

2023 Community Survey Report

Evaluating Food Insecurity in Lane County

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B. 2023 Community Survey

FOOD For Lane County's mission is to reduce hunger (a.k.a. food insecurity) by engaging our community (Lane County residents) to create access to food. FOOD For Lane County (FFLC) administers a community survey (formerly known as the "Hunger Factors Survey" every 2-3 years, through which we collect information from the community about their experiences with food insecurity, available services, and factors that may contribute to their food security needs. This information, along with U.S. Census data, contributes to FFLC's understanding of food insecurity in Lane County and provides insights on how we can better meet the food assistance needs in our county. It also allows us to share the needs of the community with elected officials and others who can make change at a higher level.

In April 2023, FOOD For Lane County put forth a 28-question Community Survey (see Appendix B) to Lane County residents about their experiences related to food security. Participation in this survey was optional and confidential. Participants were assured that they would still be able to receive food if they chose not to answer survey questions. We collected contact information separately for participants who wished to participate in the incentive drawing we offered. We sought out respondents who have experiences related to food security and invited participation from those without direct experiences of food insecurity as well.

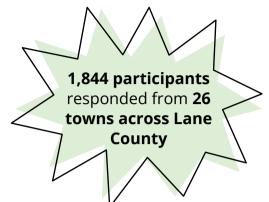
FFLC promoted the survey online and in person at partner agencies and programs, as well as through our website, social media, and connections with other local organizations. It was important to us that we provide accessible options to as many members of our community as we could. Surveys were conducted online as well as on paper, with both versions available in English or Spanish.

The survey consisted of 4 sections: (1) Food Assistance Questions, (2) Barriers, (3) General Information, and (4) Household Information. Food Assistance Questions focused on individuals' access to and awareness of food services. The Barriers section was intended to help us understand what we may be able to do to make it easier for community members to get food. To formulate a trauma-informed survey, we included a short introduction that shared our awareness that answering the Barriers questions might stir up difficult emotions. Participants were invited to skip questions that they did not want to answer.

The charts on the following pages reflect data collected by FFLC's 2023 Community Survey. There are also comparisons to previous years' data collected by FOOD For Lane County and Oregon Food Bank surveys in 2021 and 2018.

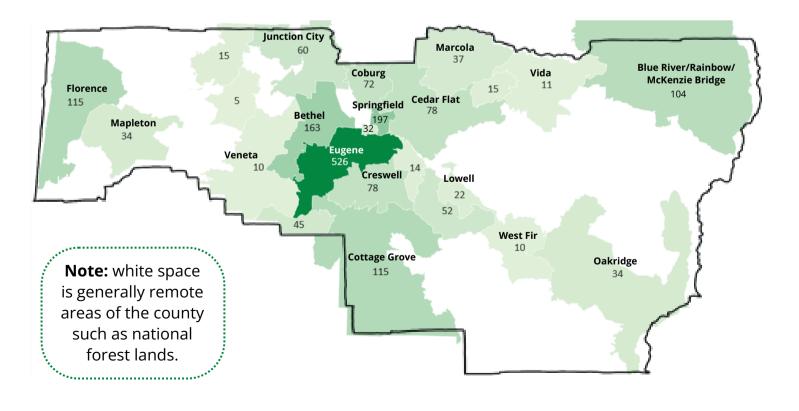


Survey Participants by Location



For a more detailed breakdown of the survey participants demographics, household characteristics, and comparisons to Lane County statistics, please reference Appendix A, Participant Demographics & Household Data.

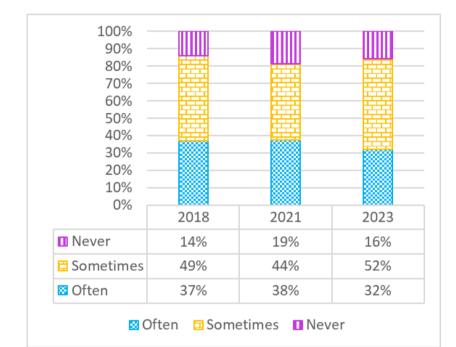
Bethel	163	Dexter	52	Marcola	37	Thurston	32
Blue River	68	Eugene	526	McKenzie Bridge	26	Triangle Lake	15
Cedar Flat	78	Florence	115	Noti	5	Veneta	10
Coburg	72	Junction City	60	Oakridge	34	Vida	11
Cottage Grove	115	Leaburg	15	Pleasant Hill	14	West Fir	10
Creswell	78	Lowell	22	Rainbow	10		
Crow/Lorane	45	Mapleton	34	Springfield	197		

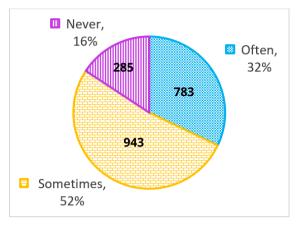


2023 Food Insecurity Findings

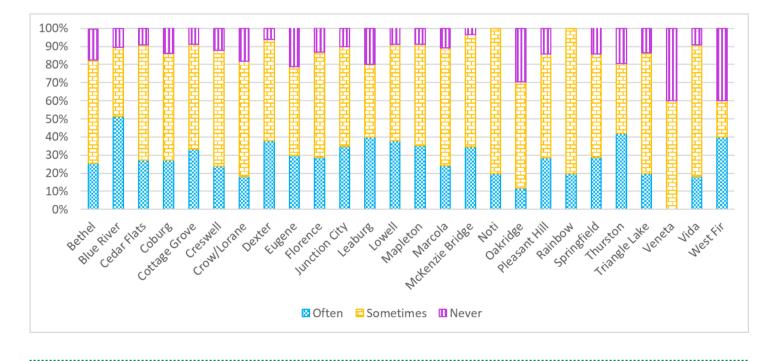
In the last 12 months, how often did you worry your food would run out before you got money to buy more?

For Lane County





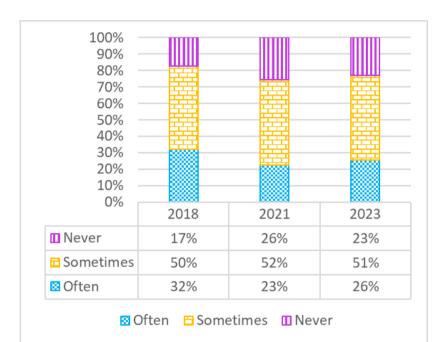
1,726 people (84%) reported that in the last 12 months they often or sometimes worried about running out of food before they had money to buy more. The areas with highest levels of concern were Rainbow (100%), McKenzie Bridge (96%), and Dexter (94%).

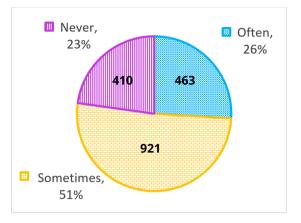




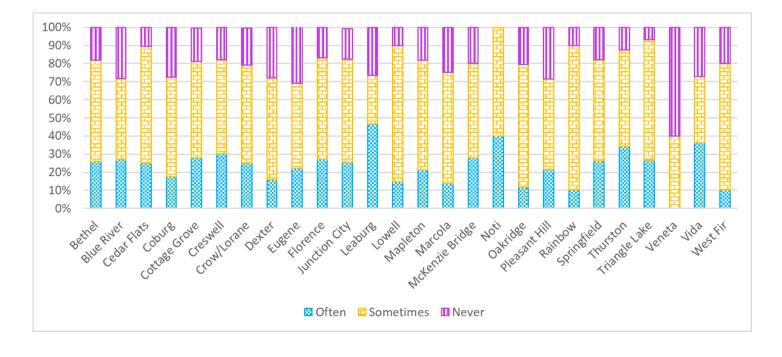
In the last 12 months, were there situations where the food you bought didn't last and you didn't have the money to buy more?

For Lane County





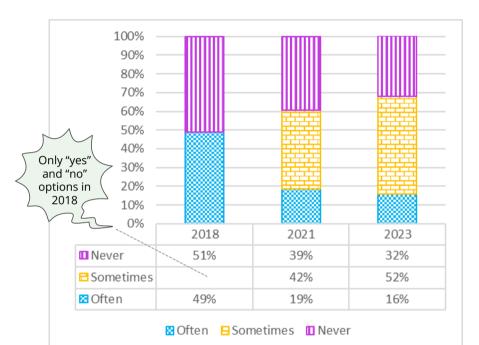
1,384 people (77%) reported that in the last 12 months they often or sometimes ran out of food and didn't have money for more during the last year. The areas with the highest levels of concern were Noti (100%), Triangle Lake (93%), Rainbow (90%), and Lowell (90%).

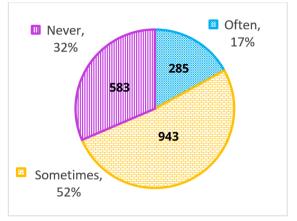




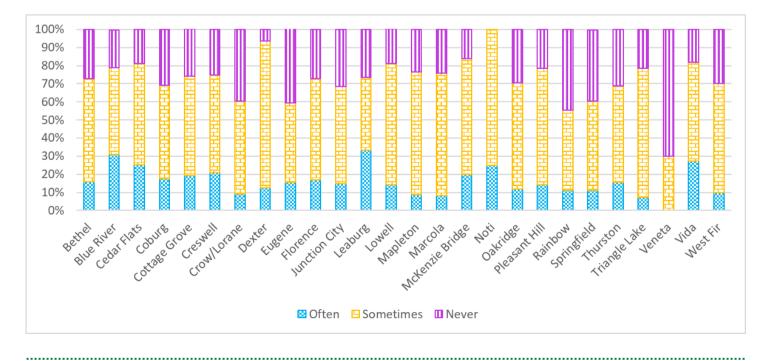
2023 Food Insecurity Findings

In the last 12 months, were you ever hungry but didn't eat because there wasn't enough money for food?





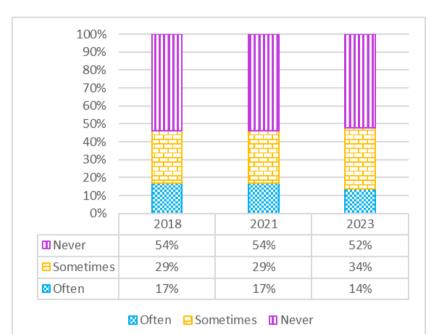
1,228 people (68%) reported that in the last 12 months they often or sometimes were hungry but didn't eat because there wasn't enough money for food. The areas with highest levels of concern were Noti (100%), Dexter (94%), and McKenzie Bridge (84%).

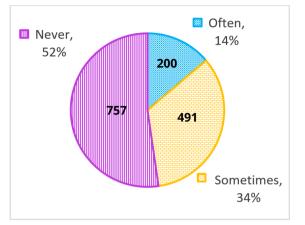




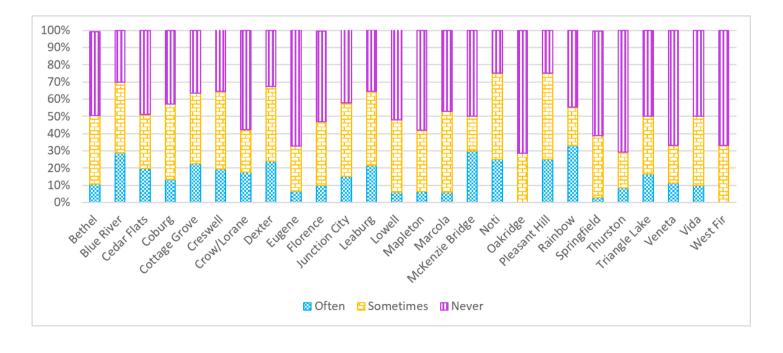
In the last 12 months, did you ever cut the size of your children's meals, or did your children ever skip meals because there was not enough money for food?

For Lane County





691 people (48%) reported that in the last 12 months they often or sometimes needed to cut the size of or have their kids skip meals because there was not enough money for food. The areas with highest levels of concern were Noti (75%), Blue River (70%), and Dexter (67%).

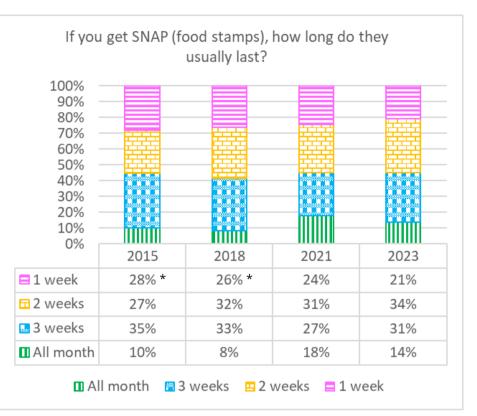




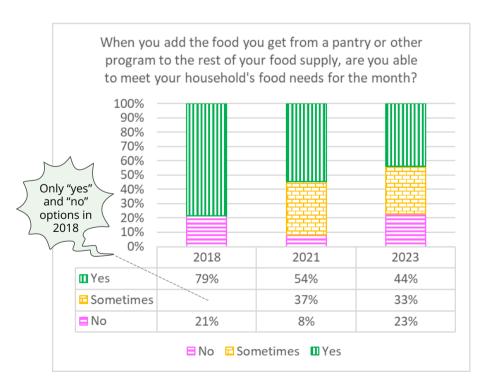
Due to pandemic expanded SNAP benefits in 2021, there was a 10% increase in respondents whose benefits lasted them the entire month. These benefits were eliminated shortly before the 2023 Community Survey and likely caused the 4% decrease.

2023 Response Totals		
1 week	278	
2 weeks	459	
3 weeks	420	
All month	183	

2023 Food Insecurity Findings



* In 2015 and 2018, instead of "1 week," the option was "less than 2 weeks."



865 people (56%) responded that even with

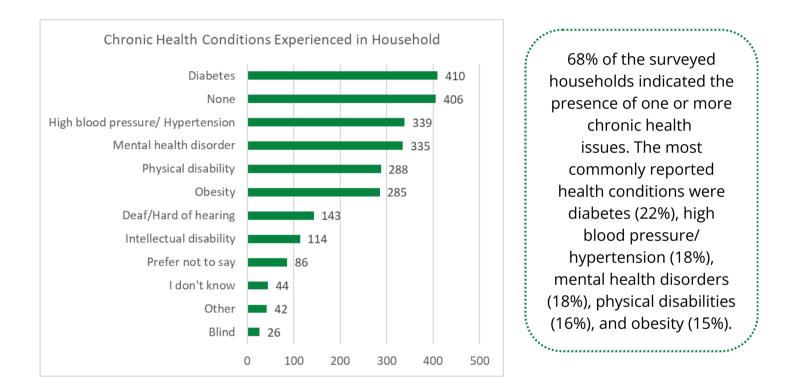
food programs they are not able to or sometimes not able to meet their household's food needs for the month.

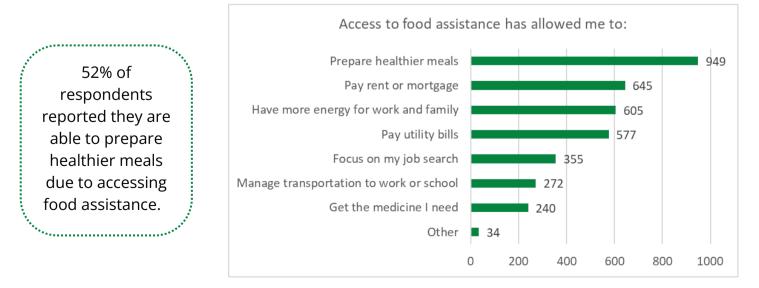
This is a significant raise (10%) from our 2021 findings and may also be related to the elimination of pandemic expanded SNAP benefits.



Health & Food Assistance

Food insecurity often causes limited access to nutritious foods and results in a diet reliant on unhealthy, processed foods. This type of diet, which is low in heart-healthy foods such as fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and lean proteins, increases the risk of developing type 2 diabetes and developing risk factors associated with coronary heart disease, such as high blood pressure, high cholesterol, and obesity (<u>TechSoup, Data Commons</u>).

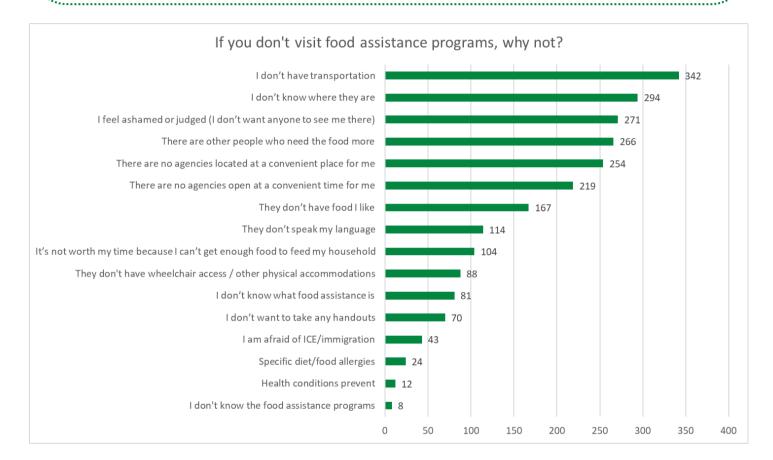






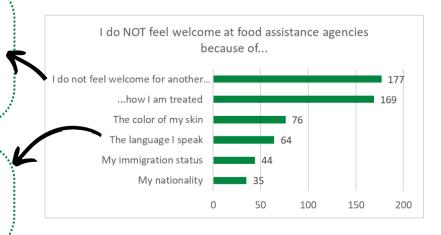
Barriers to Access

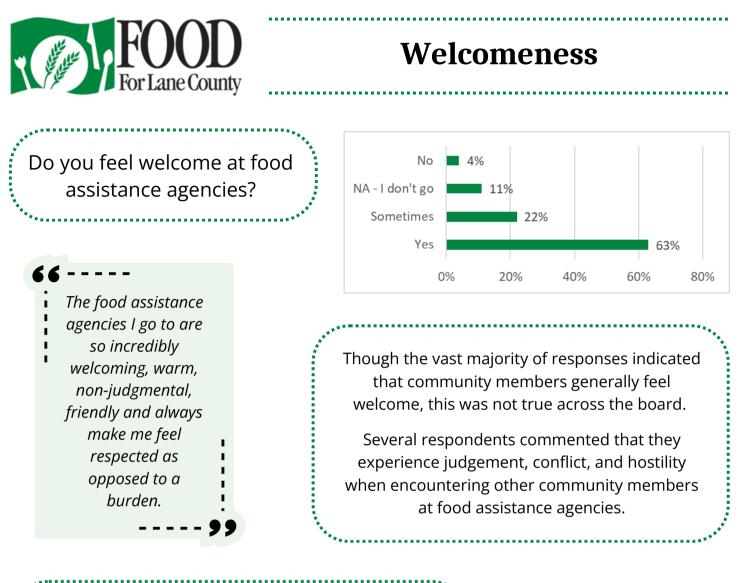
A wide range of barriers were identified by respondents related to accessing food assistance programs. The most common reasons reported for not visiting food assistance programs were a lack of transportation, the need for participants to understand where the programs are located, and feeling ashamed.



177 (33%) people reported that they did not feel welcomed for another reason. The most common reasons listed were: my social appearance (19%), unfriendly staff (15%), and unable due to disabilities (14%).

17% (64) of the 383 people who responded with a non-English primary language reported not feeling welcome because of the language they speak.





Is there anything that would help you feel more welcome at food assistance agencies?



Only 6% of survey participants (116 people) chose to answer the optional question about what would help them feel more welcome. The most common responses were:

- kinder / friendlier staff (14%)
- creating a more peaceful environment (4%)

Other responses included having interpreters and language services, offering help carrying food and support for disabled people, having closer food service locations to their residences, privacy/discretion, agencies not having religious affiliations, and hot water being available for tea and noodles.



Comments from Respondents

Participants voiced a collective desire for food delivery services, extended operating hours, and more service locations. They also shared their struggles with standing in line, citing challenges related to childcare and disabilities. Some view food delivery as a positive intervention for those facing difficulties. Some comments include:

- "During the pandemic, I had the opportunity to experience an organization that delivered shelf-stable foods to my doorstep. I found this service immensely valuable. What set it apart was its discretion, as the organization was based outside my local area. Moreover, my information was not included in the database used by my colleagues, sparing me any potential embarrassment associated with needing food assistance."
- "Food box delivery to our home would be wonderful. It's more private, and we will be included. Many times not much is left for us when it's our turn in line. It's heartbreaking."
- "Transportation and delivery services to homeless camps are much-needed and appreciated."
- "I'm unsure if this option currently exists, but having the ability to request food assistance online would be a valuable resource for individuals experiencing agoraphobia, catatonia, or other functionality-inhibiting mental health issues. These individuals may be unable to leave their homes."
- "It is vital to recognize that not everyone can endure long lines. It poses challenges for those without childcare, parents of children with disabilities, and individuals who cannot tolerate crowded and unsanitary environments. Implementing drive-up/drivethrough options or food delivery services would be an inclusive step forward, especially if dietary preferences can be accommodated."
- "It is difficult to get to the food bank and then home with my food "

2023 Community Survey Report



2023 Community Survey

Appendix A: Participant Demographics & Household Characteristics

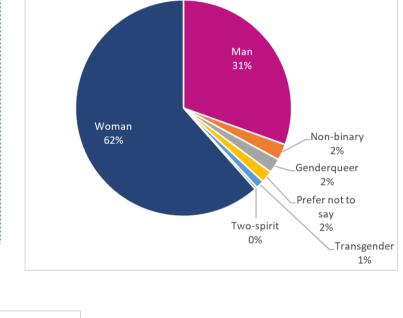
In an effort to keep the primary 2023 Community Survey report's focus on food security, the demographic and household characteristics of the survey participants are presented and compared to <u>2022 Census data</u> in this appendix.

382,353 people live in Lane County. 50.5% are estimated to be female.

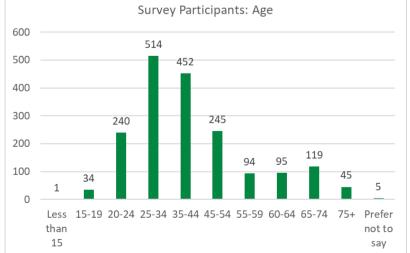
Out of the total sample size of 1,844 participants, a subset of 98 persons self-identified with several gender categories as provided in the survey.

The gender distribution is as follows:

- 1,195 Women
- 592 Men
- 47 Non-binary
- 35 Preferred not to identify
- 24 Transgender
- 7 Two-spirit



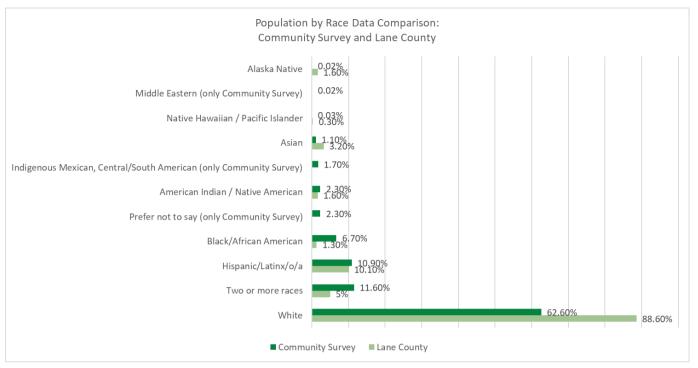
Survey Partcipants: Gender Responses



52% of participants were between the ages of 25-44. Less than 2% were 19 years old or younger. And less than 9% of participants were 65 years old or older.



2023 Community Survey: Appendix A Participant Demographics



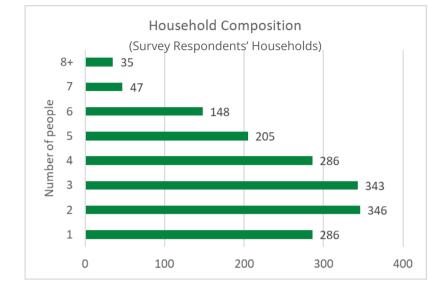
People who identify as races other than white or as two or more races generally responded to our survey at higher rates than <u>Census data</u> indicates they represent in Lane County. This is likely due to the disproportionate rates of food insecurity experienced due to systemic racism and economic inequality.

Type of Housing	# of Responses	Percentage of Responses
Assisted living/Supported housing (transitional housing, group home, nursing home)	109	6%
Group housing (residence halls, dormitories, farm / agricultural worker housing)	92	5%
Own your home (including paying mortgage)	539	29%
Rent	940	51%
Unhoused (live in car, van, motel, camping, emergency shelter, staying temporarily with friends or family, other houseless)	164	9%

Though there is a connection between housing security and food security, for respondents to this survey, home ownership does not guarantee food security. The majority (51%) of survey participants were renters, while 29% own their home (including paying a mortgage). According to 2022 <u>Census data</u>, 59% of Lane County housing units were owner-occupied or paying a mortgage.



2023 Community Survey: Appendix A Household Characteristics



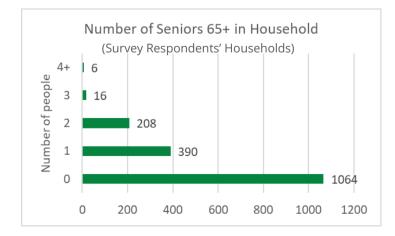
158,621 households reside in Lane County, with an average of 2.35 persons per household (2022 Census).

Approximately 25% of our respondents belonged to households with five or more family members.

17% of Lane County residents are under 18 years old (<u>2022 Census</u>).

996 (54%) of survey participants had at least one child in their household.

Number of Youth (ages 0-18) in Household (Survey Respondents' Households) 5+ 12 Number of people 4 62 3 94 2 272 1 556 0 721 0 200 400 600 800



21% of Lane County residents are over 65 (2022 Census).
620 (34%) of survey participants had at least one senior aged 65 years or older residing in their household.



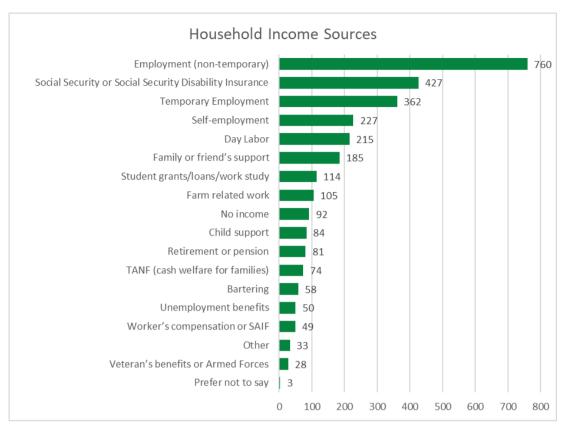
According to <u>Census data</u>, 8.5% of Lane County residents over the age of 5 speak a language other than English at home.

176 participants (10% of total participants) reported English is not a primary language they speak. Of these 176 participants, 64% visited food pantries while 36% did not. 286 participants spoke two or more primary languages. A breakdown of the different primary languages reported and their number of responses is shown in the table below.

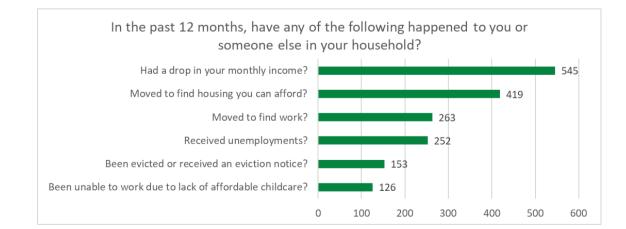
			# of responses
	Responses	% of Total Respondents	= 1844 total participants
English	1663	90.18%	
Spanish	255	13.83%	
Native American Languages	26	1.41%	
Mixteco	15	0.81%	
French	13	0.70%	
Maya Mam	12	0.65%	
Other Guatemalan or Mayan languages/dialects	10	0.54%	
Cantonese	9	0.49%	
Maya Quiché	8	0.43%	383 (21%) of
Mandarin	7	0.38%	respondents
Maya Q'onjob'al (Konjobal)	7	0.38%	indicated language
Russian	7	0.38%	other than English
Japanese	3	0.16%	as their primary
Vietnamese	3	0.16%	languages.
Korean	2	0.11%	
ASL	1	0.05%	
Catalan	1	0.05%	
Fukien/Fujian	1	0.05%	
Kinyarwanda	1	0.05%	
Lithuanian	1	0.05%	
Portuguese	1	0.05%	



2023 Community Survey: Appendix A Income & Finances



The most common income sources were non-temporary employment, accounting for 41% of the total, followed by income from Social Security or Social Security Disability Insurance (23%). Temporary employment served as another common source of household income (20%).



A decrease in income was reported by 30% of participants within the last 12-months and 14% of individuals received unemployment benefits. 8% of individuals had experienced eviction or had been served with an eviction notice within the preceding 12-month period.



We are asking Lane County residents to respond to this survey about their experiences with hunger and food assistance. Your responses will help us better understand how we can meet your food assistance needs. This also allows us to share the needs of our community with those who can make change at a higher level.

Participation in this survey is up to you. If you choose not to answer these survey questions, you will still get food.

We estimate that this survey will take about 5 minutes to complete.

We are not collecting any identifying information (no name, address, contact information, etc.) If you don't want to answer a question just leave it blank.

After you have completed this survey, you can enter to win a \$20 gift card!

Thank you for taking the time to help us better serve you!

Food Assistance Questions

1. Do you or anyone in your household currently receive food assistance?*

□ Yes □ No *(skip to question #6)* □ I don't know

2. Does anyone in your household currently get help from the following:*

□ SNAP (food stamps / EBT/ Oregon Trail Card / Basic Food)

- □ Free food boxes (food pantry / mobile pantry / food bank)
- □ Little Neighborhood Free Pantries
- □ Meal sites
- □ Children's summer food program
- □ Free or reduced-price school breakfast or lunch
- □ Section 8 (subsidized housing) or Senior/Disabled Housing
- □ Snacks or meals in an after-school program
- □ Energy assistance

□ WIC

- □ Neighbor / Family / Friend(s) purchasing food
- □ Free Produce Program (such as Trillium Produce Plus)
- □ Senior Grocery food boxes
- □ Meals on Wheels
- □ Other: __

3. If you get SNAP (food stamps), how long do they usually last?*

All month3 weeks2 weeks

 One week or less
 Not applicable, I do not receive SNAP

- 4. When you get food from a pantry or other food assistance program, are you able to meet your household's food needs for the month?*
 - YesNoSometimes
- 5. Access to food assistance has allowed me to:* (check all that apply)
 - □ Prepare healthier meals
 - □ Pay rent or mortgage
 - \Box Focus on my job search
 - \Box Pay utility bills
 - $\hfill\square$ Have more energy for work and family
 - \Box Manage transportation to work or school
 - \Box Get the medicine I need
 - $\hfill\square$ None of the above
 - □ Other: _____
- 6. What makes it hard for you to access food assistance programs? (If you do not visit them, why not?) *Select all that apply.*
 - \Box I don't know what food assistance is
 - \Box I don't know where they are
 - □ I don't have transportation
 - □ They don't speak my language
 - $\hfill\square$ There are no agencies located at a convenient place for me
 - □ There are no agencies open at a convenient time for me
 - \Box They don't have wheelchair access / other physical accommodations
 - □ They don't have food I like
 - □ It's not worth my time because I can't get enough food to feed my household
 - □ I feel ashamed or judged (I don't want anyone to see me there)
 - □ There are other people who need the food more than me/my household
 - □ I don't want to take any handouts
 - □ I am afraid of ICE/immigration
 - □ None I don't experience any barriers to getting food assistance
 - □ Other: _____
- 7. What foods would be most helpful for you?

The food we provide mostly comes from donations, but when we know what is preferred we can ask for specific items to be donated and purchase what we can.

8. What are the most convenient times for you to access food assistance programs?

□ Weekdays during school/work hours

□ Evenings (after work hours)

- □ Weekend days
- \Box Weekend evenings
- □ Other: _____

Barriers

The following questions may bring up difficult emotions. Feel free to skip any question or the entire section (questions 10-15).

Any answers you can provide will help us understand what we may be able to do to make it easier for you to get food. Some things are out of our control, but we want to do what we can to help.

9. In the past 12 months,

	Often	Sometimes	Never
How often did you worry your food would run			
out before you got money to buy more?			
Were there times when the food you bought			
didn't last and there was not money to buy			
more?			
Did you ever cut the size of your children's			
meals, or did your children ever skip meals			
because there was not enough money for			
food? (please skip if you DON'T have children)			
Were you ever hungry but didn't eat because			
there wasn't enough money for food?			

10. What makes it hard for you to have enough food?*

	This IS a barrier	This is NOT a barrier	I don't know
How long food lasts			
Length of time it takes to prepare foods			
The amount of space food takes to store			
The availability of food at my local food pantry			
I do not have a refrigerator or another way to			
keep perishable food cold			
Not having the tools to prepare food			

11. What would help improve your situation and make food assistance less necessary for your family?

□ Better job□ Higher pay

[question continues on to the next page]

□ Affordable housing
🗆 Healthcare
Education
□ Nearby food assistance options
□ Other:

12. Do you feel welcome at food assistance agencies?

- Yes (skip to question #14)
 No
 Sometimes
 I do not go (skip to question #15)
- 13. I do NOT feel welcome at food assistance agencies because of...

🗆how I am treated	
□my nationality	

- \square ...the color of my skin
- \Box ...the language I speak
- □ ...my immigration status
- □ I DO feel welcome
- □ I do not feel welcome for another reason: _____

If you do not feel welcome for another reason and you are willing to share, please use this space to tell us why you don't feel welcome.

If there is a specific agency where you do NOT feel welcome, you may list them here:

- 14. If there is a specific **agency where you DO feel welcome**, you may list them here:
- 15. Is there anything that would help you feel more welcome at food assistance agencies? *Or any additional comments*?

General Information

Your answers to the following questions will help us understand more about what types of food services may be most helpful for you and your household.

We don't ask for your name when you answer these questions. If you choose not to answer certain questions, you will still get food.

16. Which of the following best describes the community where you live?*

- □ Bethel □ Mapleton □ Blue River □ Marcola Cedar Flats □ McKenzie Bridge □ Coburg 🗆 Noti □ Oakridge □ Cottage Grove 🗆 Pleasant Hill Creswell □ Crow/Lorane □ Rainbow □ Dexter □ Springfield □ Thurston □ Eugene □ Florence □ Triangle Lake □ Junction City 🗆 Veneta □ Leaburg 🗆 Vida □ Lowell U West Fir
- 17. What is your age?*
 - □ Under 15
 □ 45-5

 □ 15-19
 □ 55-5

 □ 20-24
 □ 60-6

 □ 25-34
 □ 65-7

 □ 35-44
 □ 75+
- Which gender do you identify with?* (check all that apply)
 - □ Woman □ Man
 - Non-binaryGenderqueer
- 19. Which categories best describe you?*
 - (check all that apply)
 - 🗆 White
 - □ Hispanic/Latinx/Latina
 - □ Indigenous Mexican, Central and/or South American
 - 🗆 Black
 - □ African American
 - \Box African
 - 🗌 Asian
 - □ American Indian / Native American
 - 🗆 Alaska Native
 - □ Middle Eastern
 - □ North African
 - □ Native Hawaiian
 - □ Other Pacific Islander
 - \Box Prefer not to say
 - □ Other: _____

- □ 45-54
 □ 55-59
 □ 60-64
 □ 65-74
 □ 75+
- \Box Prefer not to say
- Transgender
 Two-spirit
 Prefer not to say

20. Are you currently a student?*

- \Box Yes in high school
- □ Yes in technical school
- □ Yes in college
- □ Yes in graduate school
- □ No not currently a student
- 21. Which of the following best describes your housing situation?*
 - □ Own your home (including paying mortgage)
 - 🗆 Rent
 - Unhoused (live in car, van, motel, camping, emergency shelter, staying temporarily with friends or family, other houseless)
 - □ Assisted living/Supported housing (transitional housing, group home, nursing home)
 - Group housing (residence halls, dormitories, farm / agricultural worker housing)

Household Information

We want to get a little more information about you and your household so that we can meet your needs as best we can.

We don't ask for your name or contact information when you answer these questions. If you choose not to answer them you will still get food.

22. Household size (including yourself)

Total number of people you live with (they do not need to be related to you)	
Number of adults you live with ages 19-64 (including yourself)	
Number of youth ages 0-18 living in your household	
Number of seniors ages 65+ living in your household	

23. Primary language(s) you speak:

24. Does anyone in your household live with any of the following conditions? *We use this question to help us target our programs and services and reduce barriers.*

□ Diabetes
□ High blood pressure
□ Obesity
Intellectual disability
Physical disability
□ Deaf/hard of hearing
Blind
Mental health disorder
🗆 I don't know
□ None
□ Prefer not to say
□ Other:

25. In the past 12 months, have you or another adult household member...*

 \Box Moved to find work?

- □ Moved to find housing you could afford?
- □ Been evicted or received an eviction notice?
- □ Received unemployment benefits?

□ Had a drop in your monthly income?

□ Been unable to work due to lack of affordable childcare?

 \Box None of the above

26. What are your household's current sources of income?* (Please check all that apply.)

□ Employment (non-temporary)

□ Temporary Employment

□ Self-employment

- □ Worker's compensation or SAIF
- □ Student grants or work study

□ Day labor

□ Family or friend's support

 \Box Farm related work

 \Box Veteran's benefits or Armed Forces

□ TANF (cash welfare for families)

□ Bartering

□ Child support

□ Social Security or Social Security Disability Insurance

□ Retirement or pension

 \square No income

□ Unemployment benefits

□ Other: __

27. What is the highest grade completed by the person with the most education in your household?*

□ 8th grade or lower

□ Some high school (no diploma / no GED)

[question continues on to the next page]