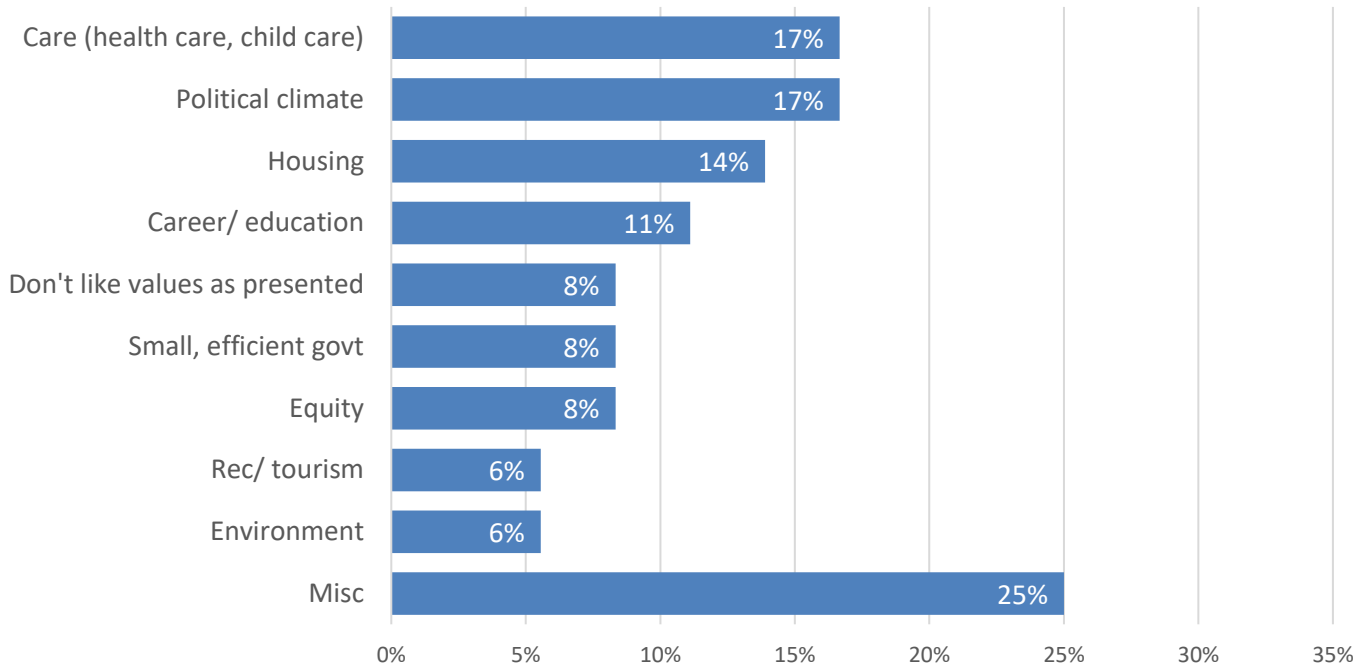
Part 3: What do you value? (n=339)



#	Answer	%	Count
5	Supporting locally owned businesses, entrepreneurs, and organizations	16%	214
1	Increasing the diversity of our economy so we are not reliant on just a few main industries	15%	202
4	Improving health care, including public health, mental health, and culturally appropriate care	13%	178
2	Supporting environmental health and sustainable use of natural resources	12%	159
3	Supporting diverse participation in community planning and decision-making	11%	146
7	Improving educational and training opportunities	11%	146
8	Supporting activities that welcome people of different backgrounds and remove barriers that prevent people from fully participating in and identifying with the broader community (such as lack of resources or because they are not welcome)	8%	110
6	Investing in infrastructure	8%	108
9	Supporting collaboration and coordination among individuals and organizations working in community and economic development	8%	104
	Total	100%	1367

Part 3: What do you value? - (Optional) Please share any additional thoughts about what you think is most important for us to consider when making decisions about how we invest in supporting the Northeastern Oregon economy. (n=36)

Values Comments
(n=36)



(Optional) Please share any additional thoughts about what you think is most important for us to consider when making decisions about how we invest in supporting the Northeastern Oregon economy.

We need to safe guard our quality of life as we seek to grow the economy. Input from all interests must be included to ensure an agenda that can be wholly supported be the community.

Do not support high class businesses in town running out mom and pop buisness.

Work and life support for people with disabilities

As a minority, I have not found Union County welcoming. The opposite -- I've found it to be discriminative and ignorant.

Increased mental health resources are badly needed in our community. Also, remembering that inability to meet fundamental needs like housing and childcare can make it difficult to include all the voices we'd like at the table.

Quit spending money on grants just researching as a short term means of job creation and actually implement something for small business and wage earners to stay here. Of all the research grants spent and people employed for those short term very very few result in making Wallowa County an affordable and long term sustainable business environment for families. In fact much of the money spent creates barriers by encouraging short term "greener" less sustainable business obstacles.

This question has politically and emotionally loaded verbiage. Slanted! This makes me think that it's an excuse to add the woke agenda items.

Create "destination learning" such as a federal Job Corps center, winter-season wildland firefighter school, skilled trades training center.

What could make Union County a leader in quality of life?

Quality healthcare is not very accessible especially for elderly. Transportation to specialists in Idaho or collaboration to bring specialists in periodically would be helpful. Elderly cannot age in place. They have to leave-their families have not remained in the area due to many factors, industry and education, a big part of it. Coming to EO is like stepping back in time and not always in a good way. Oregon policies on so many things makes it undesirable to families that work. Hurry up and get aligned with becoming Idaho and it might make the area more appealing and viable in many ways.

We need to make people accountable! We should always be asking "How well is this Working"? We need to develop a Matrix, that outlines goals, objectives, and create an objective measurement for each task or project. We must try to eliminate political, emotional and corrupt decisions and practices

Many people with special health needs have to travel outside of the area for support. We own a mental health group practice, and I'd love to bring in more providers and offer more support groups. Convincing people to move here can be challenging.

Pay attention to the construction of talents, high salary to introduce talents plan, to provide talent security demand. To attract settlers from outside.

We need to be wise and use restraint as too much tourism can permanently change the ecosystem, sense of place and affordability for locals who live here.

Invest in outdoor recreation expansion

40 year-old land use laws are not allowing for the necessary growth and land use that is required today. The laws allow for 20ft deep topsoil to have factories built upon them in the Willamette Valley but we are unable to build upon 80 acres of sagebrush. Our most productive agricultural grounds need to be preserved for agriculture so that we may feed the next generation. Factories may be better suited to build upon ground a cow would starve on even if she has 300 acres to graze.

Cultural sensitivity training!!

More jobs with a living wage, while also increasing income limits to reflect inflation so residents don't lose state supported benefits.

Changing the direction our county commissioners are taking us. Electing new commissioners that support than only ag and conservative values.

Get rid of law abiding people and reward criminals..

WE have to address the homeless or poorly homed situation. I just came from Central Oregon where families are living in camptrailer by the hundreds. It is coming to us in Eastern Oregon.

These answers are all written in a way that I cannot trust you to understand what I mean when answering them.

There is not enough housing to support additional businesses in this area. Without places to live, we can't expect new business to come in and succeed with our current labor pool.

We need to attract diverse businesses that make La Grande a great place to live and visit. There is not enough entertainment for our small town. We need more restaurants and local entertainment for our you and adults.

Investment in development should also be accompanied by environmental protection

None of these are important

Support the career development of migrants in local areas, introduce high-quality talents, and provide relevant housing and medical subsidies.

Please try to make decisions that benefit everyone, not just a handful of wealthy people.

Childcare/ enrichment opportunities for kids during meetings. Need a hub to easily see what other organizations in the region do and have done to not duplicate planning efforts

Daycare. La grande needs daycare on all levels. Especially daycare centers

I think the most important infrastructure investment

The goals above should be pursued by the least restrictive means possible.

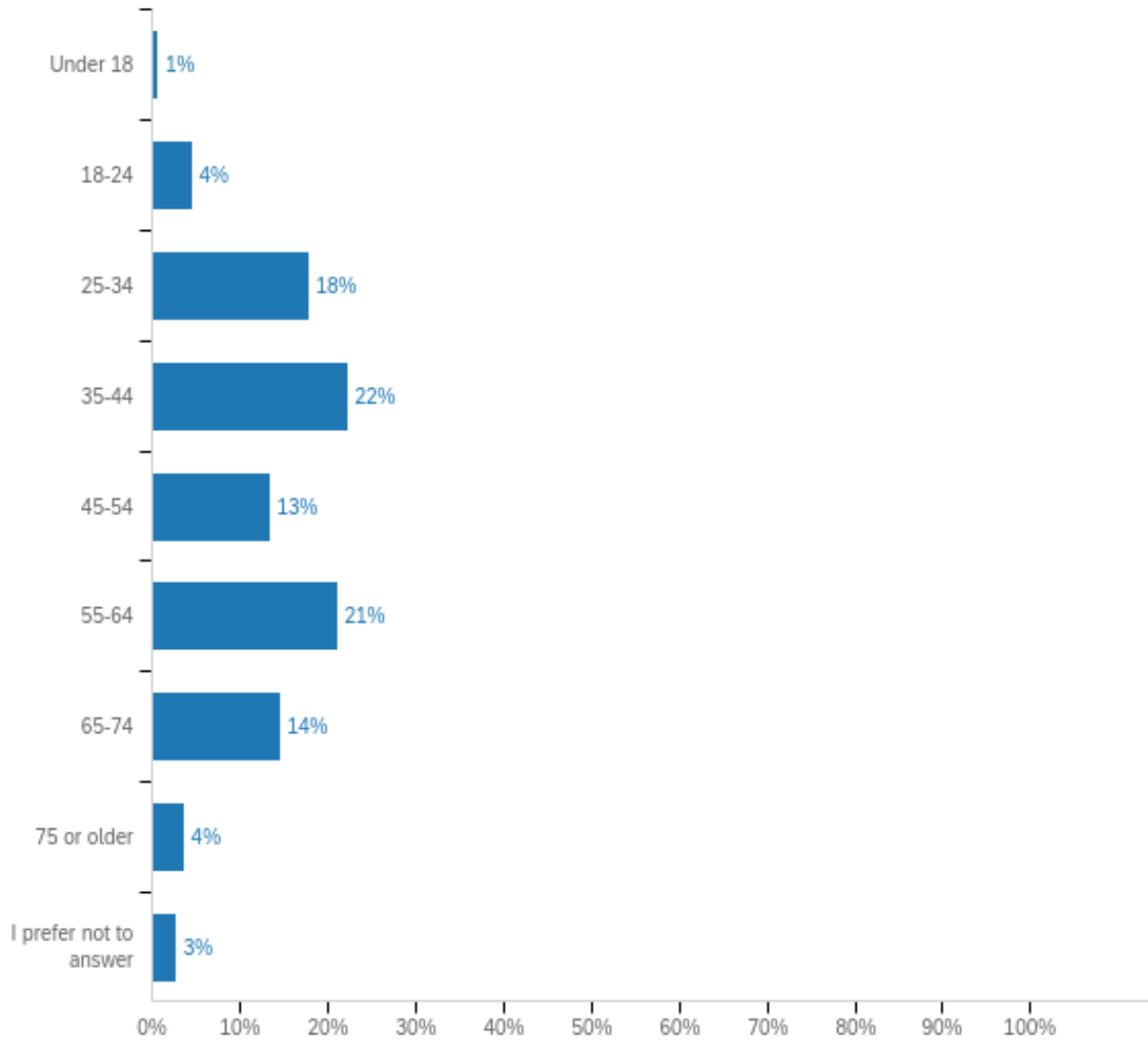
Current "collaboration" processes surrounding community planning and decision-making are intimidating for average citizens, and are dominated by the same people year after year - people who own land and have roots in NE Oregon. One result is county land-use planning, rule-making and permitting that is hugely imbalanced in favor of land owners and those who personally know and influence local government officials and employees. Plus, nearly anyone with significantly different viewpoints about land use, land access, and land uses is routinely mocked and suppressed until they become silent.

boycotting the Portland businesses.

These questions are all asking the same thing

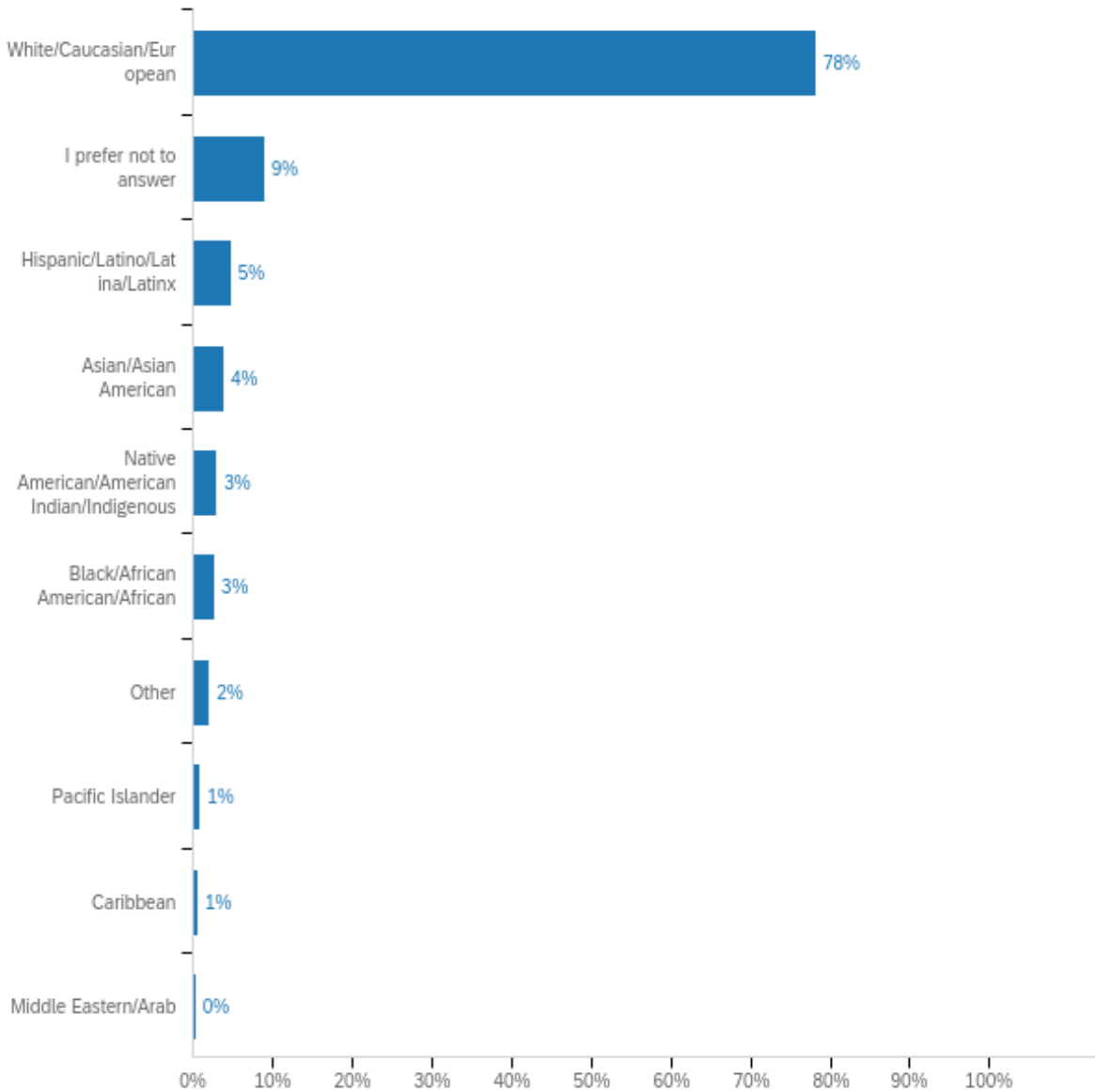
There seems to be a large portion of the population that is adverse to change, which includes social changes including diversity.

Part 4: About You - What is your age? (n=338)



#	Answer	%	Count
1	Under 18	1%	2
2	18-24	4%	15
3	25-34	18%	60
4	35-44	22%	75
5	45-54	13%	45
6	55-64	21%	71
7	65-74	14%	49
8	75 or older	4%	12
9	I prefer not to answer	3%	9
	Total	100%	338

Part 4: About You - Which of the following best describe the races/ethnicities you have? Select all that apply. (n=336)



#	Answer	%	Count
5	White/Caucasian/European	74%	263
9	I prefer not to answer	8%	30
6	Hispanic/Latino/Latina/Latinx	5%	16
3	Asian/Asian American	4%	13
8	Native American/American Indian/Indigenous	3%	10
1	Black/African American/African	3%	9
10	Other	2%	7
4	Pacific Islander	1%	3
2	Caribbean	1%	2
7	Middle Eastern/Arab	0%	1
	Total	100%	354

Text Entry

Other - Text

Euro-American

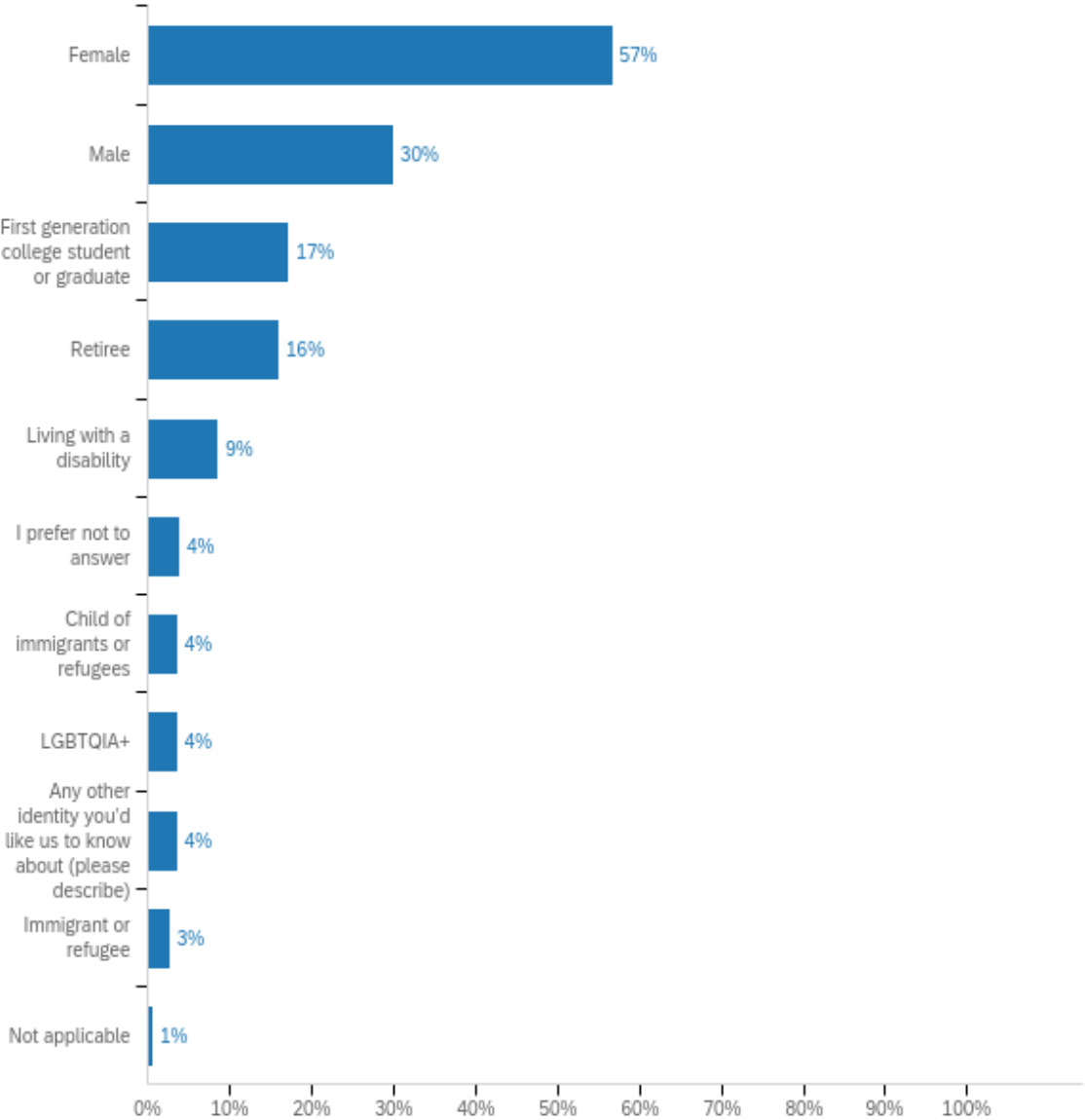
AMERICAN

The white race

Multi

Human

Part 4: About You - Which of the following, if any, do you identify as? Select all that apply. (n=337)



#	Answer	%	Count
4	Female	39%	191
5	Male	20%	101
8	First generation college student or graduate	12%	58
3	Retiree	11%	54
7	Living with a disability	6%	29
11	I prefer not to answer	3%	13
2	Child of immigrants or refugees	2%	12
9	Any other identity you'd like us to know about (please describe)	2%	12
6	LGBTQIA+	2%	12
1	Immigrant or refugee	2%	9
10	Not applicable	0%	2
	Total	100%	493

Text Entry

Any other identity you'd like us to know about (please describe) - Text

Full-time caregiver for aging and disabled family members.

Fifth generation in this area.

Scandinavian

tourism professional/writer

Veteran

An American

Non-Binary

Military Veteran

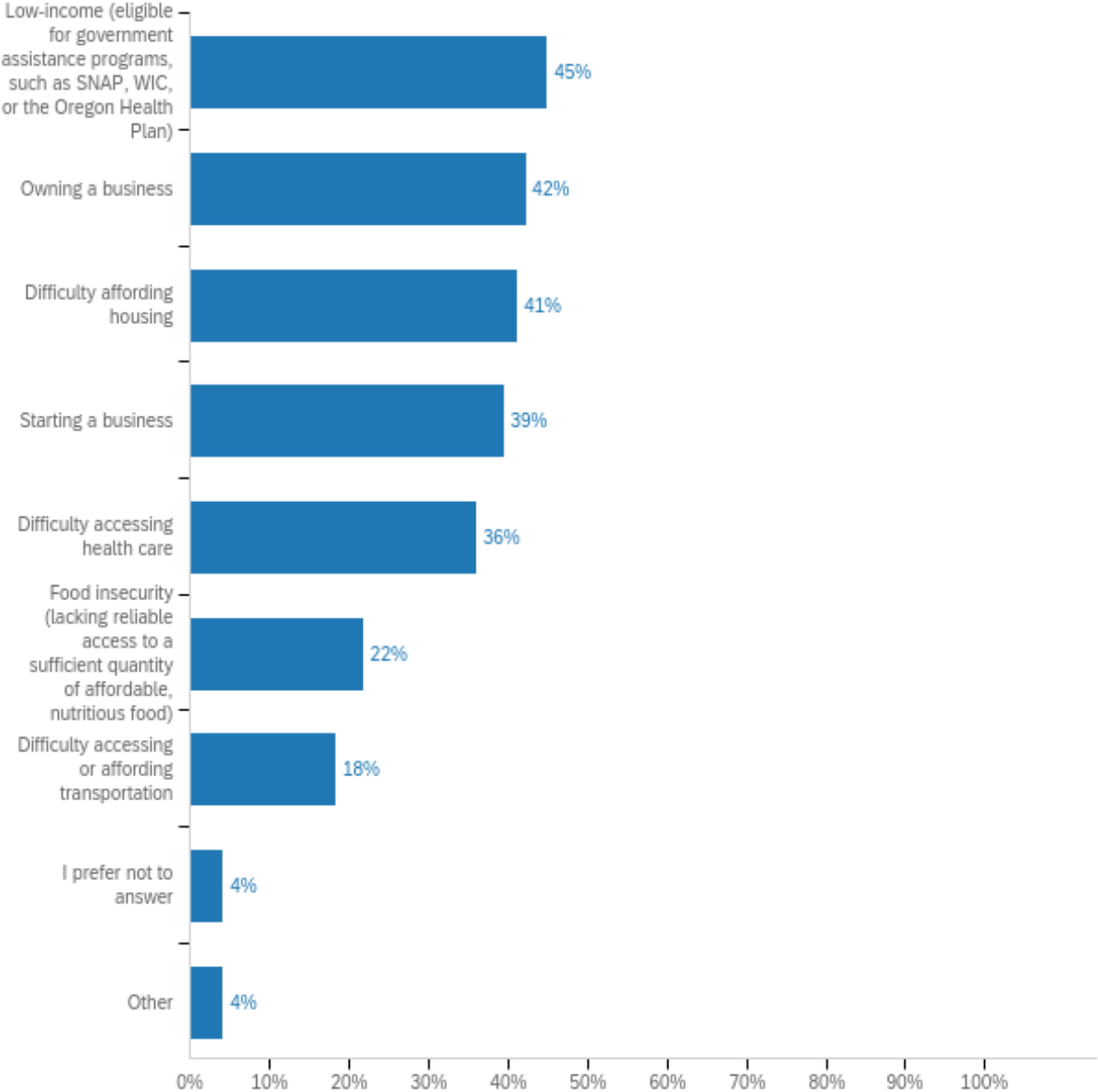
Retired U.S. Marine

American

Awake not woke

First time business owner

Part 4: About You - Do you currently experience or have you in the past experienced any of the following? Select all that apply. (n=289)



#	Answer	%	Count
1	Low-income (eligible for government assistance programs, such as SNAP, WIC, or the Oregon Health Plan)	18%	130
6	Owning a business	17%	122
4	Difficulty affording housing	16%	119
7	Starting a business	16%	114
2	Difficulty accessing health care	14%	104
3	Food insecurity (lacking reliable access to a sufficient quantity of affordable, nutritious food)	9%	63
5	Difficulty accessing or affording transportation	7%	53
8	I prefer not to answer	2%	12
9	Other	2%	12
	Total	100%	729

Text Entry

Other - Text

Quality high speed internet and affordable dependable day care for staff

Lack of mental health supports for family members

Cost of healthcare but against government healthcare.

Low income, not low enough for those programs

it would have been nice to have a timeframe for "in the past" as opposed to implied "have you ever"

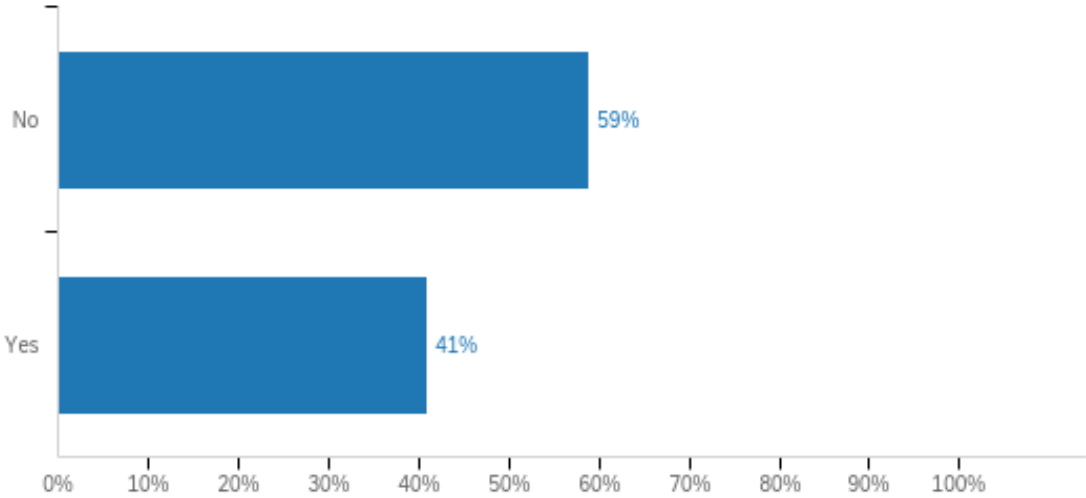
Traveling for healthcare out of county.

Sold my business in Enterprise & retired last year

None

Oregon is anti business

Part 4: About You - Do you currently own or operate a business based in Baker, Union, or Wallowa Counties? (n=339)



#	Answer	%	Count
2	No	59%	200
1	Yes	41%	139
	Total	100%	339