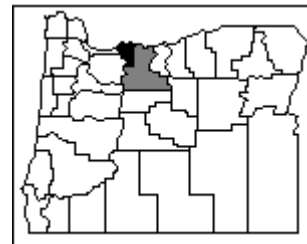


HOOD RIVER & WASCO COUNTIES

COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT

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. The agency operates under the direction of the Board of Directors. Program guidance is given by the Policy Council with input, planning, and action provided by local program committees comprised of local parents. Oregon Child Development Coalition's Migrant Seasonal Head Start program in Hood River and Wasco Counties served a total of 505 children in 2008. In the two counties, 384 children were classified as migrant and 121 children were classified as seasonal.



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 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.

CRITICAL ISSUES

► CHANGES IN AGRICULTURE

Changes in agriculture continue to impact the community, families, and programs. As new orchards in the Dufur area and further south and east come on line, and as later varieties gain favor and come into production, there has been a growing need to extend services for the summer Migrant program in Wasco. Fortunately, in 2007, and 2008, funding has been available for this expansion of approximately three weeks. The need

for services throughout July and into August will continue and potentially grow and extend into the full second or even third weeks of August. There is also a need for a satellite site to run during this program in Mosier, Oregon. It was initially anticipated that the bell curve of need for workers would lower as the harvest lengthened, but observations reveal that during a good crop year, there is still a peak need in late June and early July for nearly 7,000 workers, and then there is a continued need for a lower number into the late or “second” harvest.

The changing market has also affected local agriculture, with demands for quality and size becoming more and more stringent, and salability decreasing each year. There have been several years, including 2009, where hundreds of tons of fruit are thrown away due to sudden loss of market and buyers backing out.

▶ **SERVICE AVAILABILITY/ECONOMIC DOWNTURN**

Incomes are lower with the downturned economy, and agriculture employment has suffered as well with poor markets in the last couple of years leading to fewer jobs and less demand for farmworkers. This leads to increased levels of need among families which has been evidenced through dramatic increases in the number of families seeking services through TANF, food stamps and food boxes, etc. (Reported at the Hood River Commission on Children and Families Meeting, spring 2009)

Several local businesses in Wasco County have closed completely, including Copper’s Hardware Store, Courtesy Home Furnishings (Rent to Own), LeBreton’s Shoes, Gayer’s Jeweler, and Albertson’s grocery store. Albertson’s will be a particular loss as the company helped provide milk and meat vouchers and discount supplies for Migrant Farmworker Food Boxes during cherry harvest. In Hood River, all three car dealerships have closed completely.

Many key programs that provide services to local families, especially those who are low-income and high need, are going through major program cutbacks and are losing some program services altogether. In particular, services we have seen affected include Early Intervention which provides services to young children with disabilities and their families, parenting education, mental health services, Migrant Education programs, public library access, reduced medical and dental services at local clinics, and health outreach services cut through both La Clinica del Carino and The Next Door. (This topic has been discussed over the past 12 months at Families First Network/Commission meetings)

▶ **AFFORDABLE HOUSING, ESPECIALLY IN HOOD RIVER COUNTY**

The lack of affordable housing mentioned in the 2006 Community Assessment has continued and increased. Added to the lack of independent affordable housing, farmworkers have had increased difficulty in obtaining housing as OSHA regulations have led to less farmworker housing being available through agricultural employers.

COUNTY PROFILE

▶ GEOGRAPHIC PROFILE

Hood River County and Wasco County span 533 square miles and 2,396 square miles, respectively.¹ 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. The counties have varying community characteristics with Hood River County tending to embrace its proximity to the large city of Portland, Oregon, some 60 miles away and Wasco County tending to be more isolated with long-term residents having more extensive roots and networks in the community.²

▶ ECONOMIC PROFILE

Table I (all tables are contained in the earlier Oregon Community Assessment and OCDC Overview section of the Community Assessment) provides the following economic information. The 2007 median per capita income for Hood River County was \$33,103. The total number of individuals employed in the Hood River County in 2007 was 15,787 with 11.14 percent in agriculture. Unemployment in Hood River County has moved from 4.9 percent in both 2007 and 2008 to 8.4 percent in July 2009.

In Wasco County, the 2007 median per capita income was \$31,763. The number of individuals employed in 2007 was 13,504 with 7.09 percent employed in agriculture. Wasco County's unemployment was higher than Hood River's with 8.0 percent unemployed in 2007, 7.5 percent in 2008, and rising to 10.9 percent in July 2009.

While manufacturing, retail, and service work continue to be the major employers in the two counties, both Hood River and Wasco Counties are key players in Oregon's

¹ Oregon Blue Book 2009.

² Esther K. Smith, 'Country Girls' Build Value in Fruit Grown in the Gorge, July 26, 2006, Hood River News.

agricultural economy. 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. It is of notable interest that the pool of farmworkers in Wasco County is almost entirely composed of migrant and seasonal farmworkers. Should that pool decline or dry up, agriculture would suffer. Growers could no longer maintain a viable business due to an inadequate labor supply. Over the past few years growers have been 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.). Cherry growers in Wasco County have considered extending the harvest in order 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. These improvements allows for cherry growers to plant more but this increase is linked to and dependent upon 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 have expanded their operations into the Dufur and Mosier.

► DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

Data from Table 5 indicate the total population of Hood River County in 2008 was 21,536 up by 1.58 percent from 2007. Table 5 also indicates the total number of children under age four in Hood River County in 2008 was 1,540.

The US Census and Oregon Department of Education data indicate the number of individuals living in poverty in 2007 in Hood River County was 12.7 percent.³ The poverty rate for children ages 3 and 4 was 15.5 percent and for children birth to two years of age it was 16.1 percent.⁴

Table 5 reported the total population of Wasco County in 2008 to be 23,775 in 2008, an increase from 23,707 in 2007 which represents only a .30 percent increase in population. Table 5 also indicates the total number of children under the age of four in Wasco County in 2008 to be 1,490.

The percent of the total population of people living in poverty in Wasco County was 14.6 in 2007. The poverty rate for children ages 3 and 4 was 13.4 and for children ages birth to two years it was 10.8 percent.⁵

³ US Census Bureau and Oregon Department of Education

⁴ ODE Annual Estimate of Eligible 3-4 year olds and birth -2 year olds, 2009

⁵ Data is taken from the *Program Information Report*, 2008, Oregon Child Development Coalition.

Additionally, Table 5 data indicates that during the 2008-2009 school year, 56.7 percent of students in Hood River County schools and 46.2 percent of students in Wasco County schools were eligible for free or reduced lunch. These figures are important to note for the reason that poverty is often associated with: health problems and access to health care; and the need for food stamps, temporary assistance to needy families (TANF), and housing/shelter.

► **PROFILE OF PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS⁶**

Table 5 displays the Hispanic composition of the population in Hood River County and Wasco County. Hood River County has a sizeable Hispanic population. Hood River is reported as having a population of 5,500 Hispanic residents in 2007 and 5,755 in 2008 which represents a 3.69 percent increase. Table 5 also shows that in Wasco County there are an estimated 2,825 persons of Hispanic origin living in the County in 2007 increasing to 2,929 in 2008 representing an increase of 3.68 percent.

In 2008, 505 children in Hood River County and Wasco Counties were enrolled in the Migrant Seasonal Head Start program based on income eligibility or public assistance. Overall, program participants in the counties were of Hispanic or Latino origin, which includes persons of Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, South and Central American or other Latino culture or origin.

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

► **DATA ANALYSIS: ELIGIBLE, UNSERVED 3-4 YEAR OLD CHILDREN**

The Oregon Department of Education estimated there to be 619 total children between the ages of 3 and 4 in Hood River County and 530 total children between the ages of 3 and 4 in Wasco County for 2008.⁷ 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 2008 for Hood River and Wasco County, 15.5 percent and 13.4 percent respectively. Thus, the 2008 total number of eligible Head Start children in Hood River County was 96 children; and the total number of eligible Head Start children in Wasco County was 71 children.⁸ Note that Head Start and OPK

⁷ Estimated Number of Eligible 3 and 4 Year Olds, Oregon Department of Education, 2009.

⁸ Estimated Number of Eligible 3 and 4 Year Olds, Oregon Department of Education, 2009.

programs in Hood River County served 119 children in 2008 and that 160 were served in Wasco County.

Because the 2008 number served by Head Start and OPK programs exceeded these eligible numbers, this need for services is being met. The same cannot be said, however, for the Migrant/Seasonal population. In the sections that follow, the Oregon Child Development Coalition will further refine the estimates from the Oregon Department of Education to provide estimates for the number of unserved, eligible Migrant Seasonal Head Start children in Hood River County and Wasco County.

► **DATA ANALYSIS: ELIGIBLE, UNSERVED MIGRANT CHILDREN**

The Oregon Child Development Coalition contracted with a demographer, Jack DeWaard, who developed a method for estimating both the number of migrant and seasonal farmworkers and the number of children ages 0-5 of migrant and seasonal farmworkers in Oregon counties for 2005 and 2008. The method builds upon Alice C. Larson's 2002 estimates of migrant and seasonal farmworkers and uses agricultural information from the Oregon Agricultural Information Network through Oregon State University.⁹ Table 2 contains the estimated number of MFW and SFW for four years across an 11 year period from 1997 to 2008.

As can be noted, in Hood River there were 7,135 migrant workers in 1997 and only 4,002 in 2008. In addition there were estimates of 1,197 seasonal workers in 1997 and 6,615 seasonal workers in 2008. Overall the estimated number of MSFW in 1997 was 8,332 increasing to 11,179 in 2002 and decreasing to 10,617 in 2008.

Table 2 indicates that in Wasco County the estimated "total" number of MFW and SFW from 1997 to 2008 remained nearly constant but there was a large shift in migrant to seasonal workers. It is estimated that in 1997 there were 8,601 MFW in Wasco County and 4,317 in 2008. Estimates indicate there to have been only 615 SFW in 1997 with an increase to 4688 in 2008. These figures help explain and support the changes during recent years in the options and weeks of services offered in the two counties.

The estimates for children of MFW and SFW reflect the changes discussed above. Table 7 shows the changes in this estimated population of children under five over a three year period from 2005 to 2008. The table notes there were 560 migrant children and 1,598 seasonal children in Hood River County in 2005. The 2008 numbers of migrant children expanded to 565 and the numbers of children from seasonal families expanded to 1,618. Likewise, there were an estimated 622 migrant children and 1,272 seasonal children in Wasco County in 2005; while there were 626 estimated migrant children and 1,285 children of seasonal families in 2008.

⁹Alice C. Larson, Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker Enumeration Profiles Study: Oregon, 2002, Larson Assistance Services.

Table 8 contains the number of estimated eligible, served, and estimated unserved for each county where services are provided by OCDC. **In Hood River/Wasco Counties the estimated combined number of eligible migrant children is 1,191 and the total number of migrant children served is 384, meaning 807 migrant children are estimated to be unserved. In Hood River/Wasco Counties the estimated number of eligible seasonal children is 2,903 and the total number of seasonal children served is 121, meaning 2,782 seasonal children are estimated to be unserved.**

STRENGTHS & NEEDS

In this part of the report, information on services offered to children and families 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 subsection to demonstrate that program management, staff and parents of program participants actively participated in the construction and development of this document.

► EDUCATION

Adult Education

In the period of 2005 - 2007, 43.3 percent of the residents in Hood River County age 25 years or older, had a high school degree or less level of education, with 29.7 percent of residents in the same age range in Hood River County having earned a bachelor's degree or higher. In Wasco County, 46.2 percent of the residents 25 years or older had a high school degree or less level of education. Within the same age group, 19.4 percent had earned a BA or higher in Wasco County.¹⁰

Data on the educational attainment of parents of program participants from the Oregon Child Development Coalition's 2008 Program Information Report (PIR) show that 59 percent of parents served in Hood River County have less than a high school degree.¹¹ The following is a breakdown of some 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.
- The Columbia Gorge Community College also offers 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.

¹⁰ Northwest Regional Foundation, US Census Bureau.

¹¹ Program Information Report, Oregon Child Development Coalition, 2008.

- The Mid-Columbia Health Resource Center identifies as a public library, but with a special collection in the areas of health and medicine.

Representatives from the above agencies agree that in the area of adult education, additional classes are needed for non-English speakers to acquire college level writing skills.

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

A number of families enrolled in the Migrant Seasonal Head Start program are coming from rural Mexico. Along with the need for mentoring and ESL classes, the development of an INEA Literacy Program in the community has become a major goal. 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].” OCDC in Hood River and Wasco Counties has completed the basic classes needed to serve as hosts for the INEA program. Computer and training support to open an INEA program for parents and community members would be a huge benefit.

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. 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.

Partnerships in the area of early childhood education include:

- The Mid-Columbia Children’s Council (Region X Head Start) serves three and four year old children in the counties. Since there is a new director of this program OCDC is in the process of reviewing and updating an interagency agreement.
- A collaborative agreement exists with the local Migrant Education program to provide preschool services through contracts
- Columbia Gorge Community College’s Department of Early Childhood and Family Studies includes OCDC sites in their ECE class environments tour.
- The Hood River County Library provides a number of children’s services, including programs for Spanish speaking parents.
- 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.



► MENTAL HEALTH & DISABILITIES

Data from the Oregon Child Development Coalition's Program Information Report show in Hood River/Wasco that 7% of the children enrolled in the program were determined to have a disability. Primary disabilities included health, multiple, non-categorical developmental delays, and speech or language impairments.¹²

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 Educational Service District and the Wasco School District to accommodate referrals of children with disabilities. However this agency has experienced budget cuts and reduction in services due to the depressed economy resulting in limited availability of staff for evaluating children and providing direct services.
- The Mid-Columbia Center for Living provides mental health counseling and addiction services and are experiencing major budget cuts and reductions in services. In addition they report a shortage of bilingual or Spanish speaking counselors.
- 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, working with Center for Living to provide individual counseling services.
- Mid-Columbia Child and Family Center provides services to high needs individuals.
- The Wasco County Prevention Coalition provides bilingual education and outreach, focusing on drugs and alcohol.
- Youth Think in Wasco County to support families and youth in preventing drug and alcohol use.
- Providence Gorge Counseling and Treatment Center (counseling with sliding scale payment)
- Swindell Center – resource center for families dealing with mental health issues, disabilities, and major health issues.

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

¹² Program Information Report, Oregon Child Development Coalition, 2008.

barrier to minority groups in not only receiving care but, also, in simply learning about mental health and healthy habits. While relationships with both Early Intervention and Early Childhood Special Education programs have strengthened, the numbers of children enrolled with IFSPs are the highest for the 12 OCDC counties and increasing. This is particularly true for the long-term Odell program where over half of children enrolled have a current IFSP.

► **HEALTH & NUTRITION**

Data from the Oregon Child Development Coalition's Program Information report show that 448 out of 505 children entered the Migrant Seasonal Head Start program in Hood River and Wasco Counties in 2008 with health insurance¹³. Those with health insurance were primarily covered by The Oregon Health Plan. For those without health insurance Oregon Child Development Coalition worked with families to reduce the number of children without health insurance. The following is a breakdown of the agencies providing health and dental services to children and families in Hood River and Wasco Counties. The number of families receiving WIC services in Hood River and Wasco counties was 295.

The following is a breakdown of the agencies providing services:

- 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 and The Dalles, serving nearly 3,000 migrant and seasonal farmworkers in Hood River and Wasco Counties annually. They are currently seeking grants to make-up for budget cuts and reduced services, needs to expand to meet medical, dental and mental health needs of community.
- CACOON is a multi-disciplinary team that supports children with major health and disability concerns.
- 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. The hospital also provides a mobile medical unit to provide onsite medical care, medications and prescriptions, health education and outreach, and to help families 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.

¹³ Program Information Report, 2008 & 2009, Oregon Child Development Coalition.

- Next Door Inc provides Nuestra Comunidad Sana, a culturally relevant health promotion and disease prevention service to the Columbia Gorge Latino community.
- A Kidz Dental Zone provides screening and dental services to children enrolled in the Migrant Seasonal Head Start program.
- OSU Extension Office provides nutrition education through parent meetings and nutrition classes, although they too have seen reduced services due to budget and the nutrition program has essentially been eliminated from the Wasco County office.
- Gorge Grown farmer's market has developed in Hood River County and offers fresh produce to families – accepting EBT cards and will match the first \$5 spent by families.

Providers have 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. Families still need these services, but the outreach and low-income programs that supported these efforts are being affected by budget shortages and cuts. Even when the information is available, agencies struggle to get it out to the target population. The Oregon Child Development Coalition in Hood River and Wasco Counties continue to use parent meetings as a platform to educate parents while involving other providers.

► FAMILY SERVICES

The number of families who received emergency/crises intervention (addressing an immediate need for food, clothing or shelter) was 54 in Hood River and Wasco Counties.¹⁴ Figures from the Children First for Oregon show 141 Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) cases in Hood River County and 177 TANF cases in Wasco Counties. Additionally, the number of cases for food stamps in Hood River was 1,283 and Wasco Counties was 1,537.¹⁵ In 2008, Children First reported figures estimating the number of child abuse victims in Hood River County to be 32 children (5.6 per 1,000 children) with 56% of the victims under the age of six and in Wasco County to be 103 (17.5 per 1,000) with 51% of the victims under the age of six.¹⁶

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.

¹⁴ Program Information Report, Oregon Child Development Coalition, 2008.

¹⁵ Children First for Oregon, 2008.

¹⁶ Children First for Oregon, 2008

- 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.
- 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. (Some of these services are being affected by budget cuts, in particular in the area of Parenting Education)
- HOPE Program – housing, emergency voucher programs, etc
- We refer back and forth and share resources with Mid-Columbia Children’s Council.
- Salvation Army and St. Vincent De Paul.
- Columbia Gorge Safe Kids provides a Car Seat Coalition.
- RAMAS Committee “Resources Available for Migrant Access to Services” a committee of community programs and providers led by OCDC, that meets every spring to prepare for the influx of migrant families who come to the area to work in the intensive cherry harvest.
- Columbia Gorge Child Advocacy Center opened in August 2009 to serve area children who are victims of abuse or neglect.

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 indicating that it has been difficult to promote information and services. Outreach continues to be an area that loses funding first, leading to under-utilization of services, especially among the neediest families.

In Hood River, there is a need for qualified staff in the health and education fields for interpretation and translation. Many local providers and businesses are reaching out to the Hispanic community. There appears to be more bilingual staff and better representation of the Latino population in a lot of local agencies. OCDC finds itself needing to interpret less and less for families in the community as more agencies and providers make an effort to open their services up more to the local Hispanic population.



A team that included Family Health Supervisor for the Oregon Child Development Coalition in Hood River and Wasco Counties agreed 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. This partnership continues to be developed throughout California and has been expanded to include areas further South from the Sacramento region, including Fresno, Stockton, and Visalia areas.

Other needs identified by the Family Health Supervisor include increased medical and dental coverage plus additional diapers and formula for families. 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.

► **CHILDCARE**

Oregon Child Care Research Partnership reports the following information on child care in Hood River County in 2008. There were 768 slots in child care and education centers, and 256 slots in family child care. Oregon's goal is to have 25 visible slots for every 100 children and Hood River had 26 per 100 children. It was also reported that 60 children age 0-12 received state assistance, through DHS, with part of all of their child care costs.¹⁷

Oregon Child Care Research Partnership also provided data for Wasco County in 2008. There were 736 slots in child care and education centers, and 272 slots in family child care. Oregon's goal is to have 25 visible slots for every 100 children and Wasco had 25 per 100 children. There were 137 children age 0-12 who received state assistance, through DHS, with part of all of their child care costs.¹⁸

A breakdown of some of the agencies providing childcare and related services to children and families in Hood River and Wasco Counties follows.

- 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 access childcare due to a variety

¹⁷ Child Care and Education in Oregon and its Counties: 2008, prepared by the Oregon Child Care Research Partnership OSU.

¹⁸ Child Care and Education in Oregon and its Counties: 2008, prepared by the Oregon Child Care Research Partnership OSU.

- 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.
- Both counties' Commission on Children and Families funded positions with Child Care Resource and Referral to attempt to recruit more registered providers, in particular providers who speak Spanish and providers for infants and toddlers, though with only partial success. We continue to have a shortage of providers and in particular Spanish-speaking providers.
 - Additionally, there are an unspecified number of exempt childcare providers in Hood River and Wasco Counties.

Data from the Oregon Child Care Division indicate that there is a limited number of Spanish speaking, certified home childcare providers in Hood River and Wasco Counties. 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 indicate 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. Attempts to recruit more providers and Spanish speaking providers have been largely unsuccessful.

► TRANSPORTATION & HOUSING

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 clients with the Oregon Health Plan.
- Limited taxi services are available in both counties.
- The Hood River and Wasco County Commission on Children and Families has formed Columbia Gorge Safe Kids. This organization distributes car seats and provides installation training. It also provides bike helmets and water life jackets.

Local transportation providers have 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. 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. Local transit options do little outreach and continue to be under-utilized; they do little or no outreach in Spanish.

Providers also express a 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 to 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.

There were 132 labor camps in Hood River County for 2006 and 122 in 2008. The total labor camp occupancy was 1,683 in 2006 and 1,752 in 2008. In Wasco County there were 77 labor camps in for 2006 and 81 in 2008. The total labor camp occupancy was 4,619 in 2006 and 4691 in 2008.¹⁹

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.
- 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 to the extent that it is available and both have very long waiting lists.
- 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.

¹⁹ Agricultural Labor Housing Registry, Oregon Department of Consumer and Business Services, 2006-2008

EXPANSION OPPORTUNITIES, CONCLUSIONS AND PROPOSED CHANGES

EXPANSION OPPORTUNITIES

Table 8, contained in the earlier Oregon Community Assessment and OCDC Overview section of this report, listed 2008 estimated eligible and served migrant and seasonal Head Start children. Because it will be referred to several times in this section, a copy of it is also contained on the next page of this section.

Because OCDC gives first priority to migrant children, the following discussion focuses on them. For 2008, the estimated eligible number of migrant children in the state was 4,464 of which 3,679 were located in the 12 counties OCDC serves (Table 8). Of the estimated 3,679 eligible children, OCDC served about half (1,803), leaving 1,876 unserved. There is also an estimated 785 eligible unserved 0-5 year old children living in the other 24 counties in the state.

If resources are available, what opportunities should OCDC pursue? Three broad possibilities exist: market penetration, market development and combined market penetration and market development. These three approaches plus other supporting strategies are discussed next. An important reason for presenting these ideas is to inform the Board of Directors and Policy Council as they consider future directions for the agency. Following this presentation are concluding CA remarks plus proposed changes.

▶ MARKET PENETRATION

With this approach, OCDC would penetrate or access children from the estimated 1,876 migrant children existing in its current territory or market. In Table 8, the Marion/Multnomah/Clackamas three-county area has the largest estimated number of these unserved children (822). The Hood River/Wasco combined area is the next largest with 807 estimated unserved children. An advantage of this strategy is that it would probably be less costly than other ways to serve additional children. OCDC already has resources (e.g., staff, buildings, and buses) and experiences (e.g., relationships with growers and other service providers) in these counties and this probably means less effort would be necessary to serve additional children/families than moving into new counties. This would certainly be true if additional children could be served at current sites that were not operating at full capacity and it would be less true if new service sites were needed.

Table 8: 2008 Estimated Eligible, Served & Estimated Unserved Migrant & Seasonal Head Start Children Ages 0-5

	2008	2008	2008	2008	2008	2008
	Estimated Eligible Migrant Children	Served Migrant Children	Estimated Eligible Unserved Migrant Children	Estimated Eligible Seasonal Children	Served Seasonal Children	Estimated Eligible Unserved Seasonal Children
Oregon	≈4,464	1,803	≈2,661	≈14,154	916	≈13,238
OCDC Counties						
Hd River/Wasco	≈1,191 (565+626)	384	≈807	≈2,903 (1,618+1,285)	121	≈2,782
Jackson	≈228	74	≈154	≈648	53	≈595
Jefferson	≈42	42	≈0	≈134	61	≈73
Klamath	≈19	49	≈0	≈78	80	≈0
Mar/Mul/Clack	≈1,268 (712+105+451)	446 (306+14)	≈822	≈4,641 (2,787+414+1,44)	192 (63+129)	≈4,449
Malhuer	≈172	215	≈0	≈533	99	≈434
Polk	≈199	88	≈111	≈690	49	≈641
Umatilla	≈184	206	≈0	≈1,034	107	≈927
Wash	≈376	299	≈77	≈1,195	154	≈1,041
Total OCDC Counties	≈3,679	1,803	≈1,876	≈11,856	916	≈10,940
Total Unserved Counties	≈785	0	≈785	≈2,298	0	≈2,298
Selected Unserved Counties						
Yamhill	≈393	0	≈393	≈832	0	≈832
Benton	≈175	0	≈175	≈383	0	≈383
Lane	≈97	0	≈97	≈351	0	≈351

Sources: Indirect estimates of migrant and seasonal children ages 0-5, OCDC, 2008; Program Information Report, OCDC, 2008

▶ **MARKET DEVELOPMENT**

Another approach is to serve additional children from the 785 estimated unserved migrant children located in counties OCDC does not currently provide service. Hence, OCDC would spread out or develop new territories/counties/markets. In Table 8, OCDC's unserved counties with the largest estimated eligible migrant children are listed. Yamhill County with 393 children has the largest estimated unserved number followed by Benton County with 175 and Lane County with 97. A reason for selecting this approach over market penetration is that children/families in new counties may have greater education, disability, mental health, etc. needs than the additional children that could be served through the market penetration strategy.

▶ **COMBINED MARKET PENETRATION AND MARKET DEVELOPMENT**

Employing a combined strategy means OCDC would serve additional children in both its current 12 counties as well as new counties and combine the benefits of each approach. In general, knowledge about the market penetration and market development strategies helps decision makers visualize and understand location differences with regard to serving additional children/families.

▶ **OTHER STRATEGIES**

Other strategies also may need to be considered. Suppose a program has decided to serve additional children in new counties or at new sites in its currently served counties. The next question needing an answer is: How should the program enter those new areas? It could enter by itself (start-up entry) or it could partner with others (strategic alliance entry). If OCDC elects to use the start-up entry approach it has complete control of all decisions and the outcomes, both positive and negative. However, OCDC will be responsible for all associated costs. If a strategic alliance is established, the costs are mitigated but there is the need for collaboration and cooperation.

An important part of a strategic alliance is the development of a formal (written) document between the two or more involved parties covering the agreed upon commitments and responsibilities. Ideally, partners provide the alliance with different resources, capitalizing on each of their strengths. Resources include: staff, buildings, equipment, expertise, and funding. Each partner, in turn, hopes that the benefits of the alliance--a synergy--will be greater than those from their individual efforts. The alliance can be cooperation or collaboration. The main differences between these two types is that a collaboration is a more active form of cooperation and, as such, requires more input time while producing more output benefits for the parties. Although alliances are attractive and partners can see the benefits during the planning phase, some do not produce the desired outcomes. Often problems arise during implementation when unexpected issues occur and the parties cannot agree on what actions should be taken.

CONCLUSIONS

OCDC is serving the needs of many Migrant and Seasonal families in Oregon. OCDC offers an array of services to meet family needs to match peak agricultural seasons while addressing long-term needs of seasonal workers who remain in the community. The scheduled hours and program options are designed to meet the varying needs of each of the twelve counties where most migrant and seasonal workers reside or work. However, the “season” for agriculture continues to evolve into one that is year round with no one “peak” harvest period due to crop diversity, crop rotation, and changing farm management practices. In some areas it is reported that there are more than one “peak” season where additional workers are needed. Agricultural reports indicate a continued growth in planting of orchards, vineyards, and hop yards and a growing emphasis on local “farm to market” activities supported by the industry and the consumer.

OCDC has extensive partnerships in the state that are designed: to meet the needs of their employees, through professional development; and to meet the needs of the families, through collaborative partnerships with key agencies in the state providing health, disabilities, mental health and educational services. Of particular note is the expanded emphasis and interest in family literacy and working with local clinics to provide medical and dental services.

PROPOSED CHANGES

The following are suggested changes associated with the Community Assessment process.

- Estimates of MSFW and their children should be carefully reviewed and an emphasis placed on validating the numbers in the state, the counties and in local areas within the counties.
- There appears to be a need to develop a weighting scale to assist in the prioritization of future expansion into additional counties or within current counties served in the state. Should expansion dollars or other resources become available, the scale would include criteria for weighing family and community needs to determine the neediest areas.
- It is suggested that data be gathered from each of the twelve counties rather than consolidating Clackamas into Multnomah and Marion and combining Hood River with Wasco.
- Questions contained in the parent survey should be reviewed. Some questions may need to be redesigned to reduce their ambiguity. Also, depending on the purpose of the survey, other questions may need to be added to more fully cover the services offered by OCDC and the needs of families.
- It is recommended that timelines for completing data reports to inform the grant application using the Needs Assessment, Community Assessments, Training and Technical Assistance Plan, Goals and Objectives and Budget be reviewed and revised at the county and state level.



- An ongoing CA team, led by the Director of Resource Development at the central office, needs to be established to oversee the data gathering and analysis process, and to identify trends that impact the services OCDC offers. The outcomes of the CA can be integrated more fully in training and technical assistance, grant applications, goals and objectives and the self assessment.

