

RESEARCH IN OREGON COMMUNITIES' REVIEW SYSTEM

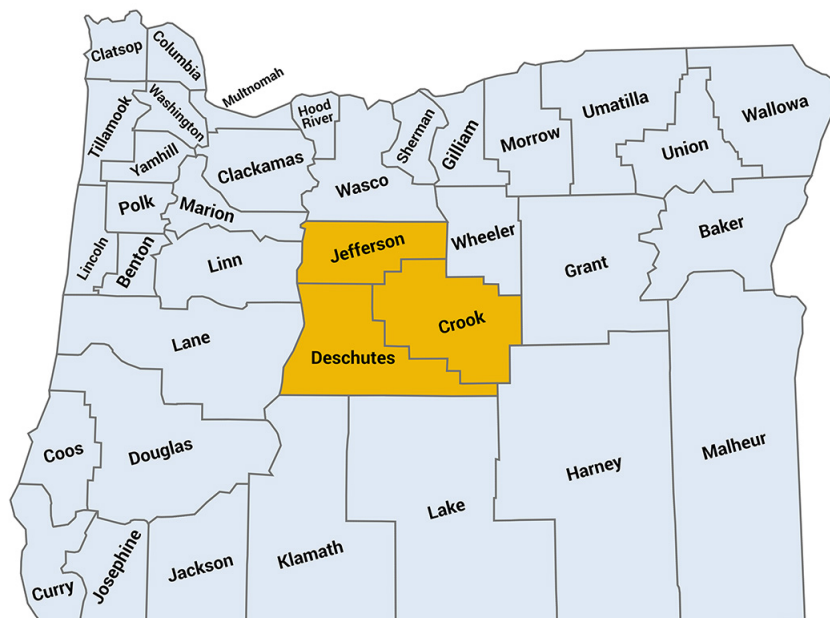
# Central Oregon Cultural Landscape

December 2024

Published by OHSU Community Outreach, Research and Engagement



## About this document



This locally-developed landscape is intended to describe the region of interest, to help guide design choices for proposed cancer prevention and control projects and/or clinical trial research implementation.

Data collected in response to the development of this landscape was offered by community leaders in the region. This regionally-specific cultural landscape is the first step along the Research in Oregon Communities' Review System (ROCRS), supported by OHSU Community Outreach, Research and Engagement (CORE).

CORE supports community-academic partnerships, gathers community input for academic research, and increases research in community settings that is responsive to the pressing health concerns of residents in Oregon. To learn more, [visit our website](#) or contact us at [CommunityResearch@ohsu.edu](mailto:CommunityResearch@ohsu.edu).



## Overview

The geographic region of Central Oregon has many different definitions. The Central Oregon Health Council's definition is a commonly used catchment area, which includes Crook, Deschutes, Jefferson and North Klamath counties, and the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs Reservation. This document highlights the political, economic, social, technological, legal, and environmental “landscapes” of Crook, Deschutes and Jefferson counties. These counties cover a 7,778 square mile area and are within the ceded lands of the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs (Wasco, Warm Springs and Northern Paiute).

The combined population of the three counties is 266,010 [1]. All cities in Central Oregon, except Bend (population 104,557), are designated rural by the Oregon Office of Rural Health (cities are >10 miles from center of 40,000 or more) [2].

The Central Oregon Health Council is the governing body for the local Coordinated Care Organization (PacificSource). It conducts a [Regional Health Assessment](#) every five years to identify priorities for a Regional Health Improvement Plan (RHIP). The 2025-2029 RHIP priority areas include: Housing Affordability, Healthcare Access and Quality, Transportation, Mental & Behavioral Health, Substance Use, and Nutrition, Physical Activity & Weight Status.

## Social, Political, and Economic Landscape

Communities are geographically isolated from one another with Bend, located in Deschutes County, serving as the urban hub. Each community has a distinct sense of self and pride. “Rural independence” is a common descriptor of Central Oregon politics. “It takes longer to build relationships within rural areas.”

Still, there are many informal, volunteer community networks that are exceptionally good at responding to needs and can transcend political divides. “People are helping people here.”

**RESEARCHER PRO TIP:** Partner with trusted leaders and networks. Come with interest and willingness to help. Include community collaboration, ways of sharing resources throughout the project, and a plan for sharing back results in project budgets and timelines.

Regional resources are often primarily located in the urban hub, resulting in communities outside of Bend and Redmond being under-resourced. The region's white majority contributes to challenges for Black, Indigenous, Latino/a, Asian, Pacific Islander, and other People of Color to gain access to resources and representation in public and political decision-making spaces.

Tourism is a primary economic driver and the region's population is growing rapidly as people move into an unaffordable housing market that also lacks inventory. “Housing costs are escalating and are not keeping pace with wages.” Additionally, “the region is a daycare desert, there is limited availability and unrealistically high costs, especially for children ages 0-3 years.”

**RESEARCHER PRO TIP:** Reduce barriers to participation by providing meals, childcare, gas cards, access to other resources.

Housing affordability and homelessness are major concerns for the region. Housing costs are outpacing wages and the 2024 Point in Time count estimated a 9% increase in unhoused adults and children from the previous year [3]. A robust coalition of housing



and homelessness service agencies serve as the Continuum of Care to prevent and end homelessness in the region.

## Environment, Technology, and Legal Landscapes

Central Oregon is known for its outdoor recreation, however, there is limited access to outdoor activities for people with disabilities. Wildfire, air quality, drought, extreme heat and extreme cold pose climate-related health threats, particularly for vulnerable populations, and may be areas of interest for environmental health research.

Substance use is a rising health concern and more services are needed [4]. Additionally, mental health services are highly sought after and largely unavailable. For every 194 people, there is 1 mental health provider in Central Oregon; this rate is lower than the statewide rate [4].

St. Charles Health System is the primary health care provider for the tri-county area, the only hospital system and one of the region's largest employers. It has cancer centers in Bend and Redmond but rare cancer cases are referred to specialists outside the area.

Cascades East Transit (CET) provides free but limited public transportation. The long distance travel required for medical appointments has led to the emergence of several community-led non-emergency transportation services. "Patients have to travel long distances to receive care, especially certain specialty care."

Broadband infrastructure is costly and limited in some areas. Largely, there are divisions in access to and use of technology between low and high-SES households and among older and younger age groups.

Population-based funding models are not optimal for under-resourced, rural communities. Local public health agencies' experiences of being charged with implementing policies and enforcing regulations without funding has damaged relationships and may have led to increased caution when engaging with larger, non-local institutions.

**RESEARCHER PRO TIP:** Consider ways to tie research to regional, public health, or county-level needs and priorities. Always return discoveries and project results to the communities that provided input and data to cultivate trust and engage in mutually beneficial practices.

## Outreach and Dissemination

Word of mouth, flyers, and promotion through community partner networks are often the most effective outreach avenues. Local news outlets are also important sources of information.

### Print and web-based publications

- Bend Bulletin
- Madras Pioneer
- Prineville Roundup
- Redmond Spokesman
- Sisters Nugget
- Spilyay Tymoo Warm Springs News
- The Source

## Radio

- La Bronca 1240 AM (Spanish language)
- KWSO 91.0 FM (Warm Springs)

## TV

- KTVZ
- Central Oregon Daily News

## Offer engagement opportunities in multiple languages and modes (online, in-person, phone)

- Tailor questions and incentives to population (location, ability, access) when possible.
- Offer incentives to local businesses such as local grocery stores or coffee shops.

## Share back findings or results with a focus on impact and relevance

- Be as visual as possible (infographics)
- “Short & sweet” messages
- One-pagers (use QR codes for full report)
- Presentations + Q&A + discussion

## Crook County

Crook County has the second highest overall cancer incidence rate (men & women) [5].

Cancer Incidence Rankings in Oregon [5]:

- First in incidence rate for:
  - ◊ Colorectal Cancer in men
  - ◊ Pancreatic Cancer
  - ◊ Overall cancer incidence rate for American Indian/Alaska Native population (>2x Oregon’s rate)
  - ◊ Overall cancer incidence rate for the Hispanic populations (>1.5x Oregon’s rate)

Cancer Prevention Behaviors and Modifiable Risk Factors [6]:

- Breast cancer screening: 70.3% vs. 78.9% for Oregon
- HPV Vaccine Completion rates (13-17 yr olds) for 2022: 47%, compared to the state completion rate (55%)
- Second lowest rate (38.6%) of older men 65+ yrs who are up to date on a core set of clinical preventive services: Flu shot past year, PPV shot ever, colorectal cancer screening
- Third highest rate (28.2%) of high cholesterol in Oregon
- Coronary Heart Disease ever diagnosed: 5.5% vs 3.1% for Oregon

## Deschutes County

Cancer Incidence Rankings in Oregon [5]:

- First in incidence rate for:
  - ◊ Melanoma of the skin for men

- ◇ Oropharyngeal Cancer for women
- ◇ Prostate Cancer

- Third in incidence rate for:
  - ◇ Brain Cancer
  - ◇ Breast Cancer
  - ◇ Melanoma of the skin for women

#### Cancer Prevention Behaviors and Modifiable Risk Factors [6]:

- Second highest binge drinking rate in Oregon: 19.5%.
- Third lowest uninsured rate in Oregon: 6.7%, matching the state uninsured rate.
- Higher cervical and colorectal cancer screening rates than Oregon
- 3rd highest rate for visiting the dentist over the past year: 69.8%
- Second lowest rate of depression: 23.8%
- Lowest rate of diabetes: 7.3%
- Lowest rate of obesity: 25.8% vs 30.6% for Oregon

### South Deschutes County

La Pine and the surrounding communities are often referred to as “South County.” Residents are on average, older than the rest of the county (Median age: 55.2 yrs, compared to 42.6 yrs for Deschutes County overall [7]). We would expect higher rates of more acute and chronic health conditions because older adults are at higher risk. To avoid obscuring the different needs of this population, we highlight a few of the differences in disease prevalence in South County.

- Uninsured rate: 7.6%
- Visits to dentist or dental clinic among adults aged 18+: S. County (64.2%), Des. County (70.2%) [8]
- All teeth lost among adults aged 65+ years: S. County (15.8%), Des. County (9.3%) [8]
- Diabetes among adults aged 18+: S. County (12.2%), Des. County (9%). [7]
- Obesity rate: S. County (30.1%), Des. County (26.2%) [7]

### Jefferson County

#### Cancer Incidence Rankings in Oregon [5]:

- First in incidence rate for:
  - ◇ Non-Hodgkin’s Lymphoma for men and women
- Third in incidence rate for:
  - ◇ Kidney and Renal Pelvis Cancer for men and women

#### Cancer Prevention Behaviors and Modifiable Risk Factors [6]:

- Breast Cancer screening: 70.2% vs 78.9% for Oregon
- Colorectal Cancer screening: 6th lowest screening rate, 68.8% vs 73.4% for Oregon
- Third highest mortality rate for Prostate Cancer
- Fifth highest mortality rate for Lung and Bronchus Cancer in women

- 6th highest uninsured rate: 11.3% vs 8.4% for Oregon
- Lowest quartile for older men 65+ yrs who are up to date on a core set of clinical preventive services: Flu shot past year, PPV shot ever, Colorectal cancer screening (40.5%).
- Lowest quartile for older women 65+ yrs who are up to date on a core set of clinical preventive services: Flu shot past year, PPV shot ever, Colorectal cancer screening (36.4%).
- Coronary Heart Disease: 6% vs 3.1% for Oregon.
- 4th highest rate of Diabetes in the State: 10.2%.

## References

1. Central Oregon Health Council. Health Data (2024). <https://www.centraloregonhealthdata.org/demographicdata?id=285505>.
2. Oregon Office of Rural Health. (2024). About rural and frontier data. <https://www.ohsu.edu/oregon-office-of-rural-health/about-rural-and-frontier-data>.
3. Homeless Leadership Coalition. (2024). Point in time count resources. <https://cohomeless.org/resources/pit-resources/>.
4. Central Oregon Health Council. Health Data (2024). <https://www.centraloregonhealthdata.org/stories/index/view?id=323448676001344532&pid=109447956674>.
5. Oregon Health Authority. Age-adjusted Cancer Incidence Rates (2016-2020). Oregon Cancer Registry Data. Date accessed: 09 October 2023.
6. Oregon Health Authority. Chronic Conditions and Chronic Conditions Risk Factor Data. Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS). 2018-2021 4-year, age-adjusted prevalence rates. Date uploaded: 17 May 2023. Date accessed: 07 February 2024.
7. U.S. Census Bureau, 2018-2022 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates.
8. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2022 Behavioral Risk Factors Surveillance System.