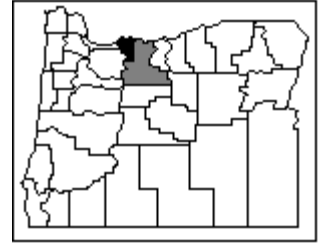


## HOOD RIVER & WASCO COUNTIES

The Oregon Child Development Coalition in Hood River and Wasco Counties improves the lives of children and families through the Migrant Seasonal Head Start program. Directed by a County Executive Committee, which includes a County Director, parents of program participants and community representatives, the Oregon Child Development Coalition's Migrant Seasonal Head Start program in Hood River and Wasco Counties serves a total of 486 children annually. In Hood River County, 135 children are classified as migrant and 55 children are classified as seasonal. In Wasco County, 260 children are classified as migrant and 36 children are classified as seasonal. In 2005, the Oregon Child Development Coalition in Hood River and Wasco Counties served 97 percent of funded enrollment despite the worst cherry harvest on record. As of May 2006, average daily attendance was 97 percent.



The Oregon Child Development Coalition in Hood River and Wasco Counties currently employs a center-based option, serving children from three locations in Parkdale and Odell, Oregon, both in Hood River County, and The Dalles, Oregon, in Wasco County. The short-term program in Hood River County runs 18 weeks from June through October, operating eleven classrooms, 5 days per week from 6 am to 4 pm. The long-term program in Hood River County runs 23 weeks from October through May, operating two classrooms, 5 days per week from 8 am to 2 pm. The short-term program in Wasco County runs 4 weeks from June through July, operating twenty-two classrooms, 6 days per week from 5 am to 5 pm. The long-term program in Wasco County runs 32 weeks from August through May, operating five classrooms, 5 days per week from 8 am to 2 pm.

The service area includes the entirety of Hood River County, Wasco County, and the southern portion of Washington State's Klickitat County in and around Bingen, Washington, and White Salmon, Washington, an area currently unserved by a Migrant Seasonal Head Start program in that state. The recruitment area, however, is determined by three factors: (i) program center locations, (ii) the location of growers as the Oregon Child Development Coalition in Hood River and Wasco Counties serves the predominantly agricultural areas of these counties, and (iii) acceptable transportation times per the Head Start Performance Standards. For illustrative purposes, Appendix C2.1 contains a map of the service area, as well as grower's locations and program center locations.

### **COUNTY SNAPSHOT**

#### **▶ QUICK FACTS**

- Hood River County and Wasco County have shown slow but steady population growth over the past 5 years - 3.8 percent and 0.6 percent respectively - with areas such as Hood River, Oregon, and Maupin, Oregon, experiencing more rapid growth over the same period.



- The median household income in both Hood River and Wasco Counties is on average 13 percent lower than the state median, with the number of children under the age of 6 living in poverty estimated to be 378 children and 393 children, respectively.
- The number of children eligible for free and reduced lunch in Hood River County and Wasco County grew by 0.0 percent and 4.8 percent to 2,146 children and 2,023 children, respectively.
- As of 2006, the total number of estimated unserved, eligible Head Start children in Hood River County and Wasco County was 16 children.
- With unemployment in Hood River County and Wasco County at 6.5 percent and 7.0 percent, respectively, these areas are seeing growth in manufacturing, industry and mining, as well as service producing industries.
- Last year, in 2005, the cherry harvest was the worst on record, with growers harvesting more acreage than they did in 2004 while seeing both production and sales drop by 30 percent. Thus far in 2006, the cherry crop appears to have rebounded, with both production and sales at or above 2004 levels.
- In Hood River County, there were an estimated 794 migrant farmworkers (-79.0% between 2002 and 2005) and 7,396 seasonal farmworkers in 2005, with the total number of migrant and seasonal children under the age of 6 at 226 children and 61 children, respectively.
- In Wasco County, there were an estimated 3,538 migrant farmworkers (-3.0% between 2002 and 2005) and 5,684 seasonal farmworkers in 2005, with the total number of migrant and seasonal children under the age of 6 at 338 children and 73 children, respectively.

▶ **CRITICAL ISSUES**

- Immigration

*Massive INS raids, sweeping through orchards, hauling away people by the busload?  
Agents checking IDs at banks, pulling people over on Interstate 84?*

*Not true, not true and not true.*

*That's the official word from U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE)...*

*- "Immigrant Roundup Reports Unfounded"  
April 29 2006  
Hood River News*

In response to the above article, the “unofficial” word this year is that growers and businesses - as well as the community in general - were profoundly impacted by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement raids in local communities throughout Hood River and Wasco Counties. Yet, what is perhaps more telling are the personal stories and actions of farmworkers and community members during this time. For instance, in April 2006, the Oregon Child Development Coalition in Hood River and Wasco Counties attempted to contact parents of program participants to hold a vote only to find that many



had gone into hiding and could not be located. For those who were able to be located by program staff, these individuals would not agree to vote even over the phone on a conference call for fear that their conversation was being monitored.

In local communities, on May 1, 2006, nearly 1,300 community members in Hood River County took part in one of the largest demonstrations in the county's history to oppose proposed immigration legislation. According to one demonstrator, "We are here. There are many of us."<sup>1</sup> And, in the words of another marcher, "We know we have parents who were fearful...that they themselves would be snatched up and their children would have no one to come home to...*We know they are fearful of this because they have told us.*"<sup>2</sup>

- Changes in Agriculture

The following is an excerpt of a letter to the Oregon Child Development Coalition from the Oregon Sweet Cherry Commission dated June 22, 2006.

*"As you can imagine there are many issues that concern farmers today. The immigration legislation being considered, increasing production costs, environmental impact and the regulation of farming practices and urban sprawl. It's hard to know where to start.*

*[T]he most pressing need identified is a stable workforce, especially for harvesting sweet cherries. Cherries are still picked by hand, which requires a large workforce to accomplish at the peak of fruit quality. In some cases the labor force needed to harvest is larger than the population of some of our smaller communities. The work is only available for a short time so migrant workers have been the best answer for growers."*

*-Dana Branson  
Administrator, Oregon Sweet Cherry Commission*

Growers in Hood River and Wasco County are in a period of transition. Many are attempting to rebound from a poor cherry crop in 2005.<sup>3</sup> Last year, despite the fact that growers increased the number of acres harvested by 4 percent, both production and sales were down by 30 percent. At the time, Oregon Congressman David Wu stepped in to seek Federal protection.<sup>4</sup> In 2006, despite labor shortages, cherry production in Wasco County returned to previous levels thanks to fair weather and the continued diversification of the cherry crop (i.e., early market and late market varieties), with growers looking to expand into neighboring towns of Dufur and Mosier, as well as into Salem, Oregon.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Donald Allison and Kirby Neumann-Rea, *Migrants and Supporters March en Masse*, May 3, 2006, Hood River News.

<sup>2</sup> Donald Allison and Kirby Neumann-Rea, *Migrants and Supporters March en Masse*, May 3, 2006, Hood River News.

<sup>3</sup> *Heavy Spring Rain Damages Region's Crop of Sweet Cherries*, July 5, 2005, Salem Statesman Journal.

<sup>4</sup> *Wu Advocates for Oregon Stone Fruit Growers in Need of Emergency Assistance*, July 15, 2005, Press Release, Congress of the United States.

<sup>5</sup> Rodger Nichols, *Growers Expand to Salem: Cherry Firm's Acquisition Will Bolster 'Briners'*, May 22, 2006, The Dalles Chronicle.



In addition, growers are having to transition away from pesticides such as Guthion, used by fruit growers to kill moths. In June of 2006, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced that it plans to phase out the use of this pesticide by 2010, leaving local growers with few options but to begin transitioning away from organophosphates.

## **COUNTY PROFILE**

### **▶ GEOGRAPHIC PROFILE**

Hood River County and Wasco County span 533 square miles and 2,396 square miles, respectively.<sup>6</sup> Each is bordered by the Columbia River to the north. These areas offer ideal conditions for tree fruit given the combination of temperature, elevation and slope. Hood River County receives an average of 30 inches of rain annually, while neighboring Wasco County receives roughly 15 inches of rain annually. Average temperatures range from 33 degrees Fahrenheit during the winter months to well above 73 degrees Fahrenheit during the summer months.

Geographically speaking, aside from differences in square mileage, Hood River County and Wasco County are quite similar. The elevation at the county seat for each is approximately 100 feet above sea level. Both counties have access to the Columbia and other rivers in the area. Both counties also have access to the Cascade Mountain Range and Mount Hood (11,249') to the south.

Indeed, what proves to distinguish these two counties is not the physical geography of each, but rather patterns of human exploration, settlement and development rooted in history as a reflection of and in response to the location of each county on the map. In late October of 1805, the Lewis and Clark expedition set out from present day The Dalles, Oregon, down the Columbia River toward the Pacific Ocean.<sup>7</sup> What the journals of Lewis and Clark do not record is any mention of a stop at present day Hood River, Oregon. Thus, Hood River, whether intentionally or not, was essentially passed over by the Lewis and Clark expedition.

What is clear is that it was Wasco County – named for the Wascopam Indian Tribe and home to the City of The Dalles – that was created first by the Territorial Legislature in 1854 and embraced the entire area east of the Cascade Mountains including present day eastern Oregon, Idaho and parts of Montana and Wyoming.<sup>8</sup> Hood River County, on the other hand, was settled from the west. Thus, today, it is not surprising that while Hood River County tends to embrace its proximity to Portland, Oregon, some 60 miles away, Wasco County tends to be a bit more isolated with long-term residents having more extensive roots and networks in the community.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Oregon Blue Book, 2006.

<sup>7</sup> *Lewis and Clark Expedition Timeline*, 2006, National Geographic.

<sup>8</sup> Oregon Blue Book, 2006.

<sup>9</sup> Esther K. Smith, 'Country Girls' Build Value in Fruit Grown in the Gorge, July 26, 2006, Hood River News.



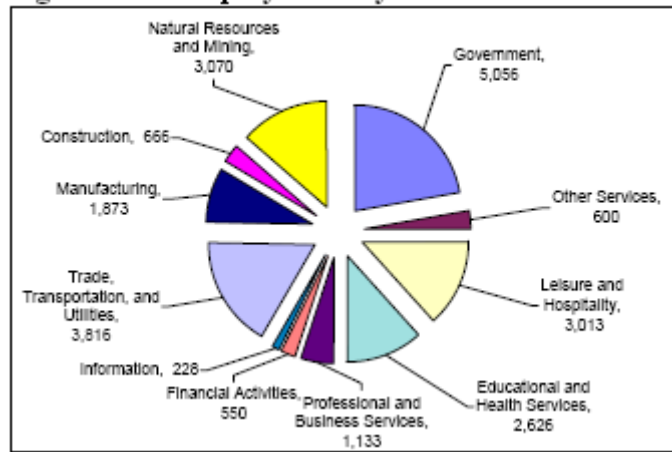
► **ECONOMIC PROFILE**

In 2003, the median per capita personal income in Hood River County and Wasco County was \$23,676 and \$23,516, respectively. Both figures rank well below those for the state of Oregon (\$29,175) and the United States (\$31,487).<sup>10</sup> In terms of household income, figures from the U.S. Census Bureau show that over 50 percent of households in Hood River County earn less than \$50,000 per year, while in Wasco County nearly 50 percent of households earn less than \$35,000 per year.<sup>11</sup>

State economists have noted that the industry structure in this region of Oregon is increasingly a product of service occupations which compose nearly 11 percent of total employment in the region.<sup>12</sup> Of these, nearly 61 percent of service related occupations can be attributed to food service and related occupations, with new jobs being created on an ongoing basis in light of the growing number resorts springing up Hood River County.<sup>13</sup> Further, the region is seeing growth in retail occupations and salespersons, with additional population growth in Hood River County also accompanied by corresponding growth in professional and related occupations such as lawyers and teachers.

In 2005, manufacturing was the top industry in Hood River County (1,230 jobs), while retail trade was the top industry in Wasco County (9,130 jobs).<sup>14</sup> During this time, unemployment dropped to 6.2 percent and 4.7 percent, respectively, and provided some much needed breathing room following three years of rising unemployment between 2001 and

**Figure 2.1 - Employment by Sector**



**Figure 2.2 - Total Employment and Unemployment**

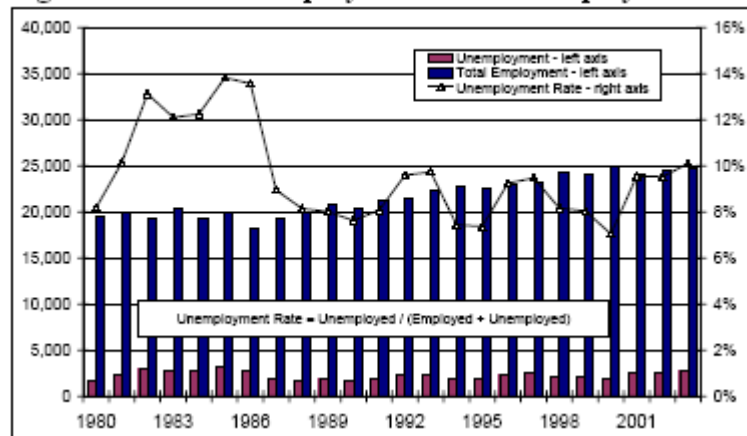


Figure 2.1 – Dallas Fridley, *Regional Profile: Industry Employment in Region 9, 2005*, Oregon Employment Department.

Figure 2.2 – Dallas Fridley, *Regional Profile: Labor Force, Employment and Unemployment in Region 9, 2005*, Oregon Employment Department.

<sup>10</sup> *Oregon Per Capita Personal Income: 1986-2004*, November 2005, Oregon Employment Department.

<sup>11</sup> *DP-3: Profile of Selected Economic Characteristics*, 2000, United States Census Bureau.

<sup>12</sup> Dallas Fridley, *Regional Profile: Occupational Employment in Region 9*, Fall 2005, Oregon Employment Department.

Dallas Fridley, *Food Manufacturing Main Course in Columbia Gorge and Basin*, November 28, 2005, Oregon Employment Department.

<sup>13</sup> Sue Ryan, *\$12 Million Resort Planned for CL*. May 24, 2006, Hood River News.

<sup>14</sup> Dallas Fridley, *2005 Job Growth in Region 9*, April 4, 2006, Oregon Employment Department.



2004.<sup>15</sup> Unemployment during this three-year period had reached as high as 13 percent in Wasco County in January of 2004; and, heading into the recession in 2000, the area saw declines in production from a major aluminum manufacturing plant which had already begun lowering employment levels in the area.

Currently, unemployment in Hood River County and Wasco County is at 6.5 percent and 7.0 percent, respectively, still an average of 41 percent higher than the national unemployment rate (4.8 percent).<sup>16</sup> Nonetheless, in relative terms, these figures are impressive, as counties in Region 9 rarely see unemployment drop below 8 percent.<sup>17</sup> In the way of an explanation, economists have noted that unemployment in this region of the state tends to fluctuate with power costs for the production of aluminum.<sup>18</sup> Between 2000 and 2001, when energy prices rose, aluminum plants in the area began laying off employees, the effects of which are still felt today.<sup>19</sup>

That said, the outlook has changed in recent years. Hood River County continues to attract new industries to the area, as well as a growing contingent of residents who elect to commute the 60 miles to Portland, Oregon, each day.<sup>21</sup> Likewise, in Wasco County, Internet search engine Google has recently purchased acreage in The Dalles, prompting developers to begin looking into additional housing and retail complexes.<sup>22</sup>

In light of the above discussion, it may be surprising to learn that the fastest growing occupation in Region 9 – an area that includes Hood River and Wasco Counties – is farmwork.<sup>23</sup> While manufacturing, retail, and service work continue to demand attention, it must be remembered that both Hood River and Wasco Counties are key players in Oregon’s agricultural economy. To get some sense of the population employed in agriculture, Table 2.1 displays

**Table 2.1 - Estimates of Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers<sup>20</sup>**

	2002	2005
<b>Hood River County</b>		
MFWs	3,783	794
SFWs	7,396	7,396
<b>Total</b>	11,179	8,190
<b>Wasco County</b>		
MFWs	3,650	3,538
SFWs	5,684	5,684
<b>Total</b>	9,334	9,222
<b>Klickitat County (WA)</b>		
MFWs	723	152
SFWs	1,355	1,355
<b>Total</b>	2,078	1,507

<sup>15</sup> *Oregon Labor Force and Unemployment by Area*, April 20, 2006, Oregon Employment Department.

<sup>16</sup> *Oregon Labor Force and Unemployment by Area*, April 20, 2006, Oregon Employment Department.

<sup>17</sup> Dallas Fridley, *Regional Profile: Labor Force, Employment and Unemployment in Region 9*, Fall 2005, Oregon Employment Department.

<sup>18</sup> Rodger Nichols, *County Looks for Green in RREDZ Zone: Commissioners Seek Alternative Energy Sources*, April 20, 2006, The Dalles Chronicle.

<sup>19</sup> Dallas Fridley, *Regional Profile: Labor Force, Employment and Unemployment in Region 9*, Fall 2005, Oregon Employment Department.

<sup>20</sup> Note, 2005 estimates are based on initial figures provided by Alice Larson in 2002 and acreage information provided by the Oregon Agricultural Information Network. The drastic decline in the number of migrant farmworkers in 2005 in Hood River County and, based on anecdotal evidence, the apparently inflated number of seasonal farmworkers in Wasco County in 2005 raise questions about (i) the accuracy of Larson’s estimates in these two counties in 2002 and (ii) the accuracy of 2005 data provided by the Oregon Information Network.

<sup>21</sup> Dallas Fridley, *Regional Profile: Labor Force, Employment and Unemployment in Region 9*, Fall 2005, Oregon Employment Department.

<sup>22</sup> Laura Oppenheimer, *Faster Than They Can Google It, Newcomers Find The Dalles*, August 20, 2006, The Oregonian.

<sup>23</sup> *Oregon Labor Force and Unemployment by Area*, April 20, 2006, Oregon Employment Department.

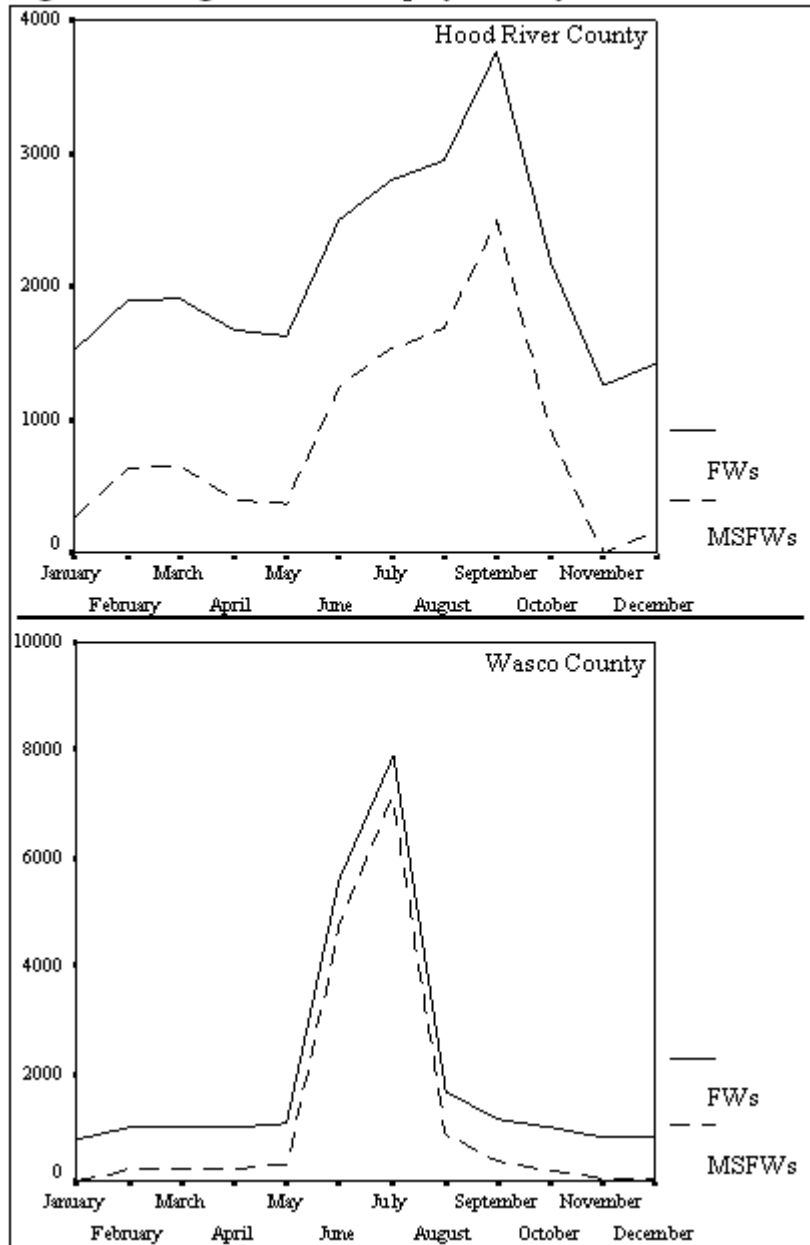


estimates of migrant and seasonal farmworkers in 2002 and 2005.<sup>24</sup> What is remarkable is that these counties employ some 17,000 migrant and seasonal farmworkers each year.

On average, agricultural operations in Hood River and Wasco Counties employ some 2,130 farmworkers and 1,920 farmworkers each month, respectively.<sup>25</sup> Monthly agricultural employment estimates are shown in Figure 2.3 for both the general population of farmworkers (FWs), as well as for migrant and seasonal farmworkers (MSFWs).<sup>26</sup> In Hood River County, the labor peak corresponds to the apple and pear harvests, with general orchard maintenance occurring during the winter and spring months. In Wasco County, the situation is different and much more intensive. During the months of June and July, roughly 6,000 mobile, migrant farmworkers arrive in Wasco County for an intensive 3-6 week cherry harvest.

With regards to the information displayed in Figure 2.3, what is of notable interest is that the pool of farmworkers in Wasco County is almost entirely composed of migrant and seasonal farmworkers. Put differently, should the supply of migrant and seasonal farmworkers in this area dry up, agriculture would suffer. Growers could no longer maintain a viable business due to an inadequate labor supply; thus, the local and state economies would suffer from the loss of nearly \$30-40 million worth of cherries annually, as displayed in Table 2.2.

**Figure 2.3 - Agricultural Employment by Month**



<sup>24</sup> Alice C. Larson, *Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker Enumeration Profiles Study: Oregon, 2002*, Larson Assistance Services.

<sup>25</sup> *2005 Oregon Agricultural Employment Estimates*, 2006, Oregon Employment Department.

<sup>26</sup> *2005 Oregon Agricultural Employment Estimates*, 2005, Oregon Employment Department.



**Table 2.2 - Selected Crop Outputs<sup>27</sup>**

Hood River County	2004			2005		
	Acres	Production	Sales (in \$000s)	Acres	Production	Sales (in \$000s)
Apples	1,375	653,125	\$4,082	1,375	866,250	\$3,032
Cherries	1,600	8,000	\$11,200	1,600	4,800	\$9,600
Pears	11,938	171,664	\$47,848	11,938	197,764	\$51,824
Wine Grapes	83	158	\$316	83	166	\$332

Wasco County	2004			2005		
	Acres	Production	Sales (in \$000s)	Acres	Production	Sales (in \$000s)
Cherries	7,200	31,602	\$41,083	7,500	22,000	\$28,600

In truth, there was a slight labor shortage this year, causing local growers to lease their labor crews to one another during the peak cherry season.<sup>28</sup> Currently, growers are exploring several options for extending the cherry growing season by several weeks. One such option involves the use of a range of cherry cultivars such that the harvest is extended over a longer period (e.g. from 4-6 weeks to 6-8 weeks, etc.). A recent roundtable discussion with cherry growers in Wasco County found that the rationale for extending the harvest is to provide an incentive (i.e., more hours of work) for families to travel to the area. Additionally, growers are using innovative pruning techniques - central leader pruning - and placing trees a shorter distance apart to increase density and productivity. In fact, at a recent growers summit hosted by the Oregon Farm Bureau, an entire work session was devoted to exploring these techniques in greater detail, including mapping trees' growth over a specified number of years to predict yields.

A recent survey of agricultural producers in Hood River and Wasco Counties conducted in 2006 by the Oregon Child Development Coalition revealed that over one-half of growers surveyed expect to employ about the same number of migrant farmworkers next year for tree fruit operations.<sup>29</sup> On average, individual operations in Hood River and Wasco Counties require the labor of at least 55 migrant farmworkers each year with monthly figures in line with those displayed in Figure 2.3.

Growers were also asked to respond to questions about crop conditions in 2005 in light of the poor cherry crop. Responses indicate that frost was primarily to blame, with a handful of growers reporting that sales in 2005 were down by over 70 relative to the previous year. However, despite such conditions, only one grower indicated that they had opted out of the business altogether.

Table 2.2 displays acreage, production and sales information for agricultural commodities produced in Hood River and Wasco Counties. Estimates from the Oregon Agricultural Information Network show that acreage in Hood River County has held steady over the one-year

<sup>27</sup> Oregon Agricultural Information Network, 2006.

Unit of production varies by commodity.

<sup>28</sup> *Oregon Farm Labor Bulletin*, July 12, 2006, Oregon Employment Department.

<sup>29</sup> *Agricultural Employer's Survey*, 2006, Oregon Child Development Coalition.



period while sales have increased only for pears and wine grapes, the former of which may be attributed to innovative marketing and packaging techniques for winter pear varieties.<sup>30</sup> Apples and cherries, however, are down by 26 percent and 14 percent, respectively.

Figures provided in Table 2.2 for Wasco County confirm what has already been discussed. Cherry growers planted more acreage in 2005 than they did in 2004; however, frost and heavy rains damaged production and, ultimately, sales. Unlike in other counties throughout the state, growers in Wasco County are especially dependent on the labor of migrant and seasonal farmworkers as cherries require hand picking. Accordingly, whereas growers in other counties throughout the state are attempting to stabilize acreage while increasing sales, growers in Wasco County are looking to expand their operations into the Dufur and Mosier areas which should have the effect of growing the need for additional labor.

In other areas of the state, enrollment in Oregon Child Development Coalition's Migrant Seasonal Head Start program appears to be partially a function of harvested acreage, as opposed to annual sales. However, the information displayed in Figure 2.4 tells a different story, namely that actual enrollment in the Migrant Seasonal Head Start program in Hood River and Wasco Counties appears to be correlated with crop sales. One possible explanation for this is that while growers in other areas of the state are able to reduce labor costs by mechanizing certain crops, cherry growers in Wasco County *depend* on the labor of migrant farmworkers because cherries need to be harvested by hand. Thus, whereas an increase in crop sales in another area of the state may or may not have the effect of creating additional employment given the option to mechanize, the reality in Wasco County is that there is a correlation between crop sales and the supply of labor needed for the harvest; hence, the relationship between actual enrollment and crop sales in Figure 2.4

**Figure 2.4 - Crop Outputs by OCDC Enrollment**



cherry growers in Wasco County *depend* on the labor of migrant farmworkers because cherries need to be harvested by hand. Thus, whereas an increase in crop sales in another area of the state may or may not have the effect of creating additional employment given the option to mechanize, the reality in Wasco County is that there is a correlation between crop sales and the supply of labor needed for the harvest; hence, the relationship between actual enrollment and crop sales in Figure 2.4

In light of the above discussion, Figure 2.4 is also of importance in program planning for the Migrant Seasonal Head Start program.<sup>31</sup> Particularly, it is imperative that relationships with

<sup>30</sup> Janet Cook, *Making Time for Wine*, October 22, 2005, Hood River News.  
<sup>31</sup> *Glass-Pack Product Could be a Boost to Oregon Pear Growers*, February 2, 2006, Oregon Department of Agriculture.



growers continue to be maintained and, in some cases, developed. In a roundtable discussion with local growers in Wasco County, it was noted that education and outreach are needed to reach other growers who, while depending on the labor of migrant and seasonal farmworkers, hold some sort of bias to the extent that they are not involved in supporting the Migrant Seasonal Head Start program and the work of the Oregon Child Development Coalition in Hood River and Wasco Counties.

► **DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE**

The 2000 Census reports the population of Hood River County and Wasco County to be 20,411 persons and 23,791 persons, respectively. From this, the Population Research Center at Portland State University estimated the population of Hood River County to be 21,180 persons and the population of Wasco County to be 23,935 persons as of July 1, 2005, demonstrating 3.8 percent and 0.6 percent growth, respectively. Table 2.3 displays these estimates for each of the major cities and towns in Hood River and Wasco Counties.

Note the positive growth in each of the areas listed, with areas such as Hood River, Oregon, and Maupin, Oregon, boasting 10 percent growth over the five-year period. Such growth has been steady since the last recession which began in 2001. Further, state economists have noted that much of the growth in Region 9 - an area which includes Hood River and Wasco Counties - has been shouldered by Hood River County. In fact, prior to the last recession, Hood River County added nearly 5,000 new residents between 1987 and 2000.<sup>33</sup> Additionally, economists have noted that the county's natural population increase (i.e., births) has outpaced that of its neighbors. Thus, overall, 90 percent of growth in Region 9 - an area that includes Hood River and Wasco Counties - can be attributed to Hood River County.<sup>34</sup>

**Table 2.3 - Population<sup>32</sup>**

	Year		
	2000	2005	Percent Change
<b>Hood River County</b>	20,411	21,180	3.8
Cascade Locks	1,115	1,155	3.6
Hood River	5,831	6,450	10.6
Odell	1,849	---	---
Parkdale	266	---	---
<b>Wasco County</b>	23,791	23,935	0.6
Dufur	588	610	3.7
Maupin	411	450	9.5
Mosier	410	420	2.4
The Dalles	12,156	12,505	2.9
<b>Klickitat County (OR)</b>	19,161	19,839	3.5
Bingen	672	689	2.5
White Salmon	2,193	2,280	4.0

<sup>31</sup> Note, the scale in Figure 2.4 has been adjusted. Harvested acres are in 0s and total sales are in \$00,000s. Additionally, crop outputs reflect the set of all crops in the Hood River and Wasco Counties, not just those typically employing migrant and seasonal farmworkers.

<sup>32</sup> 2004 Oregon Population Report, March 2005, Population Research Center, College of Urban and Public Affairs, Portland State University.

Estimates for Klickitat County are provided by City-Data.com.

<sup>33</sup> Dallas Fridley, *Regional Profile: Population in Region 9*, Fall 2005, Oregon Employment Department.

<sup>34</sup> Dallas Fridley, *Regional Profile: Population in Region 9*, Fall 2005, Oregon Employment Department.



During the 1990s, the population in both Hood River and Wasco Counties aged considerably, with the population of young adults declining.<sup>35</sup> That said, the situation is currently changing with the population of children and teens continuing to grow. As displayed in Table 2.4, children under that age of 18 in Hood River County and Wasco County currently make up 28 percent and 25 percent of their respective populations. The median age in Hood River County and Wasco County is 35 years and 40 years, respectively, indicating that the population in Wasco County tends to be somewhat older than that in Hood River County.<sup>36</sup> Increasingly, young professionals and retirees are electing to call Hood River County home given its proximity to the city of Portland some 60 miles west and the abundance of outdoor activities in the area. This is a trend that is expected to continue in Hood River County and expand into neighboring Wasco County in years to come.<sup>37</sup>

**Table 2.4 - Population by Age<sup>38</sup>**

	Age						
	0-4	5-9	10-17	18-29	30-49	50-64	65+
Hood River County	1,605	1,675	2,663	3,158	6,494	2,913	5,455
Wasco County	1,431	1,644	2,907	3,009	6,695	4,234	3,981

Oregon Housing and Community Services reports that the number of individuals living in poverty in Hood River County and Wasco County increased by 9 percent and 6 percent, respectively, between 1990 and 2000, with the Oregon Department of Education reporting the poverty rate to be 22.0 percent and 19.2 percent, respectively, as of January 2006.<sup>40</sup> Further, these two sources also estimate nearly 800 children under the age of 6 to be living in poverty each year, including nearly 258 children between the ages of 3 and 4. These figures are important to note for the reason that poverty is often associated with health problems and access to health care, the need for food stamps and temporary assistance to needy families (TANF), and housing and shelter counts.<sup>41</sup>

**Table 2.5 - Free & Reduced Lunch Count<sup>39</sup>**

	Academic Year	
	2003-2004	2004-2005
Hood River County		
Hood River School District	2,146	1,413
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,146</b> <b>(54.4%)</b>	<b>1,413</b> <b>(36.2%)</b>
Wasco County		
Dufur School District	111	109
N. Wasco School District	1,666	1,751
S. Wasco School District	153	163
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,930</b> <b>(55.5%)</b>	<b>2,021</b> <b>(58.4%)</b>

<sup>35</sup> Dallas Fridley, *Regional Profile: Population in Region 9*, Fall 2005, Oregon Employment Department.

<sup>36</sup> Table DP-1. *Profile of General Demographic Characteristics*, 2000, United States Census Bureau.

<sup>37</sup> Laura Oppenheimer, *Faster Than They Can Google It, Newcomers Find The Dalles*, August 20, 2006, The Oregonian.

<sup>38</sup> 2004 Oregon Population Report, March 2005, Population Research Center, College of Urban and Public Affairs, Portland State University.

<sup>39</sup> *Students Eligible for Free and Reduced Lunch*, 2003-2004 & 2004-2005, Oregon Department of Education.

<sup>40</sup> *Estimated Number of Eligible 3 and 4 Year Olds Served and Unserved by Head Start and Oregon Pre-kindergarten*, 2006, Oregon Department of Education.

<sup>41</sup> *County Comparisons: Incidence and Distribution of Poverty*, 2004, Oregon Health and Community Services.



During the 2004-2005 school year, 36.2 percent (n=1,413) of students in Hood River County schools and 58.4 percent (n=2,021) of students in Wasco County schools were eligible for free or reduced lunch. As displayed in Table 2.5, relative to the previous academic year, these figures represent a 34 percent decrease and a 7 percent increase in the number of students receiving free or reduced lunch over the one-year period. The increase in Wasco County was felt especially in the North Wasco School District.

► **DATA ANALYSIS: ELIGIBLE, UNSERVED 3-4 YEAR OLD CHILDREN<sup>42</sup>**

The Oregon Department of Education estimates there to be 609 children between the ages of 3 and 4 in Hood River County and 644 children between the ages of 3 and 4 in Wasco County in 2006.<sup>43</sup> To estimate the total number of Head Start eligible 3 and 4 year old children, the Oregon Department of Education multiplied the total number of children in each county by the poverty rate in 2006 for Hood River County and Wasco County, 22.0 percent and 19.2 percent respectively. Thus, the total number of eligible Head Start children in Hood River County is 134 children; and the total number of eligible Head Start children in Wasco County is 124 children, as displayed in Table 2.6.

**Table 2.6 - Estimated Number of Eligible Children**

Hood River County	
Total Children	609
Percent in Poverty	22.0
<b>Eligible</b>	<b>134</b>
Wasco County	
Total Children	644
Percent in Poverty	19.2
<b>Eligible</b>	<b>124</b>

From this, the number of Head Start children currently being served in Hood River County and Wasco County by Head Start programs is subtracted. Head Start programs operated by the Mid-Columbia Children’s Council (313 total slots in three counties), Umatilla Morrow Head Start (471 total slots in seven counties), and Warm Springs Tribal Head Start (160 total slots in two counties) serve a total of 146 children and 108 children in Hood River and Wasco Counties between 3 and 4 years of age, respectively.<sup>44</sup> Thus, *the total number of unserved, eligible Head Start children in Hood River County is zero children*, as shown in Table 2.7. Likewise, *the total number of unserved, eligible Head Start children in Wasco County is 16 children*.

**Table 2.7 - Estimated Number of Unserved, Eligible Children**

Hood River County	
Eligible	134
Served	146
<b>Unserved, Eligible</b>	<b>~0</b>
Wasco County	
Eligible	124
Served	108
<b>Unserved, Eligible</b>	<b>16</b>

In the sections that follow, the Oregon Child Development Coalition will further refine the estimates in Table 2.7 to provide estimates for the number of unserved, eligible Migrant Seasonal Head Start children in Hood River and Wasco Counties.

<sup>42</sup> Note, estimates in this section are presented to highlight the need for Head Start services in the general low-income population. In a later section, additional estimates will be provided which estimate the number of unserved, eligible children of migrant and seasonal farmworkers.

<sup>43</sup> *Estimated Number of Eligible 3 and 4 Year Olds Served and Unserved by Head Start and Oregon Pre-kindergarten*, 2006, Oregon Department of Education.

<sup>44</sup> Total slot counts for individual Head Start programs include Early Head Start and Head Start programs.



## RACIAL & ETHNIC COMPOSITION

### ► POPULATION & ANCESTRY

*“The Hispanic ethnic group showed growth over the 2000-2003 period...[while] the non-Hispanic portion of Region 9’s population was down.”*

*-Dallas Fridley  
Regional Economist, Oregon Employment Department*

Table 2.8 displays the racial and ethnic composition of the population in Hood River County and Wasco County. It is noted that figures for individual cities and towns are taken from the 2000 U.S. Census, as more current figures for these smaller townships are not available.

Hood River County has a sizeable Hispanic population. In fact, even during the last recession the Hispanic population managed to gain ground on the non-Hispanic population, adding 465 people compared to a decline of 675 people among the non-Hispanic population.<sup>45</sup> In Hood River and Wasco Counties, most Hispanic residents reside in Hood River and The Dalles where amenities and services are more readily available, including affordable housing.<sup>46</sup> The Dalles, for instance, boasts the relatively recent construction of Casa Lomas, a 24 unit farmworker housing complex, and is an example of the general recognition within the community of the essential labor that migrant and seasonal farmworkers provide.

**Table 2.8 - Population by Race<sup>47</sup>**

	One Race					Two or More Races	Hispanic
	White	Black	Native Indian	Asian	Native Hawaiian	---	---
Hood River County	16,099 (78.9%)	117 (0.6%)	229 (1.1%)	301 (1.5%)	25 (0.1%)	503 (4.1%)	5,107 (25.0%)
Cascade Locks	994	1	47	8	---	36	80
Hood River	4,713	35	58	67	11	155	1,351
Odell	1,229	9	16	8	---	40	740
Parkdale	213	---	12	2	---	8	62
Wasco County	20,599 (86.6%)	71 (0.3%)	906 (3.8%)	191 (0.8%)	119 (0.5%)	561 (2.4%)	2,214 (9.3%)
Dufur	573	---	4	---	---	9	8
Maupin	365	---	14	12	---	12	20
Mosier	351	2	6	---	4	12	58
The Dalles	10,677	48	146	117	93	318	1,276

Of the population in Hood River County, 83 percent were born in the United States, with 75 percent of the population as monolingual English speakers.<sup>48</sup> Of those born outside of the United States (n=3,355), 13.4 percent are currently not U.S. citizens, with 7.6 percent having entered the United States between 1990 and 2000, and 86 percent of those born outside of the United States

<sup>45</sup> Dallas Fridley, *Regional Profile: Population in Region 9*, Fall 2005, Oregon Employment Department.

<sup>46</sup> Raelynn Ricarte, *Officials Take on Housing Challenge*, October 19, 2005, Hood River News.

<sup>47</sup> United States Census Bureau, 2000.

<sup>48</sup> *DP-2: Profile of Selected Social Characteristics*, 2000, United States Census Bureau.



coming from Latin America. Accordingly, aside from English and relative to other languages, 22.6 percent of the population identified as primary Spanish speakers (n=4,273).<sup>49</sup> Of these, more than one-half self-identified as able to speak English less than “very well.”

Of the population in Wasco County, 93 percent were born in the United States, with 90 percent of the population as monolingual English speakers.<sup>50</sup> Of those born outside of the United States (n=1,467), 3.9 percent are currently not U.S. citizens, with 2.3 percent having entered the United States between 1990 and 2000, and 72 percent of those born outside of the United States coming from Latin America. Accordingly, aside from English and relative to other languages, 8.3 percent of the population identified as primary Spanish speakers (n=1,855).<sup>51</sup> Of these, more than one-half self-identified has able to speak English less than “very well.”

► **PROFILE OF PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS<sup>52</sup>**

In 2005, 114 children in Hood River County and 241 children Wasco County were enrolled on the basis of public assistance or income eligibility, a decline of 32 percent and 21 percent, respectively, from the previous year. Table 2.9 displays the age distribution for children enrolled in the Migrant Seasonal Head Start program in Hood River and Wasco Counties. Overall, 115 program participants in Hood River County and 251 program participants in Wasco County were of Hispanic or Latino origin, which includes persons of Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, South and Central American or other Spanish culture or origin. Additionally, in Wasco County, 7 children were American Indian or Alaska Native, white, or biracial or multiracial.

The majority of program participants were primary Spanish speakers, as well as an increasing number of indigenous language speakers in Wasco County (n=12). Indigenous languages are typically spoken by those program participants from the Oaxaca region of Mexico and include the dialects of Mixteco and Trique.

**Table 2.9 - Enrolled of Children by Age**

Hood River County	
Age	Number of Children
<1	14
1	14
2	32
3	21
4	22
5	12
<b>Total</b>	<b>115</b>
Wasco County	
Age	Number of Children
<1	20
1	43
2	46
3	51
4	53
5	38
<b>Total</b>	<b>251</b>

► **DATA ANALYSIS: ELIGIBLE, UNSERVED MIGRANT CHILDREN<sup>53</sup>**

The Oregon Child Development Coalition has developed a method for estimating the number of children of migrant and seasonal farmworkers in Hood River and Wasco Counties using Alice C. Larson’s 2002 estimates of migrant and seasonal farmworkers and family members as a base, and agricultural information from the Oregon Agricultural Information Network through Oregon

<sup>49</sup> DP-2: *Profile of Selected Social Characteristics*, 2000, United States Census Bureau.

<sup>50</sup> DP-2: *Profile of Selected Social Characteristics*, 2000, United States Census Bureau.

<sup>51</sup> DP-2: *Profile of Selected Social Characteristics*, 2000, United States Census Bureau.

<sup>52</sup> Data is taken from the *Program Information Report*, 2004 & 2005, Oregon Child Development Coalition.

<sup>53</sup> See Appendix C1.3



State University.<sup>54</sup> The estimates in Table 2.10 suggest that there were 226 migrant children and 61 seasonal children in Hood River County in 2005. Likewise, there were an estimated 338 migrant children and 73 seasonal children in Wasco County in 2005.

To estimate the number of unserved, eligible Migrant Seasonal Head Start children, the number of children currently being served in Hood River and Wasco Counties by the Oregon Child Development Coalition's Migrant Seasonal Head Start program is subtracted from the estimates in Table 2.10. In Hood River County, the Oregon Child Development Coalition's Migrant Seasonal Head Start program serves 135 migrant children and 55 seasonal children each year. Thus, the total number of unserved, eligible Migrant Seasonal Head Start children in Hood River County is 97 children. Likewise, the Oregon Child Development Coalition's Migrant Seasonal Head Start program in Wasco County serves 260 migrant children and 36 seasonal children each year. Thus, the total number of unserved, eligible Migrant Seasonal Head Start children in Wasco County is 115 children. These estimates are displayed in Table 2.11.

**Table 2.10 - Estimated Migrant and Seasonal Children<sup>55</sup>**

Hood River County		
Age	Number Migrant Children	Number Seasonal Children
<1	25	11
1	25	10
2	35	10
3	56	10
4	58	10
5	27	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>226</b>	<b>61</b>
Wasco County		
Age	Number Migrant Children	Number Seasonal Children
<1	113	13
1	45	12
2	45	12
3	45	12
4	45	12
5	45	12
<b>Total</b>	<b>338</b>	<b>73</b>

**Table 2.11 - Unserved, Eligible MHS Children in Hood River County and Wasco Counties**

Hood River County		
Age	Number Migrant Children	Number Seasonal Children
Eligible	226	61
Served	135	55
<b>Unserved, Eligible</b>	<b>~91</b>	<b>~6</b>
Wasco County		
Age	Number Migrant Children	Number Seasonal Children
Eligible	338	73
Served	260	36
<b>Unserved, Eligible</b>	<b>~78</b>	<b>~37</b>

<sup>54</sup> Alice C. Larson, *Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker Enumeration Profiles Study: Oregon, 2002*, Larson Assistance Services.

<sup>55</sup> In addition to Larson's estimates and data obtained from the Oregon Agricultural Information Network, the estimated number of children in Table 2.11 also takes into account data obtained from Migrant Education and anecdotal information provided by OCDC staff in Hood River and Wasco Counties.



Overall, roughly *66 percent of eligible Migrant Seasonal Head Start children are currently being served in Hood River County*. Likewise, *in Wasco County, 72 percent of eligible Migrant Seasonal Head Start children are currently being served*.

Results of the above analysis indicate that the Oregon Child Development Coalition could serve more migrant and seasonal children in Hood River and Wasco Counties. That said, it is also important to note that the population of migrant farmworkers in the area continues to decline each year. Thus, by implication, one could also infer that the number of migrant children in the area will also decline in years to come. Ultimately, what will make for the most accurate predictions will be whether growers are able to maintain and expand acreage and increase production over the next several years.

## **STRENGTHS & NEEDS**

In the section that follows, each program and related service area is discussed. External data from secondary sources and community organizations are used at the beginning of each subsection to construct a framework for specific strengths and needs. Internal data is then used at the close of each section to demonstrate that program management, staff and parents of program participants actively participated in the construction and development of this document.

### **► EDUCATION**

#### **Adult Education**

The median level of education in Hood River County is some college, no degree. Likewise, the median level of education in Wasco County is a high school graduate. Roughly 23 percent of residents in Hood River County have earned a bachelor's degree or higher, with the same figure for Wasco County near 16 percent.<sup>56</sup> In general, these figures point to the fact that Hood River County residents are typically better educated than Wasco County residents, and the whole of Region 9 for that matter. State economists have noted that workers with higher levels of formal education are less likely to be unemployed, a statement that is consistent with both the above figures and the earlier discussion pertaining to unemployment in Hood River and Wasco Counties.<sup>57</sup>

Data from the Oregon Department of Education show total public school enrollment in Hood River County to be approximately 3,945 students annually, 43 percent of which are non-white.<sup>58</sup> Likewise, total public school enrollment in Wasco County schools is approximately 3,458 students annually, 25 percent of which are non-white. Across all high schools in Hood River County and in Wasco County, the total number of high school dropouts is 64 students with 8.6 percent and 9.9 percent high school dropout rates over the past four years. Across both counties,

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<sup>56</sup> DP-2: *Profile of Selected Social Characteristics*, 2000, United States Census Bureau.

<sup>57</sup> Dallas Fridley, *Regional Profile: Labor Force, Employment and Unemployment in Region 9*, Fall 2005, Oregon Employment Department.

<sup>58</sup> Oregon Department of Education, 2004-2005.



the Oregon Department of Education also reports that 7 students dropped out of high school during the 2003-2004 school year specifically because they did not speak English well enough, while another 24 students dropped out citing a lack of adequate parental support in pursuing their high school degree.

Data on the educational attainment of parents of program participants from the Oregon Child Development Coalition's Program Information Report show that 84 percent of parents served in Hood River County have less than a high school degree, while 93 percent of parents served in Wasco County have less than a high school degree. Further, of all families served by the Oregon Child Development Coalition in Hood River and Wasco Counties, 5 are enrolled in either job training or school, suggesting that seasonal agricultural work and low wages require that both parents work to make ends meet and, thereby, detract from opportunities to advance one's education.<sup>59</sup>

The following is a breakdown of the agencies providing education services to children and families in Hood River and Wasco Counties. In the area of adult education:

- The Columbia Gorge Community College provides the Gorge Literacy program. This program is free and provides basic skills, GED, AHSD, ESL and Spanish GED classes in Hood River and The Dalles. Total enrollment in these classes is nearly 400 students annually.
- The Columbia Gorge Community College also offers 12 professional and technical programs, including early childhood and family studies.
- The Hood River County Library supports learning and personal development through general membership, cultural programs and other community gatherings.
- The Dalles-Wasco County library provides residents with access to information and materials through general membership and borrowing agreements. The library is funded by the City of The Dalles and Wasco County; however, as of July 2006, hours and services have dropped by 50 percent due to a loss of county funding as a measure for the Library District for Wasco County did not get voter majority.
- The Mid-Columbia Health Resource Center identifies as a public library, but with a special collection in the areas of health and medicine. They issue 1,300 new membership cards annually and attract 20-100 community members to each of their regular lecture events.

Representatives from the above agencies were surveyed to determine the greatest educational needs of children and families in Hood River and Wasco Counties. In the area of adult education, providers noted that additional classes are needed for non-English speakers to acquire college level writing skills, thereby moving beyond basic skills and basic education. Additionally, for those families with children, it was noted that additional mentoring opportunities are needed to ensure that families with children have the information and resources necessary to ensure adequate planning and preparation to send their children to college.

Overall, providers noted that resources are limited, particularly for those families living in south Wasco County where outreach and educational opportunities are sparse. Related to this,

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<sup>59</sup> *Program Information Report*, 2004, Oregon Child Development Coalition.



providers cited family mentoring as a current need. Too often, it was noted, local agencies and organizations attempt to advocate for families in need without engaging and educating families directly.

In an interview with the Parent Involvement Coordinator for the Oregon Child Development Coalition in Hood River and Wasco Counties it was noted that an increasing number of families enrolled in the Migrant Seasonal Head Start program are coming from rural Mexico. Further, roughly 35 percent are new families with very little education. Thus, while there is currently a need for additional ESL classes, what is perhaps more important at the present time is the development of an INEA Literacy Program in the community. Such a program was started in Mexico and essentially works to provide basic skills training as a bridge, allowing students to first obtain the Spanish GED and then advance into ESL and other classes. Thus, in the words of one provider, “current efforts regarding workforce training and skill development...could be further enhanced...[and furthermore] OCDC could serve as the lead agency to address [this].” Potential starting points include a standing invitation to community agencies to attend and participate in parent meetings to obtain and relay information.

### Early Childhood Education

In the area of early childhood education, other Head Start programs in Hood River and Wasco Counties include the Mid-Columbia Children’s Council and Warm Springs Tribal Head Start.<sup>60</sup> The Oregon Child Development Coalition in Hood River and Wasco Counties has and continues to develop interagency agreements with these providers to facilitate recruitment, trainings, transitions, etc.

Other programs that serve the migrant population include Migrant Education. Seasonal and age-specific enrollment counts are displayed in Table 2.12 for two general areas and then by age per county. What is evident is that less than 40 percent of children continue to be served during the summer and fall

**Table 2.12 - Migrant Education Enrollment<sup>61</sup>**

Hood River & Wasco Counties	2004-2005	
	Hood River School District	Region 9 ESD (includes Wasco Co)
Regular Enrollment	1,050	805
Summer Enrollment	320	409
<b>Total Enrollment</b>	<b>1,370</b>	<b>1,214</b>
	Hood River County	Wasco County
<1 year old	3	23
1	15	47
2	25	27
3	49	76
4	48	40
5	17	21
<b>Total Enrollment</b>	<b>157</b>	<b>234</b>

months, a pivotal time for most migrant families as they work long hours during the cherry and

<sup>60</sup> Enrollment information is included in the previous section entitled, *Data Analysis: Eligible, Unserved Migrant Children*.

<sup>61</sup> *Oregon’s Migrant Education Regional Programs, 2004-2005*, Oregon Department of Education.



pear harvests. Also of interest is the large number of 3 and 4 year old children in Hood River and Wasco Counties.

Partnerships in the area of early childhood education include:

- The Mid-Columbia Children’s Council (Region X Head Start) and the Oregon Child Development Coalition in Hood River and Wasco Counties have developed an interagency agreement which focuses on jointly implementing strategies in such areas as recruitment, transitions, health and disabilities and training and technical assistance.
- A collaborative agreement exists with the local Migrant Education program to provide assistance with screenings and assessments for the diagnosis of disabilities for migrant children. There are limited specialist services and staff trainings during the summer and fall months.
- Columbia Gorge Community College’s Department of Early Childhood and Family Studies provides staff training.
- The Region 9 Education Service District provides a range of education and support services to children, families and local providers.
- The Hood River County Library provides a number of children’s services, including Colorin Colorado for Spanish speaking parents, First Book, and GorgeKids.com.
- The Dalles-Wasco County library employs a bilingual staff member, providing onsite outreach (e.g., story times) in both English and Spanish.
- In partnership with the public libraries, First Book provides literacy support and free books to families. The Early Words literacy training program has been also accessible for staff.

Representatives from the above agencies were surveyed to determine the greatest needs of children and families. In the area of early childhood education, providers indicated that greater focus is needed in the community on school readiness, particularly in Wasco County. However, limited resources translate into limited outreach and education; thus, those in need cannot be reached (e.g., those in Dufur, Maupin, Tygh Valley) and the community goes uneducated about the current need, including the need to be involved and support service providers.

Overall, parents of program participants view the Oregon Child Development Coalition’s Migrant Seasonal Head Start program as a “good” educational program which serves both parents and children while attending to individual needs. Parents expressed a desire to see the agency expand or link with services that serve children through age 10 so as to have their children together in one location throughout the course of a day. Further, for those families enrolled in the long-term program, additional services were requested for October, including a greater number of slots for infants and toddlers.

## ► **MENTAL HEALTH & DISABILITIES**

The Health Resources and Safety Administration has designated both Hood River and Wasco Counties as mental health professional shortage areas due to their geographic isolation.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> *Oregon Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSA): Mental Health Designations as of 2/28/06*, 2006, Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), Bureau of Health Professionals.



Especially for those living outside of Hood River, Oregon, and The Dalles, Oregon, services are not readily available, a gap that is further exacerbated by limited resources. Additionally, in rural areas throughout Oregon, methamphetamine use continues to be on the rise as the second most used illicit drug after marijuana. As of 2006, over 210 persons in Hood River and Wasco Counties have been incarcerated for drugs.<sup>63</sup>

Mental health disorders affect approximately 1 in 10 children in Oregon, with 30 percent of these children experiencing co-occurring disorders requiring dual diagnoses. The Office of Mental Health Services with the Oregon Department of Human Services estimates there to be approximately 402 children with some sort of mental health issue in Hood River County under the age of 18, of which 40 children are estimated to suffer from co-occurring disorders.<sup>64</sup> Likewise, in Wasco County, an estimated 418 children are said to experience some sort of mental health disorder, of which 42 children are estimated to suffer from co-occurring disorders. Overall, approximately 157 children in Hood River County and 279 children in Wasco County receive some form of community based mental health care each year.

Data from the Oregon Child Development Coalition's Program Information Report show that 1 child in Hood River County was provided mental health services in 2004, with this child also receiving a referral for additional services. On average, mental health professionals spent 4 hours per month on-site. Likewise, **19 children were determined to have a disability, roughly 11 percent of enrolled seasonal children and 11 percent of enrolled migrant children in 2005**. Of these 19 children, each was determined eligible to receive special education and related services. Primary disabilities included emotional/behavioral disorder, non-categorical developmental delays, and speech or language impairments.<sup>65</sup>

Likewise, 5 children in Wasco County were provided mental health services in 2005, with all 5 children also receiving referrals for additional services. On average, mental health professionals spent 1 hour per month on-site. Likewise, **5 children were determined to have a disability, roughly 11 percent of enrolled seasonal children and zero percent of enrolled migrant children in 2005**. Of these 5 children, each was determined eligible to receive special education and related services. Primary disabilities included emotional/behavioral disorder, non-categorical developmental delays, and speech or language impairments.<sup>66</sup>

The following is a breakdown of the agencies providing services - both in the areas of mental health and disabilities - to children in Hood River and Wasco Counties.

- The Oregon Child Development Coalition in Hood River and Wasco Counties works collaboratively with the local ESD to accommodate referrals.
- The Mid-Columbia Center for Living provides mental health counseling and addiction services, serving 205 children under the age of 17 in Hood River County and 221 children under the age of 17 in Wasco County in 2005. Roughly 8 percent of clients in

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<sup>63</sup> *Oregon Data Book*, 2003, Oregon Department of Human Services, Office of Mental Health and Addiction Services.

<sup>64</sup> *Oregon Data Book*, 2003, Oregon Department of Human Services, Office of Mental Health and Addiction Services.

<sup>65</sup> *Program Information Report*, 2004 & 2005, Oregon Child Development Coalition.

<sup>66</sup> *Program Information Report*, 2004 & 2005, Oregon Child Development Coalition.



Hood River County were of Hispanic origin, while 24 percent of clients in Wasco County were of Hispanic origin.

- The Mid-Columbia Health Resource Center provides information, lectures and educational materials to the general community and has worked to reach out to the Latino population by investing in relationships with local churches and faith groups.
- Membership on the Local Interagency Coordinating Council allows the Oregon Child Development Coalition in Hood River and Wasco Counties to advocate for early intervention services.
- Next Door Inc provides mental health and counseling services, including Klahre House and individual counseling services.
- The Wasco County Prevention Coalition provides bilingual education and outreach, focusing on drugs and alcohol.

According to a recent needs assessment completed by the Mid-Columbia Center for Living, the number of children in need of mental health services is currently greater than the number being served.<sup>67</sup> Of the total number of children estimated in need of mental health services, only 41 percent of children under the age of 17 in Hood River County and 36 percent of children under the age of 17 in Wasco County are currently being served.

Representatives from the above agencies were surveyed to determine the greatest mental health and disabilities needs of children and families in Hood River and Wasco Counties. Respondents indicated that, overall, the need for children's mental health services exceeds the availability of care. Also of interest is that providers noted that there is a general shortage of culturally and linguistically appropriate materials covering such topics as depression, thereby acting as a barrier to minority groups in not only receiving care, but also in simply learning about mental health and healthy habits.

An interview with the Mental Health and Disabilities Coordinator for the Oregon Child Development Coalition in Hood River and Wasco Counties revealed that efforts are underway to continuously recruit children in need of mental health and disabilities services. New training and development manuals have facilitated this process, thereby freeing up time to expand partnerships and promote integration with local service providers. This is especially important, as there is only one community mental health center in the area, which is located in Hood River.

## ► HEALTH & NUTRITION

In August of 2005, the Oregon Office of Rural Health released a report identifying healthcare shortages and underservice in Hood River and Wasco Counties.<sup>68</sup> Likewise, the Bureau of Health Professions has determined that both areas contain medically underserved populations, with the low-income population specifically highlighted.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> *Behavioral Health in the Mid-Columbia Region: Estimate Needs an MCCFL Services Provided*, January 2006, Mid-Columbia Center for Living.

<sup>68</sup> *Oregon Medically Underserved Areas/Populations (MUA/MUP)*, 2005, Oregon Office of Rural Health.

<sup>69</sup> *Oregon Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSA)*, 2005, Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), Bureau of Health Professions.



In 2004, there were approximately 3 doctors for every 1,000 residents in Hood River County and 2 doctors for every 1,000 residents in Wasco County.<sup>70</sup> Roughly 18.1 percent of all residents in these two counties are without any form of health insurance, a figure that is somewhat less than figures provided by the Oregon Health and Sciences University.<sup>71</sup> In 2004, the Oregon Health and Sciences University received 2,416 visits from Hood River County residents, 53 percent of which were only partially or not reimbursable. Likewise, 2,347 visits were received from Wasco County residents, 60 percent of which were only partially or not reimbursable.<sup>72</sup>

In the preceding section, impediments to children's mental health were discussed. One such impediment includes low birth weight. Over the past several years, the number of live births with low-birth rate has increased dramatically in Wasco County. In 2004, the rate of low birth was 86.8 (n=23), whereas in 2001, the rate of low birth had been as low as 31.0 (n=9).<sup>73</sup> However, this trend is not similar for the rate of *very* low birthweight, with the rate of very low birth dropping to 11.3 (n=3) in 2004 from 17.2 (n=5) in 2001.<sup>74</sup>

While the increasing rate of low-birth has risen in recent years in Wasco County, it does not follow that such a change may be attributed to limited resources for prenatal care. In 2004, 3.0 percent live births in Wasco County were identified as lacking adequate prenatal care.<sup>75</sup> Since 2001, this figure represents an 88 percent decrease in the number of live births with inadequate prenatal care and is lower than the percentage reported statewide (5.8 percent). That said, it is noted that the percent of live births with inadequate prenatal care among Hispanics (8.7 percent statewide) is generally higher than that of non-Hispanics.<sup>76</sup> Thus, the increase in the percent of live births with inadequate prenatal care may prove to be higher among Hispanics in this area.

Data from the Oregon Child Development Coalition's Program Information report show that 116 children entered the Migrant Seasonal Head Start program in Hood River County in 2005 with health insurance, up by 22 percent from 2004.<sup>77</sup> Likewise, in Wasco County, 60 children entered the Migrant Seasonal Head Start program in 2005 with health insurance, down by 73 percent from the previous year.<sup>78</sup> Those with health insurance were covered by Medicaid and private insurance. Further, it is noted that there were zero children in Hood River County without any form of health insurance in 2005. For those without health insurance in Wasco County (n=178 in 2005), the Oregon Child Development Coalition worked with families to reduce the number of children without health insurance by 1 percent following enrollment, with the total number of

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<sup>70</sup> *Active and Practicing Physicians in Oregon by Geographic Region and per 100,000 Population, 2005*, Oregon Public Health Services, Oregon Department of Human Services.

<sup>71</sup> *2004 Percentage Without Health Insurance by Region, 2004*, Oregon Office of Rural Health. *OHSU and Jefferson County Statistics, 2004*, Oregon Health and Sciences University.

<sup>72</sup> *2004 Percentage Without Health Insurance by Region, 2004*, Oregon Office of Rural Health. *OHSU and Hood River County Statistics, 2004*, Oregon Health and Sciences University.

<sup>73</sup> *Live Births with Low Birthweight by County, Oregon Residents, 2001-2004*, Oregon Department of Human Services.

<sup>74</sup> *Live Births with Very Low Birthweight by County, Oregon Residents, 2001-2004*, Oregon Department of Human Services.

<sup>75</sup> *Prenatal Care by Mother's County of Residents, Oregon Residents, 2004*, Oregon Department of Human Services.

<sup>76</sup> *Prenatal Care by Mother's Race and Ethnicity, Oregon Residents, 2004*, Oregon Department of Human Services.

<sup>77</sup> *Program Information Report, 2004 & 2005*, Oregon Child Development Coalition.

<sup>78</sup> The majority of enrolled children in Wasco County had insurance from another state (e.g., California) which did not cover their medical needs while in Oregon.



children with access to an ongoing source of continuous, accessible medical care equal to 78 children. Common health conditions included obesity, anemia and asthma.

The following is a breakdown of the agencies providing health and dental services to children and families in Hood River and Wasco Counties.

- The Oregon State WIC program in Hood River County serves 1,080 children under the age 5 and 441 pregnant women annually, with 68 percent of those served in Hood River County at or below the poverty level.<sup>79</sup>
- The Oregon State WIC program in Wasco County serves 1,097 children under the age 5 and 480 pregnant women annually, with 67 percent of those served in Hood River County at or below the poverty level.<sup>80</sup>
- The Hood River County and Wasco/Sherman County Health Departments provide core public health services, including family planning, disease prevention, investigation, immunization, environmental health, home visiting, and maternal child health.
- La Clínica del Cariño is a community and migrant health center in Hood River, serving nearly 3,000 migrant and seasonal farmworkers in Hood River and Wasco Counties annually.
- Providence Hood River Memorial Hospital provides a range of services including nutrition, home and occupational health, and emergency services. The hospital also operates a family birth center and provides interpretation for clients. As of September 2006, the hospital will have a mobile medical unit to provide onsite medications and prescriptions, as well as to help connect families to La Clínica del Cariño to establish a medical home.
- Mid Columbia Medical Center in The Dalles, Oregon, provides a variety of medical services, including women's health services and visiting home health.
- The Mid Columbia Medical Center also operates the Health Resource Center which functions as a medical library for the community, issuing some 1,300 new memberships annually and attracting community members to regular lecture events.
- Next Door Inc provides Nuestra Comunidad Sana, a culturally relevant health promotion and disease prevention service to the Columbia Gorge Latino community.
- Dr. Kyle House provides screening and dental services to children enrolled in the Migrant Seasonal Head Start program, and has currently recruited a new partner.

Representatives from the above agencies were surveyed to determine the greatest medical and dental needs of children and families in Hood River and Wasco Counties. Providers noted that, in general, low-income and farmworking families need better access to health care, starting with culturally and linguistically appropriate information and resources covering diet, pesticides, obesity, type II diabetes and sexually transmitted diseases. To address this, a representative from Providence Hood River Memorial Hospital suggested that local providers work collaboratively to develop a continuous feedback loop which utilizes focus groups and surveys wherein information can be both obtained from and communicated to the target population. Toward this end, the hospital has offered meeting space to accommodate approximately 20 people and also suggests - along with other providers - that the Oregon Child Development Coalition in Hood

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<sup>79</sup> 2005 WIC Facts, 2005, Oregon WIC Program, Oregon Department of Human Services.

<sup>80</sup> 2005 WIC Facts, 2005, Oregon WIC Program, Oregon Department of Human Services.



River and Wasco Counties continue to use parent meetings as a platform to educate parents while involving other providers.

Respondents also highlighted the lack of dental care in the area, a finding supported by data from the Bureau of Health Professionals which has identified shortages in dental services to the low-income population in both Hood River and Wasco Counties.<sup>81</sup> An interview with the Health Manager for the Oregon Child Development Coalition in Hood River and Wasco Counties revealed that local dental providers are having difficulty recruiting and retaining qualified dentists, thereby making it difficult to accommodate referrals and provide dental services. Thus, it is not surprising that parents of program participants reported that they are currently unable to access dental services because of 3-4 week wait times and the fact that new patients are not being accepted.

## ► FAMILY SERVICES

In 2004, the Oregon Department of Human Services released figures estimating the number of child abuse victims in Hood River and Wasco Counties to be 80 children and 142 children, respectively, down 9 percent in Hood River County and up 4 percent in Wasco County between 2003 and 2004.<sup>82</sup> These figures amount to approximately 14 child abuse victims per 1,000 children in Hood River County and 22 children abuse victims per 1,000 children in Wasco County. Shelter counts in Region 6 - an area which includes Hood River and Wasco Counties - show that 105 children under the age of 6 spent one or more nights in a shelter in 2005, with the total number of actual *child nights* equal to 3,212.<sup>83</sup> While these regional figures are some of the lowest in the state, it is noted that the population of Hispanics receiving shelter services in this region - particularly in Wasco County - is overly represented relative to other areas of the state. (13.1 percent).

Figures from the Oregon Department of Human Services show 198 Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) cases in Service Area 9 - an area that includes Hood River and Wasco Counties - in March of 2006. Relative to the previous year, this figure represents an overall 2.5 percent decrease in the number of TANF cases.<sup>84</sup> However, in Hood River County alone, it is noted that the percentage of TANF cases increased by nearly 19 percent over the one-year period. Additionally, the number of cases for food stamps in both Hood River and Wasco Counties increased by nearly 5 percent over the one-year period, with the number of cases in The Dalles increasing by nearly 15 percent.<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> *Oregon Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSA): Dental Designations as of 2/28/2006*, February 2006, Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), Bureau of Health Professionals.

<sup>82</sup> *The State of Children in Oregon's Child Protective System, 2004*, Oregon Department of Human Services.

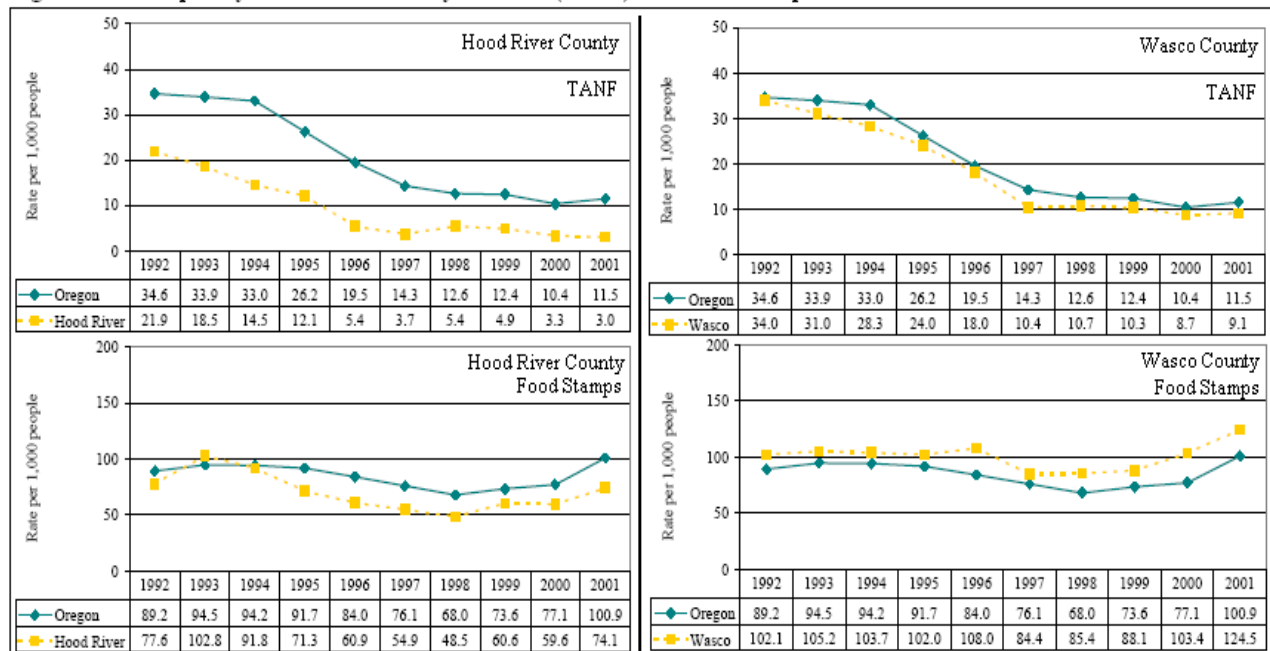
<sup>83</sup> *Summary of Services Provided by Domestic and Sexual Violence Service Programs Funded by DHS, 2005*, Oregon Department of Human Services.

<sup>84</sup> *Oregon TANF Caseload Flash, May 2006*, Oregon Department of Human Services.

<sup>85</sup> *Oregon Food Stamp Caseload Flash, May 2006*, Oregon Department of Human Services.



Figure 2.5 - Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) and Food Stamps



In 2005, roughly 5 percent (n=15) of all families served by the Oregon Child Development Coalition in Hood River and Wasco Counties identified as single parent families. In all cases was the parent or guardian employed; whereas, of the total number of two-parent families, 95 percent had both partners in the workforce.<sup>86</sup> In 2005, 12 families received benefits under the TANF program, an increase of 71 percent from the previous year. In addition, the Migrant Seasonal Head Start program responded to a range of family needs, the most common being health education, ESL needs, emergency/crisis intervention, and child abuse and neglect.

The following is a breakdown of the agencies providing family and social services to children and families in Hood River and Wasco Counties.

- The Oregon Child Development Coalition in Hood River and Wasco Counties has developed an interagency agreement with the local Child Care Resource and Referral provider to facilitate referrals.
- The Oregon Department of Human Services has offices in Hood River and Wasco Counties providing social and health related services to children, adults and families, as well as to seniors and people with disabilities.
- Helping Hands Against Violence provides shelter services in Hood River County, providing a 24-hour hotline with collect calls accepted.
- Haven From Domestic Violence provides shelter services in Wasco County, providing a 24-hour hotline with collect calls accepted.

Figure 2.5 – Hood River County Data Book, 2002, Office of Mental Health and Addiction Services, Oregon Department of Human Services.

Wasco County Data Book, 2002, Office of Mental Health and Addiction Services, Oregon Department of Human Services.

<sup>86</sup> Program Information Report, 2004 & 2005, Oregon Child Development Coalition.



- Mid Columbia Community Action boasts 7 food pantries, 2 emergency meal programs and 3 supplemental programs. Each month, 9,866 food boxes are distributed, serving some 2,893 individuals.<sup>87</sup>
- Mid Columbia Community Action also provides clothing, temporary lodging, weatherization, rent and utility assistance, tax preparation, and information and referral services. Roughly 30 percent of the client base is Hispanic, with roughly 5 percent of these as migrant farmworkers and 20 percent of these as seasonal farmworkers.
- FISH Food Bank is staffed with members from local churches and faith groups, providing food boxes to 700-800 families annually. They estimate that roughly 50 percent of those receiving assistance are migrant and seasonal farmworkers.
- Next Door Inc provides a range of services to strengthen children and families, including Big Brothers/Big Sisters, Columbia Gorge CASA, Community Attention Homes program, the Crisis Shelter, Families First, Nuestra Comunidad Sana, Latino outreach, new parent services, and other youth and family services.

Representatives from several of the above agencies were surveyed to determine the greatest family services needs of children and families in Hood River and Wasco Counties. In general, it was noted that resource shortages have impeded the ability of providers to assist permanent residents with housing and utilities assistance during the winter months when agriculture slows down. Likewise, outreach has been impeded as well, with one local provider noting that it has been difficult to promote information and services.

According to one provider, a growing number of migrant and seasonal farmworkers are transitioning out of agriculture as more and more industries - construction, education, etc - are in need of their labor. Especially in Hood River, there is a need for qualified staff in the health and education fields for interpretation and translation. It was also noted that, with the exception of law enforcement in Hood River, many local providers and businesses are reaching out to the Hispanic community.

An interview with the Family Service Manager for the Oregon Child Development Coalition in Hood River and Wasco Counties revealed that partnerships are a priority with agencies in Hood River and Wasco Counties, as well as with agencies in other areas of the country that may provide assistance in tracking and serving the migrant population. For example, the Oregon Child Development Coalition has developed contacts with Yuba City Center's Migrant Seasonal Head Start program and Live Oak School's Migrant Seasonal Head Start program, both of which are located in California. Such partnerships ensure greater continuity, allowing the agency to more effectively track the needs and movements of families.

Other needs identified by the Family Service Manager include limited medical and dental coverage, as well as difficulties securing diapers and formula. Parents of program participants noted that they tend to rely on family and friends to assist with such needs, which can exacerbate the situation when income and other resources are stretched or, in some cases, non-existent for months at a time.

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<sup>87</sup> *Regional Food Banks at a Glance*, 2005, Oregon Food Bank.



## ► CHILDCARE

The Oregon Childcare Research Partnership lists a total of 57 certified childcare providers in Hood River County and 61 certified childcare providers in Wasco County, with approximately 904 childcare slots and 1,067 childcare slots, respectively. These figures translate into a respective 21 childcare slots and 26 childcare slots for every 100 children, the figure for Hood River County being 4 slots short of the state benchmark of 25 childcare slots per 100 children.<sup>88</sup>

Depending on family type, the Oregon Childcare Research Partnership found that up to 39 percent of families in Hood River and Wasco Counties with children under the age of 13 use some form of paid childcare, with 37 percent of all children currently enrolled in paid childcare. In addition, the report found that families in Hood River County and Wasco County use on average 30 hours of paid childcare per week.

**Table 2.13 - Childcare Costs by Type of Care**

	Family Childcare		Certified Family Childcare		Center Based Childcare	
	Hourly	Monthly	Hourly	Monthly	Hourly	Monthly
	Region A/C	Region A/C	Region A/C	Region A/C	Region A/C	Region A/C
Infant	\$2.39/\$1.85	\$393/\$345	\$2.66/\$1.85	\$424/\$318	\$3.29/\$2.12	\$526/\$392
Toddler	\$2.12/\$1.60	\$361/\$318	\$2.39/\$1.85	\$382/\$318	\$3.18/\$2.12	\$509/\$392
Pre K	\$2.12/\$1.60	\$340/\$254	\$2.22/\$1.91	\$359/\$306	\$2.34/\$1.80	\$372/\$291

According to a recent childcare market rate study completed for the Oregon Department of Human Services, Hood River County and Wasco County are in different childcare regions.<sup>89</sup> Childcare costs in Regions A and C - which include Hood River and Wasco Counties - are shown in Table 2.13. While costs in Region A - an area which includes most of Hood River County - are the highest in the state, childcare care costs in Region C - an area which includes most of Wasco County - are the lowest in the state. In light of the number of childcare slots per county, 21 slots in Hood River County and 26 slots in Wasco County, the above costs are understandable. However, what is of interest is that researchers have also found that the childcare subsidy rate provided by the Oregon Department of Human Services is adequate to purchase only one-fifth of market rate childcare slots in Hood River and Wasco Counties.<sup>90</sup>

The following is a breakdown of some of the agencies providing childcare and related services to children and families in Hood River and Wasco Counties.

- Through Columbia Gorge Community College, Child Care Partners makes referrals to local child care facilities (e.g., preschools, family child care, certified family child care and center based providers), provides information and access to subsidies to assist with payment for care, and makes available information regarding characteristics of quality child care. In special circumstances CCP works with local agencies whose clients need to

<sup>88</sup> *Estimated Supply of Childcare in Oregon as of July 1, 2004*, April 26, 2005, Oregon Childcare Research Partnership.

<sup>89</sup> *2004 Oregon Child Care Market Rate Study*, 2004, Oregon Department of Human Services.

<sup>90</sup> *2004 Oregon Child Care Market Rate Study*, 2004, Oregon Department of Human Services.



access childcare due to a variety of needs, such as mental or emotional health issues, working with the case manager to find spaces that may be able to competently accommodate the child and family.

- Within Hood River County, there are 8 certified childcare centers and 28 family childcare homes. Of the total number of childcare homes, 3 are listed as primary Spanish speakers.
- Within Wasco County, there are 6 certified childcare centers and 35 family childcare homes. Of the total number of childcare homes, 2 are listed as primary Spanish speakers.
- Additionally, there are an unspecified number of exempt childcare providers in Hood River and Wasco Counties.

Representatives from the above agencies were surveyed to determine the greatest childcare needs of children and families in Hood River and Wasco Counties. Data from the Oregon Child Care Division indicate that there are only 5 Spanish speaking, certified home childcare providers in Hood River and Wasco Counties. Related to this, the following survey response illustrates the barriers that families face when in search of care.

*“For example, in recruiting and training Spanish language providers I often hear, ‘I don’t want Hispanic/Latino families because they won’t pay (more than a dollar) for care.’ I know this is an economic issue and more complicated than information and it is also an issue in the Anglo community – particularly low/moderate income.”*

According to one medical provider in the area, the issue described in the above paragraph is an instance of subtle racism. According to this respondent, discrimination tends to ebb and flow in Hood River and Wasco Counties depending on local economic conditions. For those families currently in search of childcare, the above quotation simply translates into the inability to locate quality childcare. Parents of program participants spoke to this difficulty during a focus group, arguing that differences in cost do not necessarily reflect the level of quality and that, furthermore, parents have lost or had to quit one or more jobs because they could not locate a childcare provider.

Quality childcare is currently a need expressed by service providers from across the spectrum, including staff employed by the Oregon Child Development Coalition in Hood River and Wasco Counties. What is clear is that local and statewide efforts and investments in additional childcare slots and resources would effectively be an investment in the local workforce and, hence, in the local economy. Local growers were quick to point out that childcare for their employees remains a serious concern, especially in Wasco County where agricultural operations are dependent on the labor of farmworkers, a labor pool that is already in tight supply.

## ▶ **TRANSPORTATION & HOUSING**

Transitioning from a discussion of childcare to one of transportation and housing, Appendix C2.2 contains a map which displays the locations of childcare providers relative to farmworker housing complexes, manufactured home parks and farm labor camps for illustrative purposes. The distances between such locations require transportation in some form.

*“We have a serious shortage of affordable housing.”*

*-Mike Benedict  
Planning Director, Hood River County*



Accordingly, the following is a breakdown of the various transportation providers and services in Hood River and Wasco Counties.

- Columbia Area Transit provides accessible, quality transportation services to the residents of Hood River County and the surrounding Columbia Gorge area, providing nearly 25,000 rides annually. Dial-a-Ride service is also available.
- The Wasco County Transportation Network provides transportation services to Wasco County residents. Dial-a-Ride services are also available. Roughly 17 percent of riders are children.
- Additional transportation services are available for those clients with the Oregon Health Plan.
- The Wasco County Commission on Children and Families has formed the Car Seat Coalition which distributes car seats and provides installation training.

Local transportation providers expressed concern around more effectively communicating with their riders. While many of their informational materials are in Spanish, providers have not yet established a core group of riders between Hood River and Wasco Counties. While this may change in light of the fact that Internet search engine, Google, plans to locate in The Dalles, providers spoke of the need to conduct a targeted needs assessment to identify commuting patterns (including those commuters to Portland) and adjust services so as to build trust with riders.

Likewise, providers also spoke to the need to communicate more effectively with local service agencies, indicating a desire to engage in joint planning processes to identify commonalities, available resources, and collaborative responses. For example, local transportation providers have seen a doubling of their funds this year and plan to use these dollars to both offset high fuel costs and provide additional services between the hours of 11 am and 2 pm to accommodate medical appointments. Toward this end, joint planning would allow the needs of migrant and seasonal farmworkers to be placed at the forefront and gain more direct access into route planning, etc. In essence, transportation providers are currently looking to gauge whether there is interest in and support for increasing ridership and the availability of services.

While the Oregon Child Development Coalition in Hood River and Wasco Counties continues see a limited supply of certified school bus drivers in the area, the agency does what it can to continue building partnerships, currently working with the Car Seat Coalition to secure and install car seats for those in need. Likewise, the agency continues to develop and expand relationships with local school districts. These and other partnerships are of vital importance to children and families. During a focus group with parents of program participants it was noted that families in need of a ride or a car can pay upwards of \$20 for a ride to and from town. The high cost of obtaining a ride from an acquaintance has deterred many families from traveling at all, leaving some families stranded at home without groceries and other supplies.

The final concern in the above paragraph is a particularly salient one in light of the fact that many farm labor camps in Hood River and Wasco Counties are located well outside of local towns and cities. In the area of housing, the following is a breakdown of the various housing complexes and housing services in Hood River and Wasco Counties.



- At least 6 apartment complexes in Hood River County, such as the Wyeast Vista Apartments, cater to low-income and migrant families. Overall, there are at least 215 units.
- There are 10 manufactured home parks in Hood River County, the majority of which are located in the City of Hood River.
- There are 131 farm labor camps in Hood River County. Together, these camps are able to accommodate several hundred individuals.
- At least 3 apartment complexes in north Wasco County, such as the Casa Lomas Apartments, cater to low-income families. Overall, there are at least 57 units, many of which are located in or near agricultural areas.
- There are 13 manufactured home parks in Wasco County, the majority of which are located in the City of The Dalles.
- There are 75 farm labor camps in Wasco County. Together, these camps are able to accommodate several hundred individuals.
- The Mid-Columbia Housing Authority and Columbia Gorge Housing Authority provide safe, decent, affordable housing to low-income families in Hood River and Wasco Counties.
- Housing for People (HOPE) provides affordable housing and community development for residents of the Mid-Columbia River region. Its activities have centered largely on providing temporary emergency services and developing affordable housing. Completed housing projects include Wyeast Vista, a 24-unit apartment complex for farmworker families; White Salmon Seniors Apartments, 6 units; the Riverside Apartments, a 26-unit tax credit project; Bella Vista, a 28-unit tax credit project; and Queens Heights, a 48-unit tax credit project.

According to a recent news article, many residents in Hood River and Wasco Counties are spending more than 35 percent of their household income on rent and mortgage.<sup>91</sup> This situation is further complicated by the fact that many outlying areas are not zoned for multi-family dwellings, which creates problems for those who cannot afford to buy a house. Further, waiting lists continue to grow for low-income housing units built by the Mid-Columbia Housing Authority and Housing for People (HOPE).

The above findings have been confirmed by parents of program participants, several of whom indicated that there have been months when they have been unable to make rent due to an income which fluctuates with the harvest. To reduce the financial burden, parents indicated that they are living with members outside of their nuclear family. While parents expressed that they would like to settle in a home permanently, it was clear from respondents that current dwellings lack the size, quality, and safety that they are looking for.

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<sup>91</sup> Raelynn Ricarte, *Officials Take on Housing Challenge*, October 19, 2005, Hood River News.



**DATA ANALYSIS: IDENTIFICATION AND PRIORITIZATION OF ISSUES**

**► SWOT ANALYSIS**

A SWOT analysis identified the following strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats for the Oregon Child Development Coalition in Hood River County in carrying out its mission to improve the lives of children and families.

**Figure 2.6 Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats**

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Bilingual, bicultural staff are viewed as a resource in the community.</li> <li>* The agency has and continues to meet full enrollment, with a diverse group of local and national partnerships aiding in tracking and recruitment.</li> <li>* Relationships with a core group of cherry growers in Wasco County have been developed and are being maintained.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Safe, decent and affordable housing is an emerging issue, especially in Hood River County where development has been more rapid than in Wasco County.</li> <li>* Transportation services are limited in Hood River and Wasco County. Additionally, transportation providers have indicated that greater community collaboration among service agencies is needed.</li> </ul>
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* As the agency is recognized as a leader in serving the migrant population, opportunities exist for the agency to expand its role in the community.</li> <li>* Growers are currently looking at cultivars and pruning techniques which would increase production and promote expansion.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Various sources provide conflicting estimates for the migrant and seasonal farmworker population in Hood River and Wasco Counties, an issue that needs resolution in light of the fact that agriculture continues to change in Hood River and Wasco Counties (e.g., cherries appear to have rebounded in 2006; apples in Hood River County continue to decline).</li> </ul>

**► KEY OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS BY SERVICE AREA**

The following observations and recommendations are provided to meet the requirements set forth by the Head Start Performance Standards, 45 CFR 1305, thereby providing a tool for the Oregon Child Development Coalition in Hood River County to (i) evaluate the program philosophy, and migrant and seasonal objectives, (ii) determine the most needed component services, (iii) specify the recruitment area(s) and related limitations, (iv) determine appropriate locations for centers, and (v) further establish recruitment and selection criteria for children and families. Note, these service area recommendations follow from the above SWOT analysis and are intended to compliment those recommendations provided in the state level assessment.



### **Observations and Recommendations: OCDC in Hood River County**

**Observation:** The agency demonstrates a diverse group of partnerships which have contributed to full enrollment, as well as mutually beneficial collaborations in the community.

**Recommendation:** Continue to foster collaborative relationships, while working with providers to grow the level of involvement and opening doors for new providers to support the work of the agency.

### **Observations and Recommendations: Education**

**Observation:** Additional Migrant Seasonal Head Start services are needed in Hood River and Wasco Counties, more so in Hood River County for both migrant and seasonal children.

**Recommendation:** Continue to explore additional public and private support as a way to increase the number of available slots and children served.

**Observation:** School readiness continues to be an issue for many service providers, several of which have expressed concerns about the willingness of local businesses and community members to support such efforts.

**Recommendation:** Promote greater business and community involvement in the Migrant Seasonal Head Start program and in the classroom by identifying potential supporters and creating opportunities for involvement (e.g., committees, volunteerism, trainings, etc).

### **Observations and Recommendations: Mental Health and Disabilities**

**Observation:** Mental health resources in Hood River and Wasco Counties are limited, with recent assessments identifying a relatively large number of unserved individuals in both areas.

**Recommendation:** Continue to build and maintain relationships with new and existing partners to leverage resources. Additionally, use such partnerships to build greater awareness about this need in the community.

### **Observations and Recommendations: Health and Nutrition**

**Observation:** Local medical providers have expressed a need for greater collaboration in sharing and receiving information from the target population, and could benefit from greater access to parent meetings.

**Recommendation:** Develop a system for identifying providers who wish to provide information to parents during parent meetings and other events while ensuring that the spectrum of providers in the area are included in this process.



### **Observations and Recommendations: Family Services**

**Observation:** Service providers are having difficulty meeting the needs of year-round residents and seasonal farmworkers.

**Recommendation:** In light of the current farm labor shortage, enlist the assistance of local growers to ensure that they continue to invest in their workforce, being involved in and supporting the well-being of their employees year round.

### **Observations and Recommendations: Childcare**

**Observation:** Quality, bilingual childcare is limited in this area, especially in Hood River County. High childcare costs in Hood River County exacerbate this shortage.

**Recommendation:** Respondents surveyed for this assessment confirm that efforts to increase the stock of quality childcare must also be accompanied by efforts to educate the community about the need for quality childcare. Thus, continued joint outreach with Columbia Gorge Community College's Child Care Partners is recommended.

### **Observations and Recommendations: Transportation and Housing**

**Observation:** Transportation providers have seen an increase in funding this year and are looking for collaborative approaches in planning and developing new services.

**Recommendation:** Work with local transportation providers to expand the current dialogue beyond medical transportation needs to identify long-term, community wide solutions.

**Observation:** There is a shortage of affordable housing, especially in Hood River County, as the need for residential property is outpaced that for industrial land.

**Recommendation:** Continue to advocate for migrant families by engaging city and county government, planners, and the regional housing authority to ensure that families are not pushed out and relegated to outlying areas where services and amenities are limited.

### **SUMMARY**

Especially in Wasco County, the labor of migrant and seasonal farmworkers is indispensable. Monthly employment estimates, crop reports and total sales each attest to this. Moreover, state economists have noted that farmwork continues to be the fastest growing occupation in this region. These facts, in conjunction with a diverse group of existing partnerships, warrant the agency in working collaboratively to engage and educate the community on the contributions of migrant and seasonal farmworkers. Interviews with a range of services providers revealed that



the community could benefit from such information and involvement, as could the Oregon Child Development Coalition in Hood River and Wasco Counties. As a number of service providers noted that resources were scarce and that community involvement was limited, it would perhaps be beneficial to explore this link and attempt to address the former by means of promoting the latter.

