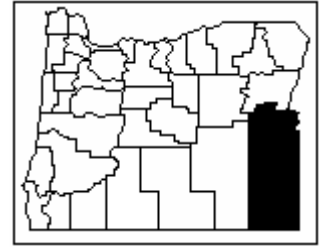


## MALHEUR COUNTY

The Oregon Child Development Coalition in Malheur County 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 Malheur County serves a total of 264 children annually. Of these, 140 children are classified as migrant children and 124 children are classified as seasonal children. In 2005, the Oregon Child Development Coalition in Malheur County served 108 percent of funded enrollment. As of May 2006, average daily attendance was 93 percent.



The Oregon Child Development Coalition in Malheur County currently employs a center-based option, serving children from two locations in Ontario, Oregon, and Nyssa, Oregon. The short-term program runs 14.5 weeks from August through November, operating 14 classrooms, 5 days per week from 6 am to 6 pm. The long-term program runs 32 weeks from January through August, operating 4 classrooms, 5 days per week from 8 am to 2 pm in Nyssa, Oregon, and from 9 am to 3 pm in Ontario, Oregon.

The service area includes the entirety of Malheur County, some 9,874 square miles. The recruitment area, however, is determined by three factors: (i) the location of growers as the Oregon Child Development Coalition in Malheur County attends to those especially agricultural areas of Malheur County, (ii) the program center locations and (iii) acceptable transportation times per the Head Start Performance Standards. For illustrative purposes, Appendix C6.1 displays a map containing the service area, as well as grower's locations and program center locations.

### COUNTY SNAPSHOT

#### ▶ QUICK FACTS

- Malheur County has seen less than 1 percent growth in its population over the past 5 years, with areas in neighboring Idaho such as Fruitland, Idaho, seeing more explosive growth - 16 percent - since 2000.
- The median household income in Malheur County is 28 percent lower than the state median, with nearly 800 children under the age of 6 living in poverty and 66 percent of public school children eligible for free and reduced lunch.
- As of 2006, there are an estimated 10 unserved, eligible Head Start children in Malheur County with the percentage of unserved, eligible children at 3.5 percent.
- With unemployment at 7.6 percent, Malheur County is seeing growth in service occupations, currently the largest job category in eastern Oregon, employing 16.5 percent of the region's workforce.



- Over the past year, Malheur County has seen reductions in the number of harvested acres of its three primary agricultural commodities – onions, sugarbeets and potatoes – in an attempt to boost sales.
- In 2005, there were an estimated 2,968 migrant farmworkers (+35.6% between 2002 and 2005) and 2,945 seasonal farmworkers in Malheur County with the total number of migrant and seasonal children under the age of 6 estimated at 285 children and 286 children, respectively.

▶ **CRITICAL ISSUES**

*“[Immigration] is a really hot topic right now.”*

*-Local grower  
Malheur County*

- Immigration

In April of 2006, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents were rumored to have visited Malheur County. Private citizens reported witnessing such raids, the effects of which most certainly hurt local growers and agri-businesses given the already tight supply of farm labor and the fact that growers are increasingly losing such workers to construction occupations. Individual interviews confirm that ***growers and farmworkers are increasingly fearful of ICE raids and rumors of raids***, and the effects of such on employment and employment opportunities and, more generally, the economic health and viability of this predominantly agricultural region.

It is also noted that this culture of fear may have had the effect of lowering participation in this assessment among growers and farmworkers, as numerous requests for interviews were either denied or ignored.

- Where the Jobs Are

In 2005, the Amalgamated Sugar Company in Nyssa, Oregon, ceased processing sugarbeets, citing U.S. marketing policies and free trade agreements for the closure of its plant.<sup>1</sup> Since then, regional economists have noted that job counts have dropped dramatically in Malheur County. However, recent interest by Fry Foods, an Ohio food processing company, in expanding its operations to Nyssa, Oregon, may result in the creation of at least 100 new jobs.<sup>2</sup> To date, city officials in Nyssa are working to change zoning restrictions for the property of interest from multiple family residential to industrial.

<sup>1</sup> Larry Meyer, *Sugar Factory Closure Haunts Local Job Market*, April 21, 2006, Argus Observer. *Plants Closure Hits Hard in Malheur County*, February 7, 2005, KATU 2 News.

<sup>2</sup> *Expansion Coming to Eastern Oregon Food Plant*, 2006, Associated Press.



- Turf Wars

The following is an excerpt from Ontario's Argus Observer dated July 20, 2006.

*"For the second time in less than three days a Nyssa home was shot up in another apparent gang-related drive-by incident... 'Nyssa has had shootings before, but they're on the rise' ... 'And Ontario has had gangs, but they've recently become more violent.' "*

The above news article and many others like it are evidence that gangs and gang violence are not strictly an urban phenomenon, as the combined population of both Nyssa, Oregon, and Ontario, Oregon, is less than 15,000 persons as of 2005. With new recruits being sought among middle school students in these areas, efforts are currently being directed toward educating parents, particularly single parents, on the warning signs of gang involvement.<sup>3</sup> Likewise, the Malheur County District Attorney's Office is working to draft a new ordinance modeled after that developed by the Portland Police Bureau which essentially works to create official gang designations as a way to restrict associations between gang members and people on probation.

## **COUNTY PROFILE**

### **▶ GEOGRAPHIC PROFILE**

Malheur County is located in eastern Oregon, spanning roughly half of the state's eastern border with Idaho. Some 9,874 square miles, Malheur County is the second largest county in Oregon and roughly the size of the state of New Hampshire. Elevation at the county seat, Vale, Oregon, is 2,243 feet above sea level, with average temperatures ranging from well below 29 degrees Fahrenheit in the winter months to well above 76 degrees Fahrenheit in the summer months. The area receives approximately 10 inches of rain annually, including significant snow during the winter months, and is recognized for its diverse landscape, open rangeland, and agricultural operations in the Treasure Valley area.<sup>4</sup>

It was not until 1883 with the completion of the Oregon Short Line Railroad that settlers began to enter Malheur County.<sup>5</sup> Once the railroad was operational, efforts

*"Remarked Thomas Farnham in 1839. 'This is barren, God-forsaken country, fit for nothing but footprints.' "*

*-Ontario Chamber of Commerce*

turned to developing manmade reservoirs throughout the area, the first of which was constructed in 1939. As a canal system was put in place, the Treasure Valley became Malheur County's agricultural hub. Primary commodities produced in this area include onions, sugarbeets and potatoes.

<sup>3</sup> Andy Gates, *A Long-Term Challenge*, 2006, Argus Observer.

<sup>4</sup> Oregon Blue Book, 2006.

<sup>5</sup> Ontario Chamber of Commerce, 2006.



The French translation for Malheur means *troubled* or *unfortunate*, a name which stuck after French trappers discovered that furs and other property had been stolen from their camp along the Malheur River, designating it the *Riviere au Malheur*.<sup>6</sup> Created in 1887 out of neighboring Baker County, Malheur County is 94 percent rangeland, two-thirds of which is managed by the U.S. Bureau of Land Management.

As of March 2006, in light of high oil and gas prices, the BLM has auctioned off nearly 225,000 acres in eastern Oregon for oil and gas exploration worth an estimated \$3.3 million.<sup>7</sup> Most of the interest in opening up these lands is in eastern Malheur County, near the Idaho border and Vale, Oregon. Currently, the entire state of Oregon holds only one developed gas field located in Columbia County in the northwest corner of the state, and it currently remains to be seen whether such exploration will result in new sources of energy.

► **ECONOMIC PROFILE**

In 2003, the median per capita personal income in Malheur County was \$18,857, which falls well below the 50th percentile when compared with all other counties across Oregon. In fact, this figure ranks well below both those for Oregon (\$29,175) and the United States (\$31,487).<sup>8</sup> Looking at household income, figures from the U.S. Census Bureau show that 50 percent of households in Malheur County earn less than \$31,000 per year.<sup>9</sup> In context, this means that that a family of four living in Malheur County falls on average \$7,341 short of what is needed to meet necessary estimated yearly expenses, including rent, food, childcare, transportation, insurance and taxes.<sup>10</sup>

Figure 6.1 displays information on the major industries in this area of the state. Of considerable interest is that nearly one in three job is in government, an industry that state economists expect will experience little growth over the next 10 years, with actual declines in federal government.<sup>11</sup> The reason for such a large government presence in this area of the state is due to

**Figure 6.1 - Employment by Sector**

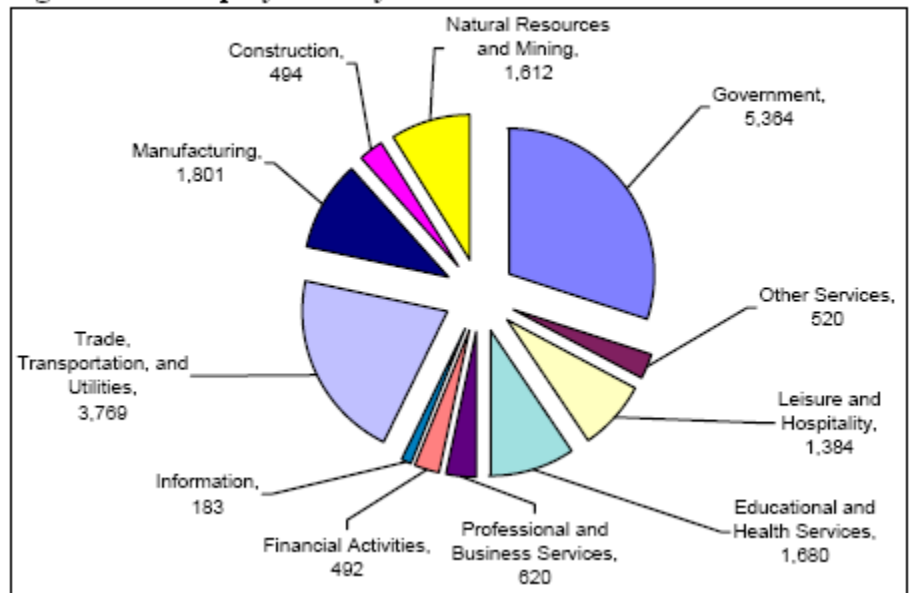


Figure 6.1 – Jason Yohannan, *Regional Profile: Industry Employment in Region 14, 2005*, Oregon Employment Department.

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

<sup>7</sup> *Oil and Gas Companies Look to Eastern Oregon*, March 10, 2006, Associated Press.

<sup>8</sup> *Oregon Per Capita Personal Income: 1986-2004*, November 2005, Oregon Employment Department.

<sup>9</sup> *DP-3: Profile of Selected Economic Characteristics*, 2000, United States Census Bureau.

<sup>10</sup> Economic Policy Institute, 2005



several factors, one of which being the fact that Malheur County is home to the Snake River Correctional Institution, Oregon’s largest state prison.<sup>12</sup> Additionally, given the size of public lands in Malheur County, numerous government agencies have a presence in the area, including the U.S. Forest Service, the Bureau of Land Management, the National Park Service and the Fish and Wildlife Service.

Also of interest is the apparent inflation in the percentage of jobs accounted for by trade, transportation and utilities, with production workers listed as the most common occupation in this region of the state.<sup>13</sup> According to regional economists, the issue here is that Malheur County - specifically Ontario, Oregon - serves as a retail trade center for both the entire county and neighboring Payette and Washington Counties in Idaho. A recent article has highlighted the growing interdependence between Malheur County and western Idaho, noting that the four counties that are primarily responsible for "exporting" residents to Malheur County are all in neighboring Idaho.<sup>14</sup> Likewise, 35 percent of all out-migrants from Malheur County moved to neighboring Payette and Washington Counties in Idaho. Thus, it is not surprising that Malheur County leads the state in the percentage of out-of-state workers employed and the percentage of workers working outside of Oregon. Accordingly, non-residents hold one out of every three jobs in Malheur County.<sup>15</sup>

Aside from the number of non-county residents filling ranks of the employed in Malheur County, employment in the area is highly seasonal, which has the effect of inflating the unemployment rate in this area of the state. The current unemployment rate in Malheur County is 7.6 percent. To put this figure in perspective, the unemployment rate in Malheur County during the most recent recession reached upwards of 13 percent. While the current figure is down some 26 percent from 1 year ago, it is 25 percent higher than the state unemployment rate of 6.1 percent and nearly double the national unemployment rate of 4.8

**Figure 6.2 - Annual Average Unemployment Rates**

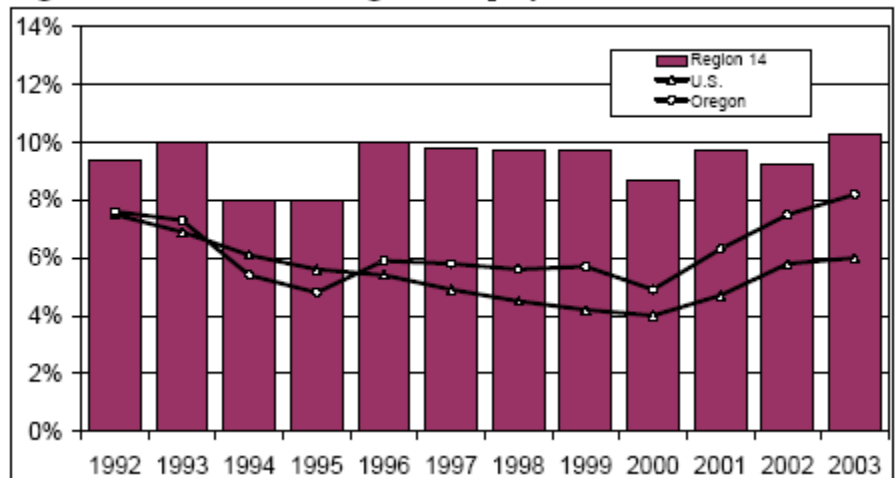


Figure 6.2 – Jason Yohannan, *Regional Profile: Labor Force, Employment and Unemployment in Region 14*, 2005, Oregon Employment Department.

<sup>11</sup> *Employment Projections By Industry, 2004-2014*, July 2005, Oregon Employment Department.

<sup>12</sup> Jason Yohannan, *Regional Profile: Industry Employment in Region 14*, 2005, Oregon Employment Department.

<sup>13</sup> Jason Yohannan, *Eastern Oregon: Service Workers Dominate Occupational Landscape*, December 6, 2005, Oregon Employment Department.

<sup>14</sup> Michael K. Wilson, *Malheur County is Closely Tied to Idaho*, December 19, 2005, Oregon Employment Department.

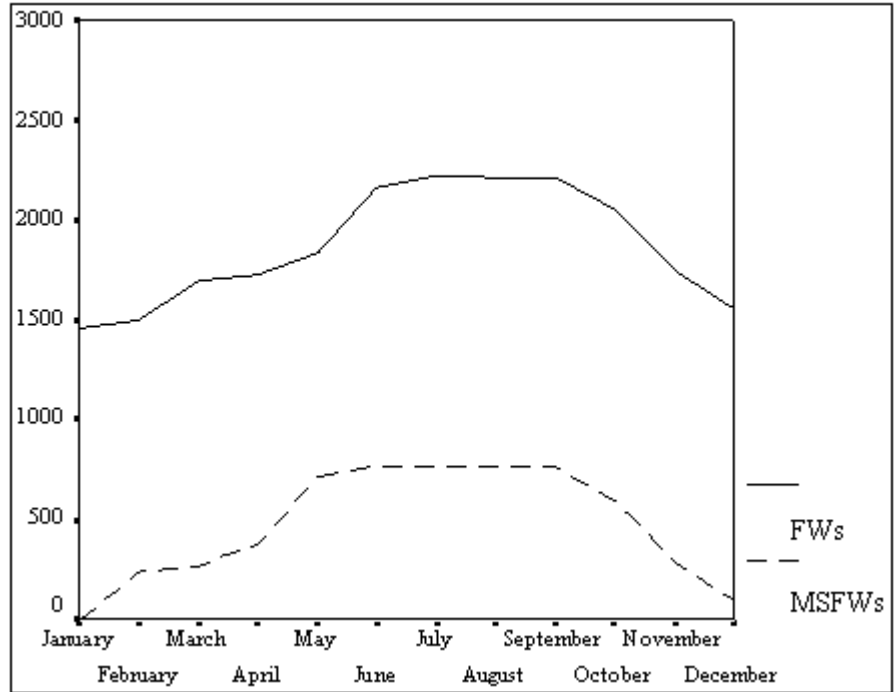
<sup>15</sup> Jason Yohannan, *Regional Profile: Labor Force, Employment and Unemployment in Region 14*, 2005, Oregon Employment Department.



percent.<sup>16</sup> Higher unemployment in this area is generally attributed to one of three factors, namely (i) that the seasonal nature of employment means that there will naturally be several months during the year when unemployment peaks, (ii) that the local economy lacks diversity and so offers limited job opportunities and (iii) that economic growth in the state of Oregon has historically bypassed southeast Oregon.

In light of the above considerations, it is not surprising that services workers are increasingly dominating Malheur County's occupational landscape, with the most common service occupations in this region of the state including waiters and waitresses and janitors and cleaners.<sup>17</sup> Accompanying these occupations are low wages, a feature that also characterizes agricultural employment in the region, an occupational category that is predicted to grow by nearly 5 percent over the next 10 years.<sup>18</sup>

**Figure 6.3 - Agricultural Employment by Month**



On average, agricultural operations in Malheur County employ 1,870 farmworkers per month.<sup>19</sup> Monthly agricultural employment estimates are shown in Figure 6.3 for both the general population of farmworkers (FWs), as well as for migrant and seasonal farmworkers (MSFWs).<sup>20</sup> Note the labor peak during the month of May and continuing through October. These dates correspond with, among others, the onion, sugarbeet and potato harvests taking place during this time. Also of interest is that at any given point, migrant and seasonal farmworkers account for roughly one-third of all farmworkers in Malheur County.

In 2002, Alice C. Larson estimated the number of migrant and seasonal farmworkers in Malheur County.<sup>21</sup> These estimates, as well as 2005 estimates calculated by the Oregon Child Development Coalition, are shown in Table 6.1. Between 2002 and 2005, the number of migrant

**Table 6.1 - Estimates of Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers**

	2002	2005
<b>Malheur County</b>		
MFWs	2,189	2,968
SFWs	2,945	2,945
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,134</b>	<b>5,913</b>

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

<sup>17</sup> Jason Yohannan, Eastern Oregon: Service Workers Dominate Occupational Landscape, December 6, 2005, Oregon Employment Department.

<sup>18</sup> Jason Yohannan, Eastern Oregon: Service Workers Dominate Occupational Landscape, December 6, 2005, Oregon Employment Department.

<sup>19</sup> 2005 Oregon Agricultural Employment Estimates, 2006, Oregon Employment Department.

<sup>20</sup> 2005 Oregon Agricultural Employment Estimates, 2006, Oregon Employment Department.

<sup>21</sup> Alice C. Larson, Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker Enumeration Profiles Study: Oregon, 2002, Larson Assistance Services.



farmworkers in Malheur County increased by over 35 percent, whereas the number of seasonal farmworkers remained constant. These figures tentatively suggest that Malheur County continues to see new migrant families in the area despite the fact that harvested acreage continues to decline for those agricultural commodities typically harvested by migrant farmworkers.

Table 6.2 displays information for selected crop outputs in 2004 and 2005. Thus far in 2006, onion growers are reporting that yields are down relative to previous years, a product of an extended number of days above 100 degrees Fahrenheit this year.<sup>22</sup>

**Table 6.2 - Selected Crop Outputs<sup>23</sup>**

Malheur County	2004			2005		
	Acres	Production	Sales (in \$000s)	Acres	Production	Sales (in \$000s)
Onions	12,000	8,040	\$20,261	11,200	6,608	\$48,899
Sugarbeets	10,300	334	\$9,319	7,700	258	\$10,500
Potatoes	5,200	213,200	\$9,924	4,800	201,600	\$9,778
Veg. & Truck Crops	50	---	\$8,800	50	---	\$8,800

For the three top commodities shown, the number of harvested acres was down by an average of 13 percent over the one-year period. That said, total sales for onions and sugarbeets were up by an average of 76.8 percent. As in other areas of the state, it would appear that growers are effectively working to increase sales by reducing acreage and production so as to keep both demand and prices high. However, unlike in other areas of the state (e.g., Klamath County and Umatilla County), potato growers have yet to see this strategy pay off, as sales remained relatively constant between 2004 and 2005.<sup>24</sup>

Consequently, an increasing number of potato growers are electing to call it quits in light of difficulties turning a profit.<sup>25</sup>

*“[Grower’s] problems started with the passage of the North American Free Trade Agreement.”*

*-Local Grower  
March 22, 2006, Capital Press*

The above findings are also of importance in program planning for the Oregon Child Development Coalition. Figure 6.4 provides information on harvested acres, total sales, and enrollment counts for the Oregon Child Development Coalition in Malheur County.<sup>26</sup> As stated earlier, the estimated number of migrant farmworkers increased by approximately 35 percent between 2002 and 2005. However, Figure 6.4 shows that actual enrollment in the Oregon Child Development Coalition’s Migrant Seasonal Head Start program declined over this period, suggesting that the population of migrant farmworkers in

<sup>22</sup> Larry Meyer, *Onion Yields Down*, 2006, Argus Observer.

<sup>23</sup> Oregon Agricultural Information Network, 2006.

Unit of production varies by commodity.

<sup>24</sup> Late blight may also be an issue in the future. See *Potato Farmers Face Possible Late Blight*, June 26, 2006, Argus Observer.

<sup>25</sup> Dave Wilkins, *Another Spud Farmer Calls it Quits*, March 22, 2006, Capital Press.

<sup>26</sup> Note, the scale in Figure 6.4 has been adjusted. Harvested acres are in 00s and total sales are in \$00,000s.

Additionally, crop outputs reflect the set of all crops in the Malheur County area, not just those typically employing migrant and seasonal farmworkers.

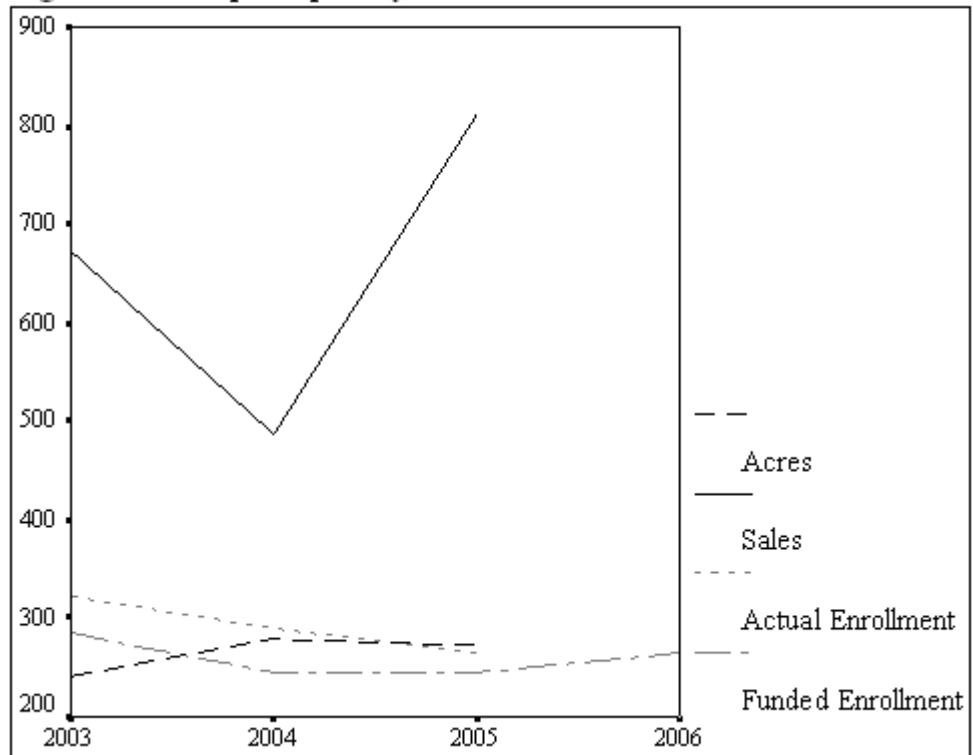


Table 6.1 may be largely composed of single men; thus, the fact that the population of migrant farmworkers grew by 35 percent between 2002 and 2005 does not carry the implication that the number of migrant children in Malheur County also increased.

Additionally, what also might be said is that actual enrollment in the Oregon Child Development Coalition's Migrant Seasonal Head Start program is more a function of harvested

acres than total sales. As growers increase efficiency (i.e., farm less acreage and realize greater sales), it is often case that crops are increasing mechanized as a way to reduce labor costs, thereby displacing agricultural workers. Interviews with management team members for the Oregon Child Development Coalition in Malheur County revealed that growers are increasingly turning to machines for "topping" onions, as well as spraying fields to lessen the need for hand weeding later. Thus, adequate enrollment planning for the Oregon Child Development Coalition must attend to the issue of declining acreage despite the fact that sales continue to increase over time. In the way of support for this conclusion, preliminary results of a recent agricultural employers survey reveal that one of the largest employers of Migrant Seasonal Head Start families in Malheur County plans to both increase the use of machines to harvest onions and potatoes. Likewise, one respondent indicated that they have considered not planting onions and potatoes next year.

**Figure 6.4 - Crop Outputs by OCDC Enrollment**



## ► DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

The 2000 Census reported the population of Malheur County to be 31,615 persons. From this, the Population Research Center at Portland State University estimated the population of Malheur County to be 31,800 as of July 1, 2005, demonstrating less than 1 percent growth in the population over the five-year period. Table 6.3 displays these estimates for each of the major cities and towns in Malheur County, as well as in neighboring Payette and Washington Counties in Idaho.

Note the slow growth in each of the locations listed with the exception of Fruitland, Idaho, a small agricultural town located approximately 4 miles east of Ontario, Oregon. Researchers with



the Oregon Employment Department have noted that the region's slow growth is a reflection of the corresponding rate of growth in the region's non-farm employment.<sup>27</sup>

Additionally, that Malheur County is home to the Snake River Correctional Institution, Oregon's largest state prison, makes for some interesting and skewed statistics, namely - 10 percent of Malheur County residents are currently incarcerated and roughly 50 percent of the population growth in this county between 1990 and 2000 consisted of prison inmates.<sup>29</sup> But, these figures aside, what is perhaps the most important consideration when examining Malheur County's slow rate of growth is the rate of out-migration of Malheur County residents to neighboring Payette and Washington Counties in Idaho.

**Table 6.3 - Population<sup>28</sup>**

	Year		
	2000	2005	Percent Change
<b>Malheur County</b>	31,615	31,800	0.6
Nyssa	3,163	3,175	0.4
Ontario	10,985	11,245	2.4
Vale	1,976	1,990	0.7
<b>Payette County (ID)</b>	20,578	22,197	7.9
Fruitland, ID	3,805	4,406	15.8
<b>Washington County (ID)</b>	9,977	10,098	1.2

Malheur County's population is also growing younger. According to economists, while the median age is 34 years old, the largest age cohort is 20-24, largely a product of the location of Treasure Valley Community College in Ontario, Oregon.<sup>30</sup> Children under the age of 5 make up roughly 7 percent of the population, a figure that is slightly larger than the statewide figure (6.3 percent). Also important to consider is that families in Malheur County tend to be larger than average, with Malheur County currently ranking first in the state for family size (3.28 persons), roughly 9 percent larger than the statewide figure.

**Table 6.4 - Population by Age<sup>31</sup>**

	Age						
	0-4	5-9	10-17	18-29	30-49	50-64	65+
<b>Malheur County</b>	2,373	2,449	3,891	5,408	8,769	4,473	4,488
<b>Payette County (ID)</b>	1,558	1,812	2,936	2,866	5,471	3,212	2,723
<b>Washington County (ID)</b>	673	780	1,285	1,230	2,534	1,712	1,763

Oregon Housing and Community Services reports that the number of individuals living in poverty in Malheur County increased by 6.5 percent between 1990 and 2000, with the Oregon

<sup>27</sup> Jason Yohannan, *Regional Profile: Population in Region 14*, 2005, Oregon Employment Department.

<sup>28</sup> *2004 Oregon Population Report*, March 2005, Population Research Center, College of Urban and Public Affairs, Portland State University.

United States Census Bureau, 2000 & 2005.

<sup>29</sup> Jason Yohannan, *Regional Profile: Population in Region 14*, 2005, Oregon Employment Department.

<sup>30</sup> Jason Yohannan, *Regional Profile: Population in Region 14*, 2005, Oregon Employment Department.

<sup>31</sup> *2004 Oregon Population Report*, March 2005, Population Research Center, College of Urban and Public Affairs, Portland State University.

Figures for Idaho counties are taken from the 2000 U.S. Census.



Department of Education reporting the poverty rate to be 29.4 percent as of January 2006.<sup>32</sup> Further, these two sources also estimate nearly 800 children under the age of 6 to be living in poverty each year, including 282 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>33</sup>

During the 2004-2005 school year, 66 percent (n=3,513) of students in Malheur County were eligible for free or reduced lunch, the second highest figure in the state. As displayed in Table 6.5, relative to the previous academic year, this represents a nearly 2 percent increase in the number of students receiving free or reduced lunch over the one year period. This increase was felt especially in the Ontario School District.

**Table 6.5 - Free & Reduced Lunch Count<sup>34</sup>**

Malheur County	Academic Year	
	2003-2004	2004-2005
Adrian School District	148	156
Annex School District	50	51
Arock School District	---	---
Harper School District	49	49
Jordan Valley School District	82	81
Juntura School District	---	3
Nyssa School District	809	777
Ontario School District	1813	1927
Vale School District	520	469
<b>Malheur County Total</b>	<b>3,472 (64.8%)</b>	<b>3,513 (65.9%)</b>

► **DATA ANALYSIS: ELIGIBLE, UNSERVED 3-4 YEAR OLD CHILDREN<sup>35</sup>**

The Oregon Department of Education estimates there to be 959 children between the ages of 3 and 4 in Malheur County in 2006.<sup>36</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 by the poverty rate for Malheur County, 29.4 percent in 2006. Thus, *the total number of eligible Head Start children in Malheur County is 282 children*, as displayed in Table 6.6.

**Table 6.6 - Estimated Number of Eligible Children**

Malheur County	
Total Children	959
Percent in Poverty	29.4
<b>Eligible</b>	<b>282</b>

<sup>32</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>33</sup> *County Comparisons: Incidence and Distribution of Poverty*, 2004, Oregon Health and Community Services.

<sup>34</sup> *Students Eligible for Free and Reduced Lunch*, 2003-2004 & 2004-2005, Oregon Department of Education.

<sup>35</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>36</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.



From this, the number of Head Start children currently being served in Malheur County by Head Start programs is subtracted. The Malheur County Child Development Center serves a total of 272 children in Malheur County between 3 and 4 years of age annually. Thus, considering the number of eligible Head Start children currently being served, ***the total number of unserved, eligible Head Start children is 10 children*** as shown in Table 6.7. Thus, 96.5 percent of eligible Head Start children are currently being served in Malheur County.

**Table 6.7 - Estimated Number of Unserved, Eligible Children**

Malheur County	
Eligible	282
Served	272
<b><i>Unserved, Eligible</i></b>	<b><i>10</i></b>

In the sections that follow, the Oregon Child Development Coalition will further refine the estimate in Table 6.7 to provide estimates for the number of unserved, eligible Migrant Seasonal Head Start children in Malheur County.

## **RACIAL & ETHNIC COMPOSITION**

### **► POPULATION & ANCESTRY**

Table 6.8 displays the racial and ethnic composition of the population in Malheur 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 areas are not available.

In general, Blacks, Asians and Native Hawaiians are underrepresented in southeast Oregon. The area also has fewer multiracial persons.<sup>37</sup> That said, growth in Malheur County’s Hispanic population is consistent with what is currently taking place across the state and throughout the nation. Roughly 1 in 4 residents in Malheur County is of Hispanic origin, the second highest such percentage in the state next to Morrow County.<sup>38</sup>

Of the population in Malheur County, 91 percent were born in the United States, with 79 percent of the population as monolingual English speakers.<sup>39</sup> Of those born outside of the United States (n=2,599), 6 percent are currently not U.S. citizens, with 3.7 percent having entered the United States between 1990 and 2000, and 87 percent of those born outside of the United States coming from Latin America. Accordingly, aside from English and relative to other languages, 19 percent of the population identified as primary Spanish speakers (n=5,640).<sup>40</sup> Of these, less than one-half self-identified as able to speak English less than “very well.”

<sup>37</sup> Jason Yohannan, *Regional Profile: Population in Region 14*, 2005, Oregon Employment Department.

<sup>38</sup> Jason Yohannan, *Regional Profile: Population in Region 14*, 2005, Oregon Employment Department.

<sup>39</sup> *DP-2: Profile of Selected Social Characteristics*, 2000, United States Census Bureau.

<sup>40</sup> *DP-2: Profile of Selected Social Characteristics*, 2000, United States Census Bureau.



**Table 6.8 - Population by Race<sup>41</sup>**

Malheur County	One Race						Two or More Races	Hispanic
	White	Black	Native Indian	Asian	Native Hawaiian	Some Other Race	---	---
2000	23,959 (75.8%)	387 (1.2%)	322 (1.0%)	619 (2.0%)	24 (0.1%)	5,496 (17.4%)	808 (2.6%)	8,099 (25.6%)
Nyssa	1,787	13	25	32	3	1,209	94	1,809
Ontario	7,609	60	97	295	16	2,536	372	3,521
Vale	1,630	3	27	15	2	237	62	491

► **PROFILE OF PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS<sup>42</sup>**

In 2005, 241 children were enrolled in the Migrant Seasonal Head Start program based on income eligibility or public assistance, down by 13 percent from the previous year. Table 6.9 displays the age distribution for children enrolled in the Migrant Seasonal Head Start program. Overall, program participants were of Hispanic or Latino origin, which includes persons of Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, South and Central American or other Spanish culture or origin. In 2004, the total number of primary Spanish speaking program participants was 301, with an additional 2 program participants listed as speakers of “other” languages.

**Table 6.9 - Enrolled of Children by Age**

Age	Number of Children
<1	39
1	53
2	55
3	63
4	64
5	29
<b>Total</b>	<b>303</b>

► **DATA ANALYSIS: ELIGIBLE, UNSERVED MIGRANT CHILDREN<sup>43</sup>**

The Oregon Child Development Coalition has developed a method for estimating the number of children of migrant and seasonal farmworkers in Malheur County 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 State University.<sup>44</sup> The estimates in Table 6.10 suggest that there were 285 migrant children and 286 seasonal children in Malheur County in 2005.

<sup>41</sup> *Fact Sheet*, 2000, American Community Survey, United States Census Bureau.

Note, 2005 data from the U.S. Census Bureau is not available for all counties in Oregon.

<sup>42</sup> Data is taken from the *Program Information Report*, 2004 & 2005, Oregon Child Development Coalition.

<sup>43</sup> See Appendix C1.3

<sup>44</sup> Alice C. Larson, *Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker Enumeration Profiles Study: Oregon*, 2002, Larson Assistance Services.



To estimate the number of unserved, eligible Migrant Seasonal Head Start children, the number of children currently being served in Malheur County by the Oregon Child Development Coalition's Migrant Seasonal Head Start program is subtracted from the estimates in Table 6.10. The Oregon Child Development

Coalition in Malheur County serves 264 Migrant Seasonal Head Start eligible children through the Migrant Seasonal Head Start Program, 140 of which are migrant children and 124 of which are seasonal children. Thus, *the total number of unserved, eligible Migrant Seasonal Head Start children in Malheur County is 307 children* and is broken down in Table 6.11. Overall, roughly 46.2 percent of eligible Migrant Seasonal Head Start children are currently being served in Malheur County.

**Table 6.10 - Estimated Migrant and Seasonal Children**

Malheur County		
Age	Number Migrant Children	Number Seasonal Children
<1	95	51
1	38	47
2	38	47
3	38	47
4	38	47
5	38	47
<b>Total<sup>45</sup></b>	<b>285</b>	<b>286</b>

Thus, *the total number of unserved, eligible Migrant Seasonal Head Start children in Malheur County is 307 children* and is broken down in Table 6.11. Overall, roughly 46.2 percent of eligible Migrant Seasonal Head Start children are currently being served in Malheur County.

**Table 6.11 - Unserved, Eligible MHS Children in Malheur County**

Malheur County		
	Number Migrant Children	Number Seasonal Children
Eligible	~285	~286
Served	140	124
<b>Unserved, Eligible</b>	<b>~145</b>	<b>~162</b>

To these estimates we must also add the number of Migrant Seasonal Head Start eligible children in western Idaho's Payette and Washington Counties. As of 2004, the Northwest Primary Care Association is contracting with Alice Larson to conduct a farmworker enumeration study in Idaho; however, results of this study have not been released to date and there are no prior such enumeration studies to reliably estimate these figures.

**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**

<sup>45</sup> Totals vary due to rounding.



## Adult Education

The median level of education in Malheur County is a high school graduate or high school equivalency, with 11 percent of the total population having earned a bachelor's degree or higher.<sup>46</sup> Data from the Oregon Department of Education show total public school enrollment in Malheur County to be approximately 5,359 students annually, 45 percent of which are non-white.<sup>47</sup> Across all high schools in Malheur County, the total number of high school dropouts is 48 students with a 12.1 percent high school dropout rate over the past four years.<sup>48</sup> The Oregon Department of Education also reports that 1 student dropped out of high school during the 2003-2004 school year specifically because they did not speak English well enough, while another 11 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 99 percent of parents served have a high school degree or less. Of all families served by the Oregon Child Development Coalition in Malheur County, 13 are enrolled in either job training or school. While a significantly higher figure relative to other service areas in the state, it remains that seasonal agricultural work and low wages require that both parents work to make ends meet.<sup>49</sup>

The following is a breakdown of the agencies providing education services to children and families in Malheur County. In the area of adult education:

- Treasure Valley Community College provides community education classes and workforce training. Serving roughly 2,000 students with these courses and trainings annually, particular efforts are being directed towards ESL and GED courses offered in Nyssa, Ontario and Vale.
- Efforts and a fundraising drive are currently underway to save the Malheur County Public Library and thereby ensure that educational opportunities for children and families continue to be made available to the general public.
- The Oregon Employment Department's WorkSource Oregon office provides a range of trainings and services for job seekers and employers.
- The Oregon Human Development Corporation works with displaced agricultural workers offering a job-training program while also working with local employers in the area.

Representatives from several of the above agencies were surveyed to determine the greatest educational needs of children and families in the Malheur County area. Of greatest importance was the continued need to promote adult education as a means toward greater community integration. For those in need of literacy skills, this is an especially salient point as one respondent noted that there tends to be "a feeling of resentment [among some residents toward] those who live here and don't speak English."

---

<sup>46</sup> *DP-2: Profile of Selected Social Characteristics*, 2000, United States Census Bureau.

<sup>47</sup> Oregon Department of Education, 2004-2005.

<sup>48</sup> Oregon Department of Education, 2003.

<sup>49</sup> *Program Information Report*, 2004, Oregon Child Development Coalition.



Further, according to respondents, high gas prices and fear among local residents that has accompanied the current immigration debate appear to have hurt enrollment in community education and workforce training classes. Regarding the latter, that some Malheur County residents lack documentation means that they experience a barrier in further pursuing their education. The mechanism is such that would-be students are discouraged from enrolling in classes not only because they lack documentation, but because, upon completion of a given course, they are unable to secure a job given their legal status.

In general, Treasure Valley Community College has expressed an interest in, according to one representative, “developing things that people can actually use,” meaning specialized trainings and other courses. In an interview with the Parent Involvement Coordinator for the Oregon Child Development Coalition in Malheur County it was revealed that parents, too, are looking to take advantage of those educational opportunities in the area, but many times are inhibited from doing so given that such classes conflict with dates of scheduled parent activities for the Migrant Seasonal Head Start program. During a focus group with parents of program participants it was revealed that parents are particularly interested in learning more about available ESL and computer courses that fit with their schedules. Most parents work from 6 am to 5 pm and so would require evening courses with childcare available, as well as weekend courses.

#### Early Childhood Education

In the area of early childhood education, other Head Start programs in Malheur County include that operated by the Malheur County Child Development Center. The Oregon Child Development Coalition in Malheur County continues to work with the Malheur County Child Development Center to strengthen Head Start services provided to low-income children and families. Likewise, in neighboring Idaho, the Western Idaho Community Action Partnership (WICAP) also operates a Head Start program and works in partnership with the Oregon Child Development Coalition. WICAP currently serves 568 children annually, 150 of which are Payette County residents. During an interview with an agency representative, it was noted that WICAP has “great” communication with the Oregon Child Development Coalition in Malheur County, including HSAC involvement and shared participation in site reviews.

According to the Education Manager for the Oregon Child Development Coalition in Malheur County, greater efforts are being made to focus on science and math training and on social and emotional development, with partnerships being developed and maintained with local Head Start programs and both public and private schools to support such efforts.



Other programs that serve the migrant population include Migrant Education. Seasonal and age-specific enrollment counts are displayed in Table 6.12 for Malheur County's three largest school districts. These figures attest to the fact that a greater number of migrant families live and work in the Treasure Valley area. It is also evident that only

**Table 6.12 - Migrant Education Enrollment<sup>50</sup>**

Malheur County	2004-2005		
	Nyssa School District	Ontario/Annex School Districts	Vale School District
Regular Enrollment	799	1,100	190
Summer Enrollment	382	356	---
<b>Total Enrollment</b>	<b>1,181</b>	<b>1,456</b>	<b>190</b>
<1 year old		10	
1		30	
2		42	
3		74	
4		86	
5		13	
<b>Total Enrollment</b>		<b>255</b>	

35 percent of migrant children continue to receive services in the summer, evidence that there is a continued need for the Migrant Seasonal Head Start program in this area.

Partnerships in the area of early childhood education include:

- The Oregon Child Development Coalition in Malheur County and the Malheur County Child Development Center continue to work together to strengthen Head Start services provided to low-income children and families in Malheur County.
- The Oregon Child Development Coalition in Malheur County continues to work with Western Idaho Community Action Partnership's Head Start program to join strategies in such areas as recruitment, transitions, health, disabilities, training and technical assistance.
- The Malheur County Commission on Children and Families facilitates the Early Childhood Team, as well as oversees state and federal grants including Great Start funds. The Early Childhood Team has been effective in integrating services and providing information to all county agencies.
- Treasure Valley Community College's Early Childhood Department continues to develop bilingual curriculum in response needs identified in the community, including a new delivery plan for early childhood classes.
- The Malheur Education Service District provides a range of education and support services to children, families and local providers.
- The Oregon Child Development Coalition has worked with and obtained signed agreements from local elementary schools that outline an effective transitions plan for children entering kindergarten.

Representatives from several of the above agencies were surveyed to determine the greatest educational needs of children and families in the Malheur County area. Aside from the need for additional Head Start slots – primarily in western Idaho – it was noted by several service providers that there is a pronounced need within local school districts to recruit and retain

<sup>50</sup> Oregon's Migrant Education Regional Programs, 2004-2005, Oregon Department of Education.



qualified bilingual Parent Involvement Coordinators to foster greater parent involvement. While the Oregon Child Development Coalition in Malheur County has developed a transition plan with the Nyssa and Ontario School Districts, greater efforts are needed to see that parents become more fully involved in their child's education once in grade school, something that is partially facilitated by opportunities for involvement in the parent's primary language. And, as will be discussed in a later section, during one-to-one interviews it was Malheur County's *medical providers* that initially expressed concerns about greater parent involvement and the transitions process.

A focus group with parents of program participants revealed that parents view the Migrant Seasonal Head Start program as a "safe," "educational," and a "helpful" environment. Parents at the Ontario, Oregon, and Nyssa, Oregon, centers expressed the need for additional hours of service per day and weeks of service per year. Additionally, parents noted that additional efforts are needed to promote greater parent involvement, especially at the Nyssa site. Parents were concerned that it has been the same parents who participate during activities and events and that the program would benefit from providing incentives and consequences for greater parent involvement or the lack thereof.

## ► MENTAL HEALTH & DISABILITIES

Access to care is limited by Malheur County's geographic isolation. In fact, the Health Resources and Safety Administration has identified Malheur County as a mental health professional shortage area due in large part to its geographic isolation.<sup>51</sup> Related to this, service providers - mental health and otherwise - emphasized the increasing use of methamphetamines among Malheur County residents over the past few years which currently ranks as the second most used illicit drug in Malheur County behind marijuana.<sup>52</sup> Accordingly, the Oregon Department of Corrections reports 186 persons incarcerated for drugs as of January of 2006, a figure that is 300 percent higher than the same figure for neighboring Harney County.

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 1,964 children with some sort of mental health issue in Malheur County under the age of 18, of which 196 are estimated to suffer from co-occurring disorders.<sup>53</sup> Overall, approximately 981 adults and 391 children receive some form of community based mental health care in Malheur County each year.

Data from the Oregon Child Development Coalition's Program Information Report show that 2 children in Malheur County were provided mental health services in 2005, each of these children also receiving referrals for additional services. On average, mental health professionals spent 4

---

<sup>51</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.

<sup>52</sup> *Oregon Data Book*, 2003, Oregon Department of Human Services, Office of Mental Health and Addiction Services.

<sup>53</sup> *Oregon Data Book*, 2003, Oregon Department of Human Services, Office of Mental Health and Addiction Services.



hours per month on-site. Likewise, *22 children were determined to have a disability, roughly 9 percent of enrolled seasonal children and 3 percent of enrolled migrant children in 2005*. Of these 22 children, 18 children were determined eligible to receive special education and related services. Primary disabilities included speech or language impairments, multiple disabilities, health impairments, and orthopedic impairments.<sup>54</sup>

The following is a breakdown of the agencies providing mental health and disabilities services - in Malheur County.

- Lifeways provides mental health and disabilities services to children and families in Malheur County, as well as those enrolled in the Migrant Seasonal Head Start program. In 2005, they served 4 children under the age 4 and 178 children between the ages of 4 and 12 years old.
- The Oregon Child Development Coalition in Malheur County contracts the services of Debbie Skouson, a mental health consultant, to provide services on-site.
- The Early Intervention program in Malheur County provides additional disabilities services. Services are provided in English and Spanish.
- The Oregon Child Development Coalition in Malheur County also participates in monthly meetings with the Oregon Department of Human Services in Malheur County, focusing on individual family needs.

Interviews with representatives from several of the above agencies revealed that they are seeing an increasing number of young, Hispanic children that have witnessed domestic violence, alcohol and drug abuse, and homicides. Accordingly, providers such as Lifeways continue to work closely with the Oregon Department of Human Services and the Justice Department. They also continue to explore ways to create a safe environment for children, particularly those children in the foster care system. However, during interviews it was noted that there is a need for additional therapeutic time to help create such an environment. Currently, providers feel that they are not able to see as many children as they would like, nor are they able to spend as much time with each child as they would like.

In the area of disabilities, the Mental Health and Disabilities Coordinator for the Oregon Child Development Coalition in Malheur County noted that there continues to be an emphasis on community partnerships to facilitate the referral and communication process with the local partners so as to reduce the wait for services. This is especially important as behavior issues (e.g., fighting, discipline, etc.) are coming up more and more these days. It has also been a challenge to promote parent follow through, something that also may be dealt with collaboratively. Accordingly, the Oregon Child Development Coalition in Malheur County has been working closely with the Oregon Department of Human Services in the development of trainings and educational opportunities for parents on this issue.

Parents, too, are aware of the need for additional services, especially in the area of mental health. During a focus group with parents of program participants, it was noted that parents are frustrated by the apparent lack of mental health services for older siblings. When pressed on this question, parents were uncertain as to whether such services existed in the community or

---

<sup>54</sup> *Program Information Report, 2004 & 2005, Oregon Child Development Coalition.*



whether they simply were unaware of them. In either case, continuing to educate parents may also prove to be a strategic move toward promoting greater parent follow through and community integration.

## ▶ HEALTH & NUTRITION

As of September 2006, Malheur County leads the state in the number of cases of West Nile Fever (n=35), a figure that is 11 times the figure for Baker County (n=3), which currently ranks as the second highest figure in the state.<sup>55</sup> In August of 2005, the Oregon Office of Rural Health released a report identifying healthcare shortages and underservice in southern Malheur County, including the area near Nyssa, Oregon, an area currently served by the Oregon Child Development Coalition.<sup>56</sup> Of notable interest is that the population of low-income residents was specifically highlighted as a medically underserved group.

*“We rely on OCDC’s medical team.”*

*-Local medical provider  
Ontario Oregon*

\*\*\*\*\*

*“OCDC is a model partner.”*

*-Local medical and dental provider  
Payette, Idaho*

In 2005, there were 59 physicians in Malheur County and just shy of 2 doctors for every 1,000 residents.<sup>57</sup> In Malheur County, approximately 24.6 percent of the population is without any form of health insurance, an estimate that is less than figures provided from the Oregon Health and Sciences University, which received 418 visits from Malheur County residents in 2004, 83 percent of which were only partially or not reimbursable.<sup>58</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 2004, the rate of low birth was 72.1 (n=33), whereas in 2001 and 2002, the rate of low birth had been as low as 46.7 (n=22) and 51.9 (n=25) respectively.<sup>59</sup> A similar trend is noted for live births with *very* low birthweight, with the rate of very low birth rising slightly to 8.7 (n=4) in 2004 from 8.5 (n=4) in 2001.<sup>60</sup>

In light of the above discussion, a similar trend does not hold for the number of live births with inadequate prenatal care. In 2004, 4.4 percent of live births in Malheur County were also identified as lacking adequate prenatal care, down by 47 percent from 2001 and is lower than the percentage reported statewide (5.8 percent).<sup>61</sup> However, it is also noted that the percent of live births with inadequate prenatal care among Hispanics (8.7 percent statewide) is generally higher

<sup>55</sup> *West Nile Virus: Oregon Map 2006*, September 19 2006, Acute and Communicable Disease Prevention, Oregon Department of Human Services.

<sup>56</sup> *Oregon Medically Underserved Areas/Populations (MUA/MUP)*, 2005, Oregon Office of Rural Health.

<sup>57</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>58</sup> *2004 Percentage Without Health Insurance by Region*, 2004, Oregon Office of Rural Health. *OHSU and Malheur County Statistics*, 2004, Oregon Health and Sciences University.

<sup>59</sup> *Live Births with Low Birthweight by County, Oregon Residents, 2001-2004*, Oregon Department of Human Services.

<sup>60</sup> *Live Births with Very Low Birthweight by County, Oregon Residents, 2001-2004*, Oregon Department of Human Services.

<sup>61</sup> *Prenatal Care by Mother’s County of Residents, Oregon Residents, 2004*, Oregon Department of Human Services.



than that of non-Hispanics.<sup>62</sup> Thus, the decline in the percent of live births with inadequate prenatal care must be interpreted cautiously.

Data from the Oregon Child Development Coalition's Program Information report show that 258 children entered the Migrant Seasonal Head Start program in Malheur County in 2005 with health insurance, up by 51 percent from 2004.<sup>63</sup> Those with health insurance were covered by Medicaid, with a handful covered by private insurance. For those without health insurance (n=6 during 2005), the Oregon Child Development Coalition worked with families to reduce the number of children without health insurance by 83 percent following enrollment. Most children (n=158) receive services through a migrant community health center and have an ongoing source of continuous, accessible medical care. In fact, following dental screenings in 2005, 76 children were identified as needing continued dental care, a service that was in fact provided. Common health conditions included anemia, obesity, asthma, and vision problems.

The following is a breakdown of the agencies providing health and dental services to children and families in Malheur County.

- The Oregon State WIC program serves 1,791 children under the age 5 and 690 pregnant women annually, with 76 percent of those served in Malheur County at or below the poverty level.<sup>64</sup>
- The Malheur County Commission on Children and Families oversees Child, Youth and Families funds, as well as Healthy Start funds, toward building the capacity of local agencies and organizations toward more effectively responding to the health needs of children and families in Malheur County.
- Treasure Valley Pediatrics provides pediatric services to 15,000 patients annually, 200 of which are children. They also operate the Community Connections Clinic, with a client base that is 80 percent Hispanic.
- Located in Payette, Idaho, Valley Family Health Care provides health and dental services, outreach, and education to low-income and migrant and seasonal children and families.
- The Malheur County Health Departments provide core public health services, including family planning, disease prevention, investigation, immunization, environmental health, home visiting, and maternal child health.
- Holy Rosary Medical Center provides a range of medical and emergency services, including childbirth services, pediatrics, and dietary care.
- Jody Stark provides medical services at a free clinic once per week.
- DeVoe Pediatrics provides pediatric medical services to children and families throughout the Treasure Valley.
- Dr. Delapaz provides pediatric medical services to children and families throughout the Treasure Valley.
- Dr. Dahle, Dr. Wettstein, and Drs. Lakes provide dental screenings and treatment to children enrolled in the Migrant Seasonal Head Start program.

---

<sup>62</sup> *Prenatal Care by Mother's Race and Ethnicity, Oregon Residents, 2004*, Oregon Department of Human Services.

<sup>63</sup> *Program Information Report, 2004 & 2005*, Oregon Child Development Coalition.

<sup>64</sup> *2005 WIC Facts, 2005*, Oregon WIC Program, Oregon Department of Human Services.



Representatives from the above agencies were surveyed to determine the greatest medical and dental needs of children and families in the Malheur County area. Primary needs identified were (i) the need for transportation to and from appointments, especially for those mothers with sick children in need of emergency care, (ii) the need for local, pediatric dentists, as the closest pediatric dentist is located in Boise, Idaho, some 60 miles away, (iii) and greater parent and community education to ensure that families understand the need for hygiene and good health habits.

Also of interest was that local medical providers stressed the need for a more collaborative *transitions* process for children and families entering the public schools. During an interview, one medical provider noted that they stood at the receiving end of a transitions process that, while adequate over the short term, is breaking down once children and families settle into the public schools. According to several respondents, medical providers in the area witness such a breakdown when parent participation and follow through is less evident (e.g., in well child exams). According to respondents, the situation is such that children and families are transitioned into a public school system which is for the most part is not equipped to address their needs (e.g., bilingual personnel and opportunities for involvement, etc). Thus, fatherhood involvement drops off, parents miss appointments, and ultimately medical providers are left with the fallout.

To address this, medical providers indicated that it would be beneficial to continue to collaborate with the Oregon Child Development Coalition in Malheur County in the transitions process. Continuing to bring a diversity of partners to the planning table, including medical providers, will not only promote consistency and continuity in working with children and families, but also ensures that a system of support and accountability are in place within local school districts. Thus, not only would the transitions process build the knowledge and skills of parents, but also the capacity of school districts and other agencies in the community.

An interview with the Health Manager for the Oregon Child Development Coalition in Malheur County revealed that efforts continue to be made to promote preventive schedules with health, dental, and nutrition and that, furthermore, partnerships have been built and maintained to promote such efforts. While promoting and encouraging greater parent involvement continues to be an issue, internal efforts are being made to further integrate with Parent Involvement so as to move from a “provider” mentality to a “connector” mentality. A focus group with parents of program participants confirms this emphasis as parents highlighted the agency’s “resourcefulness” in equipping them with information and resources to address individual needs.

*“I want them to have a health framework that is instilled in them before they leave.”*

*-Health Manager  
Oregon Child Development Coalition in Malheur County*

► **FAMILY SERVICES**

In 2004, the Oregon Department of Human Services released figures estimating the number of child abuse victims in Malheur County to be 129 children, a 90 percent increase from two years ago.<sup>65</sup> These figures amount to approximately 15 child abuse victims per 1,000 children.

<sup>65</sup> *The State of Children in Oregon’s Child Protective System*, 2004, Oregon Department of Human Services.



Additionally, shelter counts in Region 7 - an area which includes Malheur County - show that 153 children under the age of 6 spent one or more nights in shelter in 2005, with the total number of actual *child nights* equal to 4,141.<sup>66</sup> Roughly 14 percent of these received shelter services for 30 days or more. Additionally, during the 2004-2005 school year, the Oregon Department of Education reports that there were 58 homeless students in the Ontario and Nyssa School Districts.

In 2005, the Oregon Food Bank hosted a focus group in Malheur County focusing on food insecurity.<sup>67</sup> Of interest is that all participants were under the age of 22 and employed, some with criminal records. Respondents placed particular emphasis on the difficulties of finding and holding a job in light of a criminal record. Thus, wages and income fluctuate, thereby promoting food insecurity. Accordingly, respondents spoke of having to compromise around the quality of food that they were able to afford. For the area's migrant farmworkers, this situation is even bleaker given low-wages and the relatively recent layoffs at the Amalgamated Sugar Company in Nyssa, Oregon.

In general, roughly 158 persons in Service Delivery Area 14 - an area which includes Malheur County - receive Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) benefits each month. Relative to the previous year, this figure is up by 1.3 percent. However, within Ontario, Oregon, this figure is down slightly by 3.2 percent.<sup>68</sup> For those receiving food stamps, figures show that over 3,000 households receive food stamps in this region of the state, two-thirds of which live in and around the Ontario, Oregon, area.<sup>69</sup> Relative to the previous year, this figure is up by 11 percent across the region and up 8.2 percent in Ontario.

Applied to the Migrant Seasonal Head Start program, 54 families served by the Oregon Child Development Coalition in Malheur County in 2005 identified as single parent families. In each of these families was the parent or guardian employed; whereas, of the total number of two-parent families, roughly one-half had both partners in the workforce.<sup>70</sup> In 2005, 120 families received benefits under the TANF program, an increase from the previous year. In addition, the Migrant Seasonal Head Start program responded to a range of family needs, the most common being parenting education, marriage education services, child abuse and neglect services, domestic violence services, and mental health services.

---

Figure 6.5 - *Malheur County Data Book*, 2002, Office of Mental Health and Addiction Services, Oregon Department of Human Services.

<sup>66</sup>*Summary of Services Provided by Domestic and Sexual Violence Service Programs Funded by DHS*, 2005, Oregon Department of Human Services.

<sup>67</sup>*Voices*, 2005-2006, Oregon Food Bank.

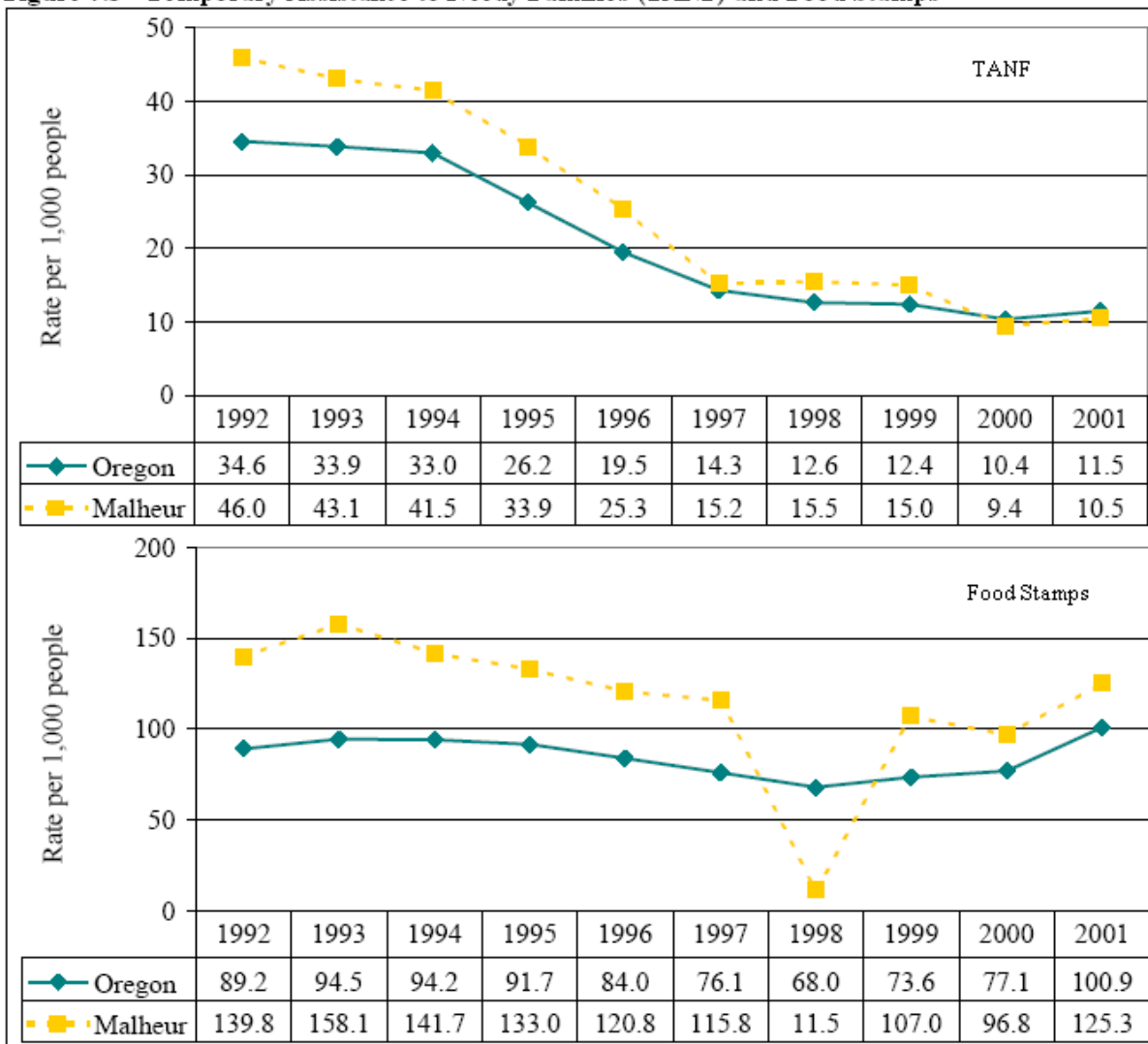
<sup>68</sup>*Oregon TANF Caseload Flash*, May 2006, Oregon Department of Human Services.

<sup>69</sup>*Oregon Food Stamp Caseload Flash*, May 2006, Oregon Department of Human Services.

<sup>70</sup>*Program Information Report*, 2004 & 2005, Oregon Child Development Coalition.



**Figure 6.5 - Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) and Food Stamps**



The following is a breakdown of some of the agencies providing family and social services to children and families in Malheur County.

- The Oregon Child Development Coalition in Malheur County 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 Malheur County providing social and health related services to children, adults and families, as well as to seniors and people with disabilities.
- Shelter services in Malheur County are provided by Project Dove.



- The Southeast Oregon Regional Food Bank boasts 5 food pantries, 2 emergency meal programs and 2 supplemental programs. Each month, 7,466 food boxes are distributed, serving some 2,149 individuals.<sup>71</sup>
- The Oregon Law Center has an office in Ontario, Oregon, providing legal services to low-income residents, including agricultural workers.
- Community Corrections has worked to translate all documents into Spanish to ensure that monolingual Spanish speakers currently in the system understand all processes and procedures.
- Oregon Rural Action is composed of individuals representing various local service providers and has partnered with the Ontario Chamber of Commerce at their weekly business lunch.
- The local Spanish speaking radio station – KWEI – continues to partner with the Oregon Child Development Coalition to share and disseminate information.

Representatives from several of the above agencies were surveyed to determine the greatest family services needs of children and families in Malheur County. It was noted that families - especially primary Spanish speaking families - experience language barriers when attempting to access services in the community. This has lead some, Community Corrections for example, to address this issue by ensuring that all documents are translated into Spanish to ensure that monolingual Spanish speakers understand any and all legal processes and procedures that they may be involved in.

*“This community is very biased and bigoted against Hispanics.”*

*-Local service provider  
Ontario, Oregon*

According to the Family Services Manager for the Oregon Child Development Coalition in Malheur County, there has been a marked increase in the number of bilingual staff among local service providers, especially among hospitals and medical clinics. However, there remains some concern about there being limited resources for families in the community, particularly childcare resources as will be discussed in the following section. Likewise, parents of program participants expressed some concern about poor customer service when attempting to access services from local providers, with several parents indicating that they were interesting in learning more about how to file a complaint or grievance.

Interviews with the County Director and the Family Services Manager for the Oregon Child Development Coalition in Malheur County also highlighted that the number of reported incidents of child abuse (n=19 thus far in 2006) represents an increase from previous years. However, it was also noted that these incidents are largely concentrated among a handful of families, some of which have been involved in incidents in the past.

Lastly, in the area of recruitment, the Family Services Manager noted that efforts are being made to continue developing relationships with local growers and food processors. In the spring of 2006, a growers’ roundtable discussion was held at the program center, bringing in growers from around the county to discuss their business needs, the role of migrant and seasonal farmworkers,

Figure 5.5 –Malheur County Data Book, 2002, Office of Mental Health and Addiction Services, Oregon Department of Human Services.

<sup>71</sup> Regional Food Banks at a Glance, 2005, Oregon Food Bank.



and ways to move forward collaboratively. That efforts continue to be directed toward engaging growers and food processors is important as there have been recent changes in ownership at Ontario Produce, as well as new businesses coming to town (e.g., Fry Foods), that may impact the number of migrant and seasonal families in the area in the future.

► **CHILDCARE**

The Oregon Childcare Research Partnership lists a total of 78 certified childcare providers in Malheur County, with approximately 897 childcare slots. These figures translate into 14 childcare slots for every 100 children, 11 slots short of the state benchmark of 25 childcare slots per 100 children.<sup>72</sup>

*“I would really like to see a child care center with staff trained in early childhood.”*

*-Community member  
Oregon Child Care Research Partnership, 2003*

Depending on family type, the Oregon Childcare Research Partnership found that up to 40 percent of some families with children under the age of 13 use some form of paid childcare in Malheur County, with 28 percent of all children enrolled in some form of paid childcare. In addition, the report found that families use on average nearly 36 hours of paid childcare per week.

**Table 6.13 - Childcare Costs by Type of Care**

Childcare costs in Region C - an area that includes most of Malheur County - are the lowest in the state, with the median hourly and monthly costs listed in Table

	Family Childcare		Certified Family Childcare		Center Based Childcare	
	Hourly	Monthly	Hourly	Monthly	Hourly	Monthly
Infant	\$1.85	\$345	\$1.85	\$318	\$2.12	\$392
Toddler	\$1.60	\$318	\$1.85	\$318	\$2.12	\$392
Pre K	\$1.60	\$254	\$1.91	\$306	\$1.80	\$291

6.13. Researchers from Oregon State University found a statistically significant difference in childcare costs between Region C and other regions of the state of Oregon, suggesting a unique childcare market in Malheur County due to its rural location.<sup>73</sup> Further, this research suggests 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 Malheur County.

The following is a breakdown of some of the agencies providing childcare and related services to children and families in Malheur County.

- Childcare Resource and Referral in Malheur County makes approximately 115 referrals annually, working with and training 53 childcare providers each year. They have recently received a grant for a Story Time Express program which would provide on-site story times in English and Spanish in the homes of providers. Additionally, CCR&R is working to provide financial incentives to providers for implementing an environmental screening tool.

<sup>72</sup> *Estimated Supply of Childcare in Oregon as of July 1, 2004*, April 26, 2005, Oregon Childcare Research Partnership.

<sup>73</sup> *2004 Oregon Childcare Market Rate Study*, August 2004, Oregon State University Family Policy Program, Oregon Childcare Research Partnership.



- Seven (7) certified childcare centers operate throughout Malheur County, most of which are located in Ontario, Oregon.
- Approximately 21 family childcare homes operate throughout Malheur County, with many of these located in Medford, Oregon. Only 2 of these providers are primary Spanish speakers.
- The Malheur County Commission on Children and Families' Early Childhood Team is working on developing and raising support for a relief nursery for children of incarcerated parents.

Representatives from several of the above agencies were surveyed to determine the greatest childcare needs of children and families in Malheur County. Primary needs identified include (i) the need for more childcare slots, particularly for the population of infants and toddlers, (ii) the need for more Spanish speaking childcare providers, (iii) the need for, in the words of one respondent, "intense wrap around services for low-income families not falling in Head Start enrollment criteria," and (iv) safe environments for children before and after school.

Regarding the final point in the above paragraph, multiple respondents equated *quality* childcare with a "safe and secure environment." Understood as such, there is a need to continue educating and encouraging childcare providers to, for example, utilize environmental screening tools. However, there has evidently been some difficulty in this area, a difficulty that has proved challenging given the low level of education (i.e., high school degree or less) among home childcare providers in the area.

To address the above concerns, Child Care Resource and Referral has worked to partner with Treasure Valley Community College's Early Childhood Education Department, Ontario High School's Teen Parenting Program, and the Ontario Chamber of Commerce. To address the shortage of Spanish speaking providers, it was suggested that the Oregon Child Development Coalition continue to participate in the Caregivers Alliance and possibly help develop a Spanish track. Lastly, to address the training and development needs of new and existing providers, interest was expressed in (i) learning whether joint trainings could be implemented focusing on curriculum and time management, (ii) integrating with agency efforts around the Child Development Associates (CDA) certification process, and (iii) working collaboratively to target local businesses to raise awareness about the need for additional early childhood and childcare services in the community.

## ► **TRANSPORTATION & HOUSING**

Transitioning from a discussion of childcare to one of transportation and housing, Appendix C6.2 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 lack of transportation services in Malheur County is currently an issue affecting service providers from across the spectrum. Families experience barriers to a variety of care and services simply because they cannot get there. This is especially the case for families living in more remote areas of the county, where services are at a minimum. To be sure, the Malheur County Commission on Children and Families has identified the lack of public transportation services as



one of the primary barriers impeding the ability to improve rates of adequate prenatal care in Malheur County.<sup>74</sup> Likewise, parents of program participants also expressed frustration with the lack of public transportation services and the expense that accompanies having to purchase rides from acquaintances.

The following is a breakdown of some of the agencies providing transportation services in Malheur County.

- The Malheur Council on Aging and Community Services provides transportation to and from the grocery store and other errands, as well as medical appointments to as far away as Boise, Idaho.
- The Oregon Child Development Coalition in Malheur County currently has representation on the Malheur County Traffic Safety Commission, which meets monthly to examine issues related to pupil and traffic safety.
- The Oregon Child Development Coalition in Malheur County is involved with efforts to get its own chapter of Safe Kids, focusing on car seats and safety.
- The Ontario School District received one year funds for the Safe Paths to Schools program to improve roads and provide bike and walk paths.

In an interview with the Transportation Coordinator for the Oregon Child Development Coalition in Malheur County, it was revealed that the agency is doing what it can to address transportation needs in the community. Current efforts include membership on the Malheur County Traffic Safety Commission and conducting car seat clinics every other month in conjunction with Head Start programs and other agencies in the area. To date, no car seat purchase program is in place; however, there is a contract in place with the Malheur County Health Department for a \$20 co-pay. Additional efforts are being made to work with State Farm Insurance agents and the local Chevrolet dealership.

The Oregon Child Development Coalition in Malheur County continues to provide transportation services to children enrolled in the Migrant Seasonal Head Start program. The agency currently retains two bus drivers in Malheur County and has done so for over 5 years. In light of such experience and accomplishments, the Transportation Coordinator in Malheur County has identified the need to continue building the capacity of the Malheur County Traffic Safety Commission to, most importantly, begin addressing the lack of public transportation in Malheur County by working with existing agencies to develop safety fairs, provide clinics on car seats, and continue to raise greater community awareness about this important issue.

The following is a breakdown of some the agencies providing housing and related services in Malheur County.

- Several apartment complexes in Malheur County – Rio Vista, Sierra Vista, etc - cater to low-income families. Overall, there are at least 150+ units.
- There are 14 manufactured home parks in Malheur County, 10 of which are located in the Nyssa and Ontario areas.
- There is 1 farm labor camp in Malheur County located in Ontario, Oregon. Total capacity is 12 persons.

---

<sup>74</sup> Malheur County Commission on Children and Families, 2006.



- The Housing Authority of Malheur County provides a range of services to low-income residents, including public housing, a Section 8 voucher program, a family self-sufficiency program, and housing projects for migrant and seasonal farmworkers.

During a focus group, parents of program participants were asked about their current housing needs. Many respondents indicated that they spend too much (>50 percent) of their monthly household income on rent, with several parents commenting on the cost of utilities during the winter months. What is more, however, is that the seasonality of agricultural work means that household income can vary substantially over the course of a year. Thus, it was not surprising when one parent estimated that nearly her entire paycheck went towards rent during two or three months out of the year when work tends to be scarce. Other parents indicated that they wished to occupy housing that was not substandard, stressing that their current dwelling did not have adequate air and ventilation.

## **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 Malheur County in carrying out its mission to improve the lives of children and families.

**Figure 6.6 Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats**

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Bilingual, bicultural staff are a resource in the community and recognized for their expertise and advocacy.</li> <li>* Among service providers, there is a general spirit of cooperation and a willingness to address emergent issues in a collaborative manner and in a way which builds the knowledge and involvement of parents, including fathers.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* According to respondents, the larger community is not ready to begin addressing issues dealing with early childhood, childcare, and the growing Hispanic population.</li> <li>* Individual growers and food processors are hesitant to get involved with the work of the agency for any number of reasons – the current immigration debate, time, and limited knowledge of the Migrant Seasonal Head Start program.</li> </ul>



Opportunities	Threats
<p>* There is an opportunity for the agency to continue collaborating with adult education providers in the community to allow parents to pursue their education while addressing the need to promote greater parent involvement.</p> <p>* There is an opportunity to make the transitions process an even more collaborative process involving service providers from across the spectrum.</p>	<p>* Agency staff estimate that roughly 85 percent of parents are employed by local onion growers, an agricultural commodity that is being harvested with greater efficiency, which may have the affect of reducing the need for labor in future years.</p> <p>* Growers are increasingly losing workers to the construction and service industries, pushing them to further mechanize crops that typically require the labor of migrant and seasonal farmworkers.</p>

► **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 Malheur 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 Malheur County**

**Observation:** In general, there are limited resources in Malheur County with many initiatives and service agencies competing for private business support and a finite pool of local dollars.

**Recommendation:** Continue to provide opportunities for businesses, growers and community members to become involved with the work of the agency through donations of and discounts on goods, services, time, and other resources. Further, doing so in a way that publicly recognizes these contributions will build greater visibility in the community and help to develop strategic partnerships.

**Observations and Recommendations: Education**

**Observation:** Additional Migrant Seasonal Head Start services are needed in Malheur County.

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



**Observation:** Interviews with agency staff and local service providers indicate that while efforts are being made to engage a greater number of school districts in the transitions process, there is also a need to broaden support systems for over the long term.

**Recommendation:** Bring a diversity of parties to the planning table for transitions, including medical providers, to not only promote consistency and continuity in working with children and families, but also to ensure that a system of support and accountability are in place within local school districts over the long term.

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

**Observation:** In light of the prevalence of children witnessing violent crimes, etc, there is a need to continue to support mental health providers in creating safe environments for children, particularly those children in the foster care system.

**Recommendation:** While continuing to support mental health providers, identify whether there could be greater integration with childcare providers who also stressed the need for a safe and secure environment, with possible efforts focusing on increasing the stock of special needs childcare.

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

**Observation:** Interviews with medical providers reveal that they stand at the receiving end of a transitions process that, while adequate over the short term, is breaking down once children and families settle into the public schools.

**Recommendation:** Continue to integrate internally with Education. In addition, bring a diversity of parties to the planning table for transitions, including medical providers, to not only promote consistency and continuity in working with children and families, but also to ensure that a system of support and accountability are in place within local school districts over the long term.

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

**Observation:** In general, there are limited Spanish resources for families, although this is changing somewhat, especially among medical providers.

**Recommendation:** In light of the prevalence of reported cases of child abuse, continue to use existing agency resources, as well as resources from the Oregon Department of Human Services to educate parents about child abuse and provide parents with necessary supports and activities.



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

**Observation:** There is a need for a greater number of safe and secure (i.e., quality) childcare environments – of course, accompanied by the need for additional childcare slots - for children in Malheur County.

**Recommendation:** Continue to partner with Child Care Resource and Referral to not only equip parents with childcare information and resources, but also to contribute the building and development of these resources such that the childcare needs of families in need are met.

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

**Observation:** There is a lack of public transportation service in Malheur County.

**Recommendation:** Continue to build the capacity of local groups and organizations in moving to address this issue directly while encouraging the support of the local business community.

### **SUMMARY**

Given limited resource in Malheur County, it is imperative that the agency continue to be a viable and collaborative partner. This is especially necessary as families and service providers attempt to address issues of community integration, readiness and support. Given the expertise and involvement of agency staff, there is an opportunity for the Oregon Child Development Coalition in Malheur County to continue to take a leadership role, as the agency is already recognized for providing quality culturally and linguistically appropriate services to the population of migrant and seasonal farmworkers.

