

Community Assessment Update 2017 – Executive Summary

Oregon Child Development Coalition regularly conducts Community Assessments to ensure that the services offered are grounded in the needs of the families and communities that we serve. OCDC is required to complete a full Migrant Seasonal Head Start Community Assessment every five years. In 2014, OCDC completed a full Community Assessment that identified several key points: new service areas for potential migrant-specific programs, the need for subsidized or low-cost private pay child care services for families living above the poverty level that still could not afford child care, the need for coordinated statewide approaches to food insecurity, integrating trauma-informed practice into OCDC's service model, and more.

This 2017 update is intended to be a comprehensive update, that examines new trends and changes that are impacting OCDC's communities – it is intended as a supplement to the existing full assessment, and follows many of the same research methods to identify changes and trends. Pending input and approval from the Board of Directors and Policy Council, this Update Report summary, as well as the full report and individual county profiles, will be made available to the public on OCDC's website and will be regularly consulted for local and statewide strategic and program planning.

Service Population: Demographics and Characteristics

Significant changes continue to impact Oregon's Migrant and Seasonal Farm Worker (MSFW) population. Some are intrinsic, with the community's demographics and behaviors changing, and some are driven by external factors such as weather, changes in growing seasons and availability of labor opportunities. Although each community's MSFW population has its distinctions, the following observations are true for the majority of OCDC's MSFW populations.

MSFW families are "aging out" of farm work. Many growers have indicated that their work force is aging, and that the younger generations that historically replaced aging workers is not showing up. Children of farm workers are looking for employment in other fields. As unemployment in Oregon is at a record low and minimum wage has been mandated to increase, many younger individuals prefer to find less hazardous and less strenuous work. Growers have noted that there is a slightly more diverse migrant farm worker population than before, with a small number of workers who speak Somali, Arabic or Marshallese; these workers typically do not bring children with them and are usually single males.

Workers are making more money. With minimum wage rising and record hiring in construction, food service and landscaping, workers are supplementing seasonal agricultural income with other jobs, and a large portion of them are over-income. Despite being above the poverty level, these families still do not earn enough to cover the cost of safe, high-quality education and care, and their children are at elevated risk when enrolled in substandard care environments. Some workers are now worried that increasing wages will eliminate benefit programs that they depend on - one grower in Ontario even reported that workers specifically

asked *not to be given raises*, so they would not rise above the income eligibility level for crucial housing and education assistance.

Parents care deeply about School Readiness, but define it differently. Having children be ready for school was the most important goal cited by parents in every community where parents were surveyed. Interestingly, there was a strong correlation with surveys returned in written Spanish identifying school readiness as the more social-emotional aspect of development – getting along with peers, managing behaviors, and being more independent. Surveys written in English were more likely to name more didactic-style developmental milestones (reciting ABCs, writing one’s name, knowing numbers and colors) as being ready for school. (OCDC’s Education specialists stress that it is more developmentally appropriate to focus on the social-emotional development of children to ensure success in school.)

This difference was more pronounced in some counties than it was in others, but was fairly consistent. This distinction could be attributed to a variety of factors: potential cultural differences, how translation into Spanish colored the meaning of the questions, or potential sampling bias from each group of parents. It is also possible that staff members transcribed printed responses for parents who did not want to write answers, and that these elements of readiness were subconsciously added because of staff members’ interpretations of school readiness. In the past, OCDC has worked with Spanish-speaking parents to encourage a dual-language approach instead of an English-focused approach, so it is also possible that this advocacy for developmentally appropriate practices with our Spanish speaking families has given them a deeper understanding of what is optimal for school readiness. More carefully designed parent surveys will better identify the cause of this intriguing difference in future assessments; OCDC’s Education team is simultaneously working in disseminating more developmentally-appropriate practice knowledge to staff, which may also impact this result in the future.

Survey responses: parents prefer longer school days with more engagement programs. Parents consistently cited 8-hour or longer days as ideal, because it saved on after-school child care and made scheduling work much easier. Parents also asked for additional father engagement services and support with English language acquisition.

Notably, parents did *not* ask for support dealing with housing insecurity or housing assistance resources. This is surprising based on the economic data indicating that the rising costs of housing is extremely challenging for families in almost every community served by OCDC as well as staff (see *Economic needs: Housing* below). It is possible that housing has always been extremely challenging for our families, and that the economics have not shifted the housing outlook for this population; it is also possible that families do not see OCDC as a resource related to housing challenges or are uncomfortable discussing these challenges (similar to OCDC’s experience identifying food insecurity among families in previous years, where parents did not want to disclose this challenge due to feelings of shame). If families’ experiences are being impacted by the greater economic climate around housing, it is recommended that OCDC engage in work with families to identify families’ housing challenges and how we can best support families that are likely living in substandard housing, doubled and

tripled up in housing, or in places not meant for long-term human habitation – what housing advocates refer to as “invisible homelessness”.

Survey responses: Transportation is critical

For approximately 85% of parents responding to OCDC’s focus groups and surveys, transportation services is critical for their family’s ability to access the program and remain enrolled. It must be highly emphasized that transportation is the most consistently needed support service that OCDC can provide to families, and without adequate transportation OCDC’s MSHS programs would not function.

Service Population: Program Enrollment

OCDC continues to identify additional communities to potentially expand the geographic reach of services and maximize enrollment in the Migrant and Seasonal Head Start program. Opportunities related to enrollment include:

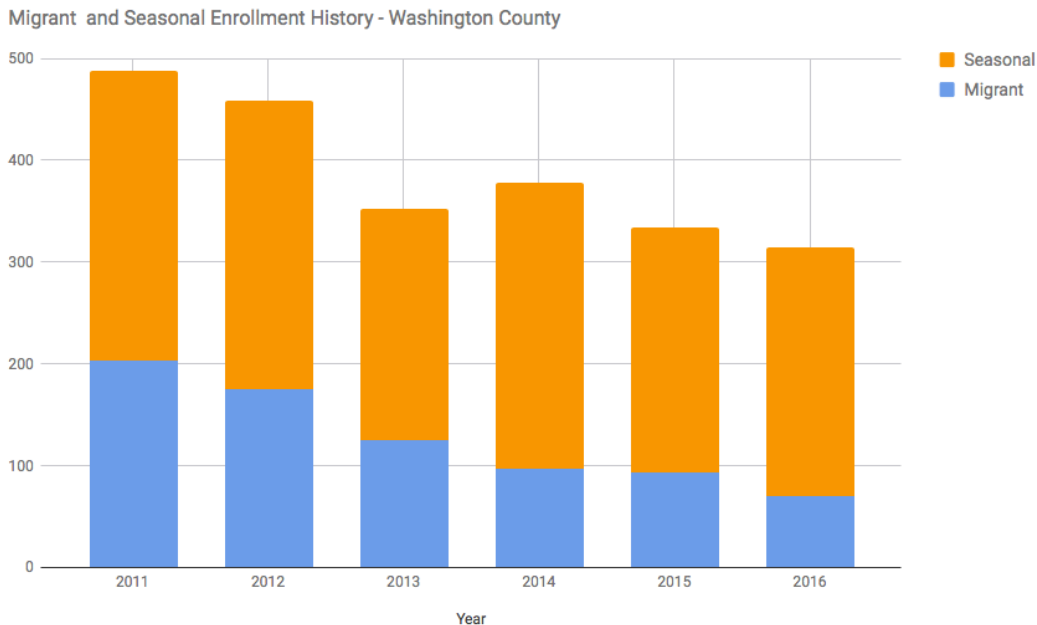
Additional need in Linn, Benton, Lane Counties. OCDC’s previous full community assessment identified enough estimated MSFW children in Linn, Benton and Lane counties to justify expanding services to this area. This estimation was confirmed in conversations with community leaders and farm worker-serving organizations. Unfortunately, OCDC was unsuccessful securing a facility – one to buy, rent, renovate or even share with partner organizations – to deliver services. As a result, no new programs have been established in these counties and the need for new program sites in these counties continues. OCDC still has these communities as priority locations for future expansion if the facility-related challenges can be met.

Expanded definition of farm workers under Head Start Performance Standards. Under the newly launched Head Start Performance Standards, the definition of farm worker was expanded to include a wider spectrum of workers in agriculture – in response, OCDC adapted the Department of Labor’s definition that includes forestry, dairy, meat production, fisheries and more. This definition is aligned with the definition used by Migrant Ed and other migrant farm worker-serving organizations, which will reduce confusion and facilitate streamlined cooperation between OCDC and community organizations. Based on data reported in the National Agricultural Statistics Survey (NASS), Livestock and Poultry workers have slightly lower rates of pay in the Pacific Northwest than field and tree crop workers, so these workers may be appropriate for recruitment of new families. Forestry workers, particularly those who collect pine cones, greenery clippings and other forest products, receive the lowest rate of pay and are also priority populations to target for additional recruitment.

Newly eligible families live in coastal communities. Based on initial conversations with community-serving organizations, there are low-income fishery employees that would be eligible for MSHS programs should services become available. Initial analysis of data show eligible populations in Lincoln County (Lincoln City, Newport) and Clatsop County (Astoria and Warrenton) and discussions with local providers are underway regarding facility leasing and potential service partnerships. Peak fishing seasons are specific to different fish – Steelhead,

for example, is March-April while Chinook is April–May – so scheduling of programs will vary by community.

Fewer migrants are coming to Oregon. The trend of fewer migrants coming to Oregon continues, with late harvest in California and growers competing to keep workers local, there have been significantly fewer migrants traveling across the State border. Historical data supports this assessment, as the example below shows the shrinking number of migrant enrollees in Washington County, where the sharpest decline in OCDC’s enrolled migrant families has occurred.

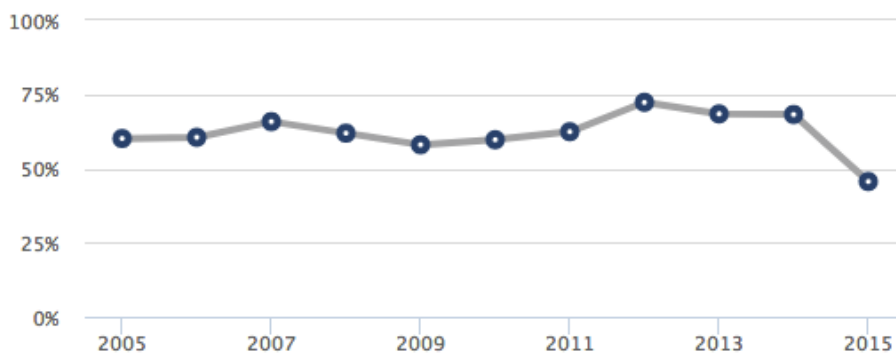


Community Needs: Educational, Social Services, and More

There are significant factors impacting the lives of OCDC’s MSHS families; while the the issues noted in the previous full community assessment continue to impact families, these items are based on significant new research, identification, or analysis by internal and external experts.

Educational Needs – 3rd grade reading scores. Across the State, 3rd grade reading scores have significantly dropped in 2015; this measurement, a crucial predictor of academic success, has dropped to record lows for Hispanic/Latino children, Limited English Proficiency students, as well as Migrant children. While this drop is alarming, it is at least partially attributable to a change in measuring tools and the implementation of the Common Core standards and processes for measuring student progress. Additional attention to this measure will still be needed, however, to ensure that families are entering school prepared to learn and best support them to engage in the school system to their full benefit.

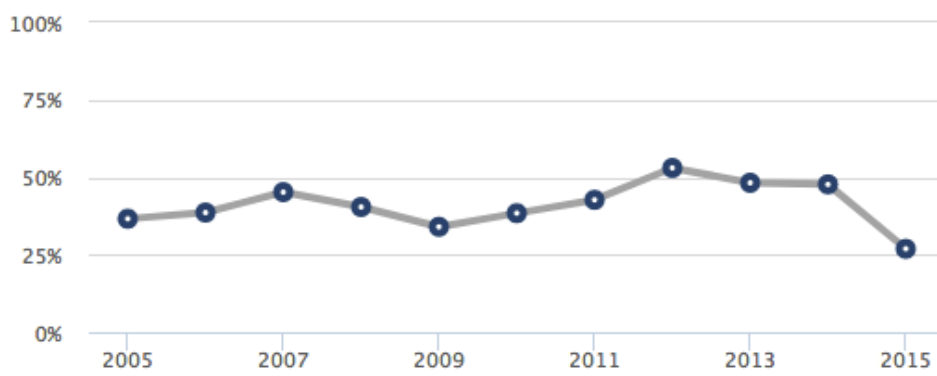
3rd Grade Reading: All Students



LEGEND: (Click to hide series in chart)

● Oregon

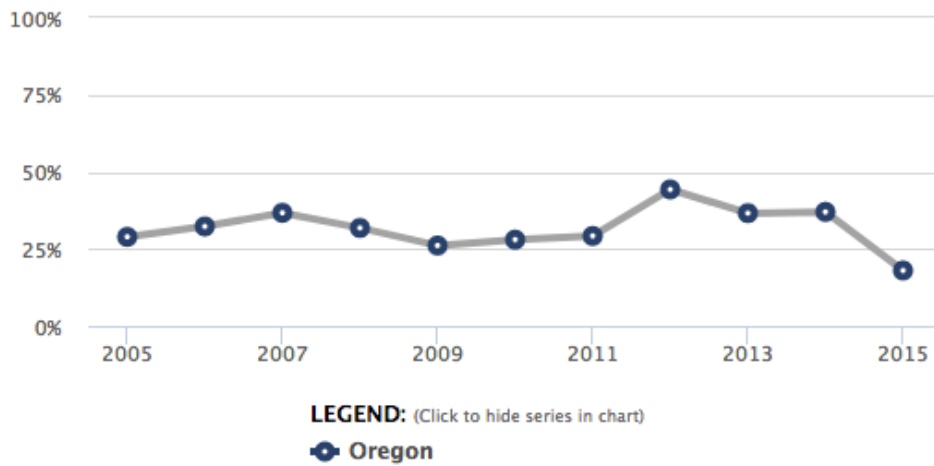
3rd Grade Reading: Hispanic or Latino



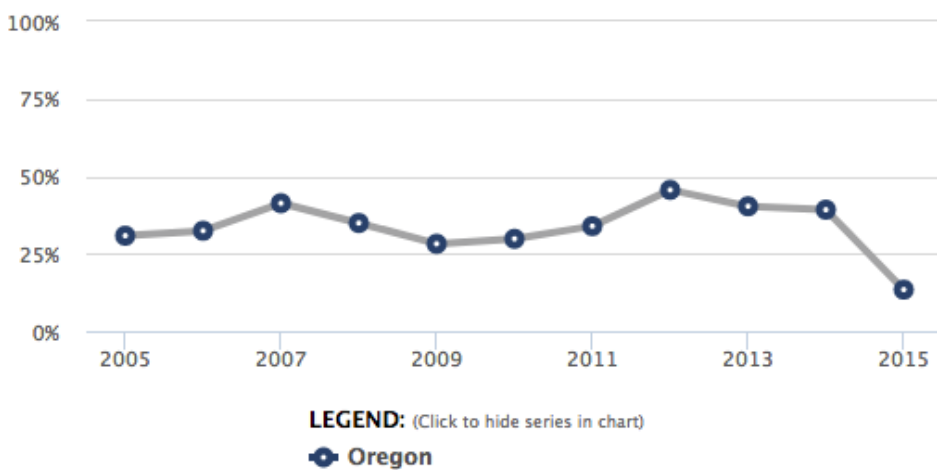
LEGEND: (Click to hide series in chart)

● Oregon

3rd Grade Reading: Migrant



3rd Grade Reading: Limited English Proficiency



Services for Children With Disabilities are not as accessible during summer months, and 504 plans are uncertain. Historically, partner organizations and LEAs have been less available to meet children’s needs during summer months, when most of OCDC’s MSHS programs are at their peak. Services are also less likely to be available in Spanish and to be culturally responsive, although different communities show a variety of approaches and a range of successful outcomes in this matter. Typically, rural centers struggle more with limited community resources dedicated to children with identified disabilities. In addition, Oregon’s unique 504 plan approach has left many schools and Head Start providers questioning how 504 plan activities will be carried out and who will pay for those services (for children who need some level of intervention to be successful, but do not meet the criteria of identifiable disability or developmental delay necessary to receive an IFSP) – these questions are still being discussed at the State level, and with little Federal input as Oregon’s existing laws are structured uniquely; other states are not experiencing any of this uncertainty to our knowledge.

Social Service Needs – Linguistically and culturally responsive mental health services are lacking. Most centers report few resources for culturally and linguistically responsive Mental Health treatment available to families. Mental Health is woefully underfunded at both the State and Federal level, and language barriers make this even more inaccessible for OCDC’s families, particularly in rural areas. OCDC’s recommendation is that additional investments in Mental Health treatment be made available paired with outreach to ensure that families know the service is available and understand what it is (or is not). Each local community and the local experts will design a strategy for how to address any cultural barriers to accessing mental health treatment, which many migrant families typically experience.

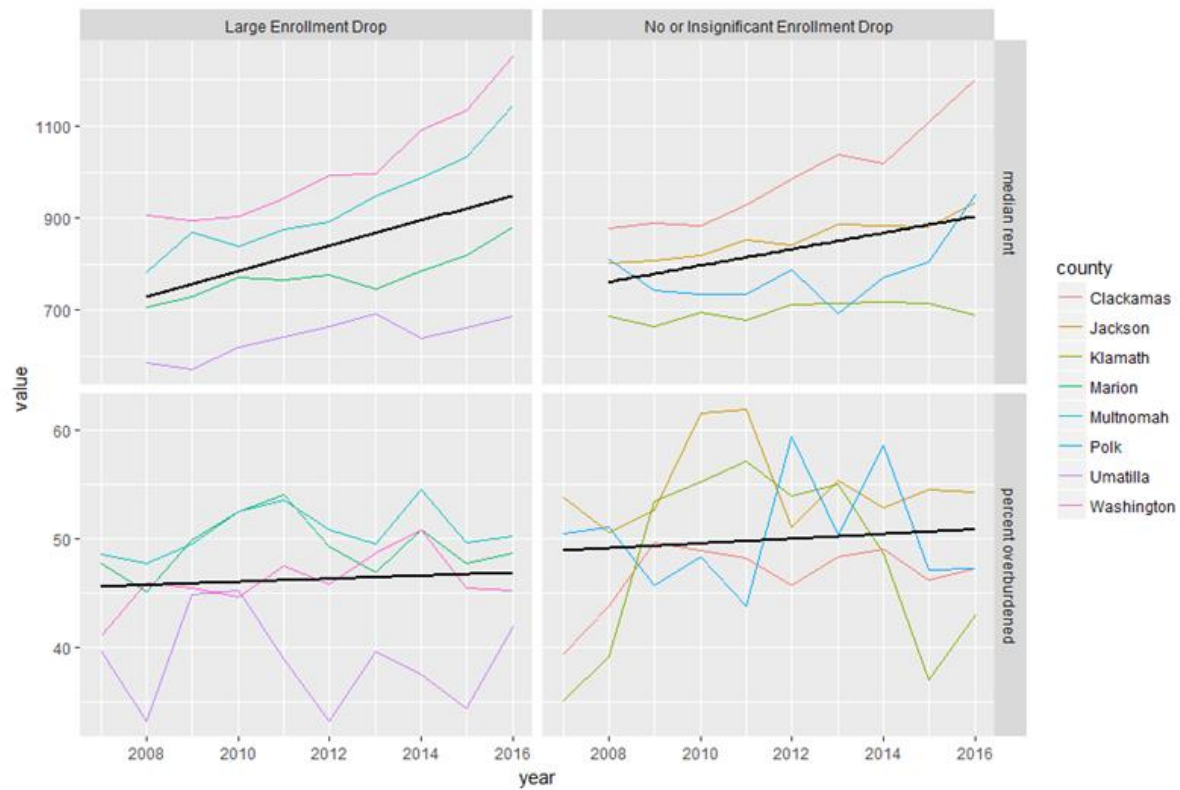
Community Needs – Economic Needs, Housing, Healthcare and food. Much research has been done and media attention has been paid to the increase in housing costs throughout the State; where once believed to be restricted to the metro areas, we now know that housing prices are escalating rapidly everywhere in Oregon. Some communities, such as Klamath Falls, are experiencing unprecedented price increases that have devastating impact on families. Prices have risen so fast that the available data does not appropriately demonstrate the acuity of need – for example, there is not a single two-bedroom apartment available for the *median* two-bedroom rent as listed by the most recent U.S. Census community update. In almost every community, the most affordable listing shown today is 30% higher – or more – than the “median” rent listed in 2016. Despite these major increases, when families were asked how we could support them to overcome challenges, almost no one mentioned housing. While surprising, this suggests:

- Families living at or below the poverty level have always struggled to find housing, so their objective experience has not changed dramatically;
- Families are unwilling to report on their current housing situation, for fear of being “outed” to landlords and evicted (for example, for doubling and tripling up in housing)
- Families are experiencing shame related to housing insecurity and are unwilling to raise the issue
- Families do not see OCDC as an organization that can assist with housing, and do not think to bring it up during interviews;
- Families who cannot find housing cannot enroll or cannot maintain their enrollment long enough to participate in the community assessment surveys;
- Some combination of these factors or some other factor not yet identified.

OCDC recommends that Family Advocates and management work with families to get a better sense of what is contributing to the issue and respond accordingly. A local solution may be necessary, as each community will have different amounts of resources and avenues for assistance that are available to families.

Data analysis based on OCDC enrollment reports and historical U.S. Census American Community Survey data show a significant correlation: in counties where OCDC has experienced a significant drop in MSHS enrollment (>5%), there is a faster average rise in housing costs when compared to OCDC’s more stable counties. This data suggests that there is a correlation between housing expenses increasing and migrants choosing to go elsewhere for

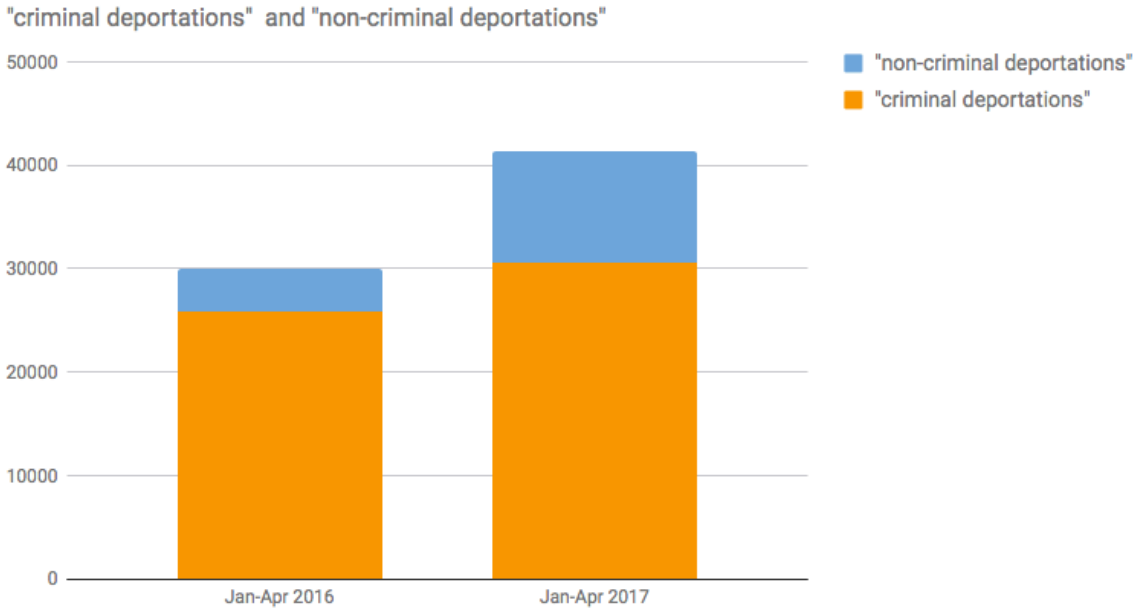
work; the data is best demonstrated in the figure below (the top two graphs). Similar analysis of historical census records of households overburdened by costs showed no such correlation, as the census data is much noisier and appears to be inconsistent (in the bottom two graphs):



OCDC has had significant success with improving families’ security in relationship to food, dental and health care, and it is recommended that the interventions designed to respond to these issues continue. This will enable OCDC’s participating families to better stabilize their lives and access crucial services that significantly impact future success in school and life.

Significant Issue: Immigration Climate

For OCDC’s families, the current immigration climate has significant potential to traumatize children, impact families’ prognosis for a stable and healthy future, and even force families to withdraw from services and federally-funded programs. Data show that immigration enforcement actions are targeting significantly higher numbers of “non-criminal” targets (although it is unclear as of this writing what ICE representatives consider to be “criminal” in nature).



Research has identified that – regardless of their documentation status or their immediate families’ documentation status – children absorb trauma related to immigration raids in the community and express a variety of changes in behavior, including increased fear and anxiety, outbursts, clinging and separation anxiety and more. The research around community impact also notes that the patterns of traumatization related to immigration enforcement can force families to disengage from community hubs and networks, and when families retreat into the shadows they are more likely to deny their cultural identities, which can have significant impacts on a child’s upbringing, their confidence and their sense of place in the world. Children who experience parental detainment or removal are highly likely to end up in the foster care system, and detained immigrant parents are often denied their constitutionally protected rights to participate in family court proceedings related to their parental rights. Immigrant communities are less likely to reach out to authorities when they have been victimized and are more vulnerable for a host of crimes, from domestic violence to labor trafficking and wage theft. Even without local deportations, the toxic stress related to being potentially targeted by ICE can be devastating to families. Recently in Oregon, local K-12 schools have reported that student absenteeism has increased significantly for Hispanic/Latino students, and some teachers have reported students asking to call home during the day to ensure parents are still there – this kind of internalized stress is devastating for children’s experience in school as well as their overall development.

OCDC’s centers have seen a variety of acuity in the community and in the responses from parents. Some have seen significant numbers of families un-enroll from programs. Others have seen little to no changes in enrollment, but are concerned about future enrollment from families that have not yet built relationships with OCDC. Almost every center reported that having trusting relationships between parents and teachers to be the best predictor of maintaining parent participation over time.

There are a variety of ways that OCDC is responding to the immigration enforcement crisis that need to be addressed carefully, from targeted outreach to increases for familial education

and support to statewide advocacy. Preliminary research has identified that communities with coordinated “know your rights” trainings and educational resources have fewer deportations overall and that residents feel more confident to engage with the greater community. As the political context of the immigration enforcement continues to change, OCDC must remain as responsive as possible to ensure that children and parents get the resources they need to feel safe and to develop healthfully.

Pyramid of Immigration Enforcement Effects on Children of Immigrants



Source: Dreby 2012, 831.

Significant Issue: Labor Trafficking and Wage Theft

A groundbreaking report by Polaris, a human trafficking and advocacy organization, recently identified that Spanish-speaking immigrant farmworkers are the top target for Labor trafficking in the Pacific Northwest (other than sex work-related trafficking, which is categorized separately). When initial conversations around labor trafficking were happening at OCDC, several staff members who had previous experience working in the fields shared personal experiences that mirrored the events explicitly defined as Labor Trafficking. In addition, other anecdotal reports of wage theft were discussed, with the pervasive attitude among former farm workers that this was fairly common practice. As a result, OCDC is supporting families to ensure they can protect themselves, their relatives and peers from instances of human trafficking. “Know the signs” training, as well as basic advocacy training and responsiveness training for staff is OCDC’s current priority – preferably from local external partners and experts with deep levels of knowledge related to responding to labor trafficking.

TOP 10 INDUSTRIES ASSOCIATED WITH VICTIMS REPORTED TO THE NHTRC AND BEFREE TEXTLINE

1. Agriculture/Farms/Animal Husbandry
2. Landscaping Services
3. Hospitality
4. Restaurant/Food Service
5. Domestic Work
6. Forestry/Reforestation
7. Recreational Facility
8. Construction
9. Traveling Carnivals
10. Transportation

In addition, there is not necessarily a clear demarcation between wage theft and labor trafficking, as the issues are deeply interrelated. OCDC is exploring incorporating wage theft-related trainings or advocacy work, either in parent trainings or in leadership training, based on parents' experiences, their interest in the topic and the level of local need for interventions.

Agriculture – News and Trends summary

Local agriculture trends include smaller, localized events related to weather and changes in crop production, as well as statewide trends impacting the entire sector. Major changes reported by growers and agricultural news sources include:

Labor shortages continue, and are significant. With the local immigration climate, growers are even more concerned about being able to find labor. The delay in California's growing season has increased competition for workers, with growers in California paying high wages to keep workers there, which has reduced the labor pool for Oregon's harvest. Some workers report anxiety about traveling for fear of being detained or deported. With minimum wage laws rising, growers are concerned about profit margins and being able to afford the workers they need, as they are not seeing raises in pricing. Many are looking to future mechanization to prevent this problem from costing them their farm or packing business; some are turning to the H2A guest worker program, which carries its own unique challenges. For the past several years growers have reported, on average, a 20%-30% labor shortage, with fears that these trends will continue to worsen. Finding good labor to harvest crops is the most consistent challenge facing agriculture today.

Farm worker Housing is almost non-existent. Based on new OSHA regulations, growers are opting to house only single males to keep costs down and to be able to house more workers.

With the exceptions of some specialty harvests – cherries in particular – growers express no longer wanting to operate farm worker housing. Much of the housing previously in use is no longer legally usable due to new regulations and enforcement from the State.

Extreme weather severely damaged production in Eastern Oregon. Hundreds of packing sheds and farm structures were lost under the record snowfall that collapsed large numbers of buildings. Muddy fields made planting impossible which delayed the harvest and will result in less viable product. The storms also damaged blackberries, some types of cherries, watermelons and other delicate products across the state. Many of the farmers who lost their sheds in Ontario are considering relocating to Idaho due to relaxed regulations around minimum wage, labor, sick leave and environmental issues.

Public infrastructure investment in Eastern Oregon. Major investment was made by the State legislature in a \$26M transload facility that, when constructed, will greatly reduce shipping costs for Eastern Oregon farmers, particularly onion and potato growers. Projections state that \$15M in costs will be saved by the region's farmers annually, which is hoped to spur additional investment in the region by private companies and family farms. It is not currently clear when the facility is projected to be completed, as construction planning is underway.

Water rights and legislation related to the clean water act continue to impact farmers. Several regions are dealing with water rights and clean water legislation in a variety of ways. While too varied to be summarized effectively, almost each community is dealing with somewhat controversial issues related to tribal water rights, endangered species protection or pesticide use regulations and limitations.

Several problematic pest populations have popped up in Oregon. Communities are addressing the appearance or resurgence of Mormon Crickets, Grasshoppers and Japanese Beetles. Communities are spraying pesticides and closely monitoring these situations to protect local agriculture operations.

Significant Issue: Local employment challenges caused by shortages of qualified teachers

OCDC has experienced a shortage of qualified teachers in the 2016-2017 program year, with some classrooms not opening because a qualified teacher could not be recruited and retained. Degree requirements and Head Start Performance Standard requirements are the main barrier. Bachelor's degree requirements significantly impact rural communities, as statewide data show that only 23% of early childhood and child care sector employees living in rural locations have Bachelor's degrees, while 35% of employees living in metro areas have a bachelor's or higher. Furthermore, statewide analysis has shown that only 10% of child care sector employees' primary language is Spanish, which further impacts OCDC's ability to locate qualified staff while maintaining culturally relevant programming.

Analysis of the local pipeline shows that the demand for child care will continue to rise, particularly when unemployment is at a record low, and as schools implement Preschool Promise programs and other preschool services, highly-qualified teachers are drawn to mandated rates of higher pay, stronger fringe benefits and the stability of a school year-based

program. Analysis of the greater child care industry show a the median 4% raise in wages since 2014, which is nowhere near the meteoric rise in the cost of living, particularly in relationship to housing costs in Oregon. As a result, OCDC's teachers are experiencing economic pressures that can cause significant amounts of stress and force passionate and dedicated teachers to explore better paying jobs. Based on the available data and the growing shortage of teachers, OCDC and other providers will likely be forced to make significant investments in growing qualified staff from within, rather than expecting the local community colleges and universities to fill the gap – and, as a sector, the low rates of pay will likely need to be adjusted to prevent a “brain drain” of the most effective and highly qualified teachers and managers from the field of Early Childhood education and care.

Family strengths

Across counties, families cited “familia unidad” or familial togetherness and unity as a strength and a source of pride. Our families celebrate their cooperation and their willingness to tackle life's challenges together, and OCDC is well-served by continuing to promote and celebrate this sense of unified purpose and spirit whenever possible. OCDC has also worked with a large cadre of parents to develop peer trainers for popular education curricula, primarily *Abriendo Puertas* and most recently *ESPERE*, which was developed by the School of Forgiveness and Reconciliation in Bogota, Columbia – parents that have participated in train the trainer programs have expressed great pride that they are now certified trainers, and that they can now deliver significant value to their fellow parents and their greater community through these training opportunities.

Community Profiles

Despite the universality of many state trends discussed above, deeper analysis of each county OCDC serves demonstrates that each community has different needs and that further attention paid to the individualized data for each county may be beneficial from a programmatic standpoint. Therefore, OCDC's Community Assessment will include county-level profiles that further explore applicable trends related to community needs, services for children with disabilities and other service infrastructure as well as educational outcomes and enrollment challenges. Profiles will be available for review as requested and will be made available along with the major findings of the 2017 Community Assessment update, which is publicly available on the OCDC website.