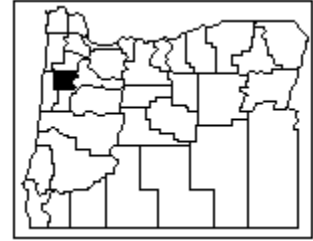


## POLK COUNTY

The Oregon Child Development Coalition in Polk 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 Polk County serves a total of 138 children annually. Of these, 100 children are classified as migrant children and 38 are classified as seasonal children. In 2005, the Oregon Child Development Coalition in Polk County served 116 percent of funded enrollment. As of May 2006, average daily attendance was 89 percent.



The Oregon Child Development Coalition in Polk County currently employs a center-based option, serving children from one location in Independence, Oregon. The short-term program runs 15 weeks from June through September, operating 10 classrooms, 5 days per week from 8 am to 3 pm. The long-term program runs 32 weeks from September through December and then from January through May operating 7 classrooms, 5 days per week from 8 am to 2 pm and from 9 am to 3 pm.

The service area includes the entirety of Polk County. The recruitment area, however, is determined by three factors: (i) the location of growers as the Oregon Child Development Coalition in Polk County attends to those especially agricultural areas of Polk County, (ii) the program center location and (iii) acceptable transportation times per the Head Start Performance Standards. For illustrative purposes, Appendix C9.1 displays a map containing the service area, as well as grower's locations and program center locations.

### COUNTY SNAPSHOT

#### ▶ QUICK FACTS

- Polk County has experienced 5.3 percent growth in its population over the past 5 years, with areas such as Independence, Oregon, experiencing more explosive growth over the same period and serving as a “bedroom” community for nearby Salem, Oregon’s third largest city.
- The median household income in Polk County is 5 percent lower than the state median, with nearly 900 children under the age of 6 living in poverty and 43 percent of public school children eligible for free and reduced lunch.
- As of 2006, there are an estimated 274 unserved, eligible Head Start children in Polk County with the percentage of unserved, eligible children at 45.3 percent.
- With unemployment at 5.7 percent, Polk County is seeing growth in the professional and business service industry, growth attributed to outsourcing and the increased use of “leased workers” through staffing agencies.

*“All farmers have been wrestling with the skyrocketing cost of petroleum products.”*

*-Craig Coleman  
Polk County Itemizer Observer*



- Greenhouses and nurseries are changing the face of agriculture in Polk County, with strawberry, blackberry and raspberry acreage continuing to decline annually in light of international competition and greater mechanization.
- In 2005, there were an estimated 1,525 migrant farmworkers (+5.7% between 2002 and 2005) and 1,853 seasonal farmworkers (-42.6% between 2002 and 2005) in Polk County with the total number of migrant and seasonal children under the age of 6 estimated at 62 children and 98 children, respectively.

## ▶ CRITICAL ISSUES

- Immigration

On May 1, 2006, thousands of Polk County residents took to the streets to, in the words of one Latino business owner, “show sympathy for undocumented workers and their families because the proposed [immigration] bill is not just.”<sup>1</sup> The preceding statement not only highlights concerns about the effects of proposed immigration legislation, but also touches on the need for continued community education around the issue.

*It is disheartening that some people still blindly lump immigrants and Latinos, regardless of legal status or country of birth, together in one big “undesirable” category. People who are incapable, or unwilling, to educate themselves on this issue will not suddenly gain enlightenment if... immigrants lose their jobs. They are the same people who would be happy if all illegal immigrants, or all Latinos for that matter, were shipped out. They believe the rhetoric that illegal immigrants don’t pay taxes and are an economic drain on the nation. Such bigotry and ignorance ignores the fact that employers are required to withhold payroll, Social Security and Medicare taxes from their workers’ wages. It also ignores the fact that workers employed with phony documents will also never be able to collect the Social Security benefits they have paid into. It’s the same bigotry that ignores that [many state’s] social and government services are largely funded through [taxes], which anyone who buys goods pays, whether they are citizens, legal immigrants, illegal immigrants or tourists just visiting the state.*

*-Editorial: Boycott May Damage Immigration Debate  
April 28, 2006  
Capital Press*

- Changing Population Demographics

Like all counties in the Willamette Valley, Polk County produces a variety of agricultural commodities, including those typically harvested by migrant farmworkers (e.g., berries, etc). In the past, many agricultural operations were centered in and around Independence, Oregon. Today, this picture is changing. In the past 4 years, the population of Independence has grown by 25 percent, due in large part to its proximity to Oregon’s

<sup>1</sup> Craig Coleman, *Local Latino Stores Close in Support of Immigration Reform Protest*, May 2006, Polk County Itemizer Observer.



State capital, Salem, located some 12 miles away. The upside is that the Independence's growth has prompted greater investment in local infrastructure to benefit the community. The downside is that less acreage is being harvested each year requiring the labor of migrant farmworkers. Despite the recent groundbreaking for a farmworker housing complex near Independence in 2006 which may bring in some farmworker families from neighboring counties, developers already have plans for a computer lab, vocational training programs and language classes on site, suggesting that more and more families are looking to transition out of migrant stream into more long-term agricultural or non-agricultural employment.<sup>2</sup>

## **COUNTY PROFILE**

### **► GEOGRAPHIC PROFILE**

Spanning some 2,010 square miles, Polk County is located in the northwestern portion of Oregon and in the heart of the Willamette Valley, and is home to Western Oregon University in Monmouth, Oregon. Created out of the Yamhill District in 1845, the county was named for President James Polk. The county seat, originally named Cynthia Ann, was changed to Dallas after then Vice President George Dallas.<sup>3</sup>

Average elevation in Polk County is 325 feet above sea level. Average temperatures range from 39 degrees Fahrenheit during the winter months to 66 degrees Fahrenheit during the summer months. The area receives approximately 52 inches of rain annually, including rare snowfalls during the winter months, and is recognized for its fertile farmland, rich soil and the diversity of agricultural commodities produced in this area.<sup>4</sup>

With the Willamette River to the east, Polk County has historically been considered part of small town America with its rolling hills and covered bridges. Only recently has the county experienced significant growth, causing some to speculate that Polk County is increasingly becoming a bedroom community for nearly Salem, Oregon's state capital.<sup>5</sup>

Like all agricultural communities, water remains an important issue in Polk County. To be sure, there is most certainly a history around the supply of water in the area, with records showing that the county seat was officially moved one mile in 1845 to improve its water supply.<sup>6</sup> This year, growers in the area had little concern over water supplies, as snow pack, soil moisture, stream flows and reservoirs were 25 percent above the annual average.<sup>7</sup>

### **► ECONOMIC PROFILE**

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<sup>2</sup> Craig Coleman, *Farmworker Housing Due for Independence*, 2006, Polk County Itemizer Observer.

<sup>3</sup> Oregon Blue Book, 2006.

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

<sup>5</sup> Pat O'Connor, *Salem MSA Year in Review*, 2005, Oregon Employment Department.

<sup>6</sup> Pat O'Connor, *Salem MSA Year in Review*, 2005, Oregon Employment Department.

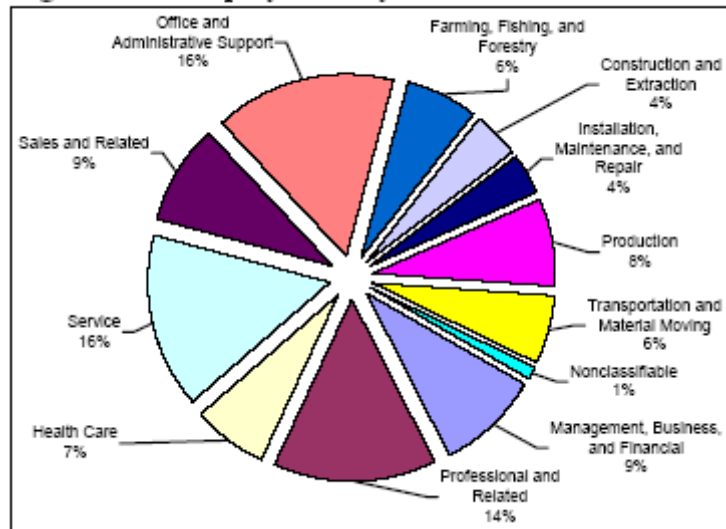
<sup>7</sup> *State Will Have Water Aplenty for Agriculture This Summer*. June 7, 2006, Polk County Itemizer Observer.



In 2003, the median per capita personal income in Polk County was \$25,083 which falls at the 50th percentile when compared with all other counties across Oregon. This figure ranks 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 over 50 percent of households in Polk County earn less than \$50,000 per year.<sup>9</sup> In context, this means that a family of four living in Polk County may fall short of meeting necessary expenses, including rent, food, childcare, transportation, insurance and taxes.<sup>10</sup>

Major industries in Polk County include state government, agriculture, food processing, education and wood products manufacturing. Between 2002 and 2004, non-farm employment grew by 2.2 percent, nearly 41 percent slower than the state of Oregon. However, state economists have also noted the higher than average number of government jobs in the area, largely due to the location of Western Oregon University in nearby Monmouth.<sup>11</sup>

**Figure 9.1 - Employment by Sector**



Polk County has experienced several periods of rising unemployment since the 1980s, each of which correspond to state and national recessions.<sup>12</sup> In 2003, the number of people estimated as unemployed in Region 3 - an area that includes Polk County - peaked at 17,742. As of February 2006, the unemployment rate in Polk County was 5.7 percent, nearly 7 percent lower than the state unemployment rate of 6.1 percent and 12 percent

**Figure 9.2 - Average Annual Unemployment Rates: Region 3 Counties**

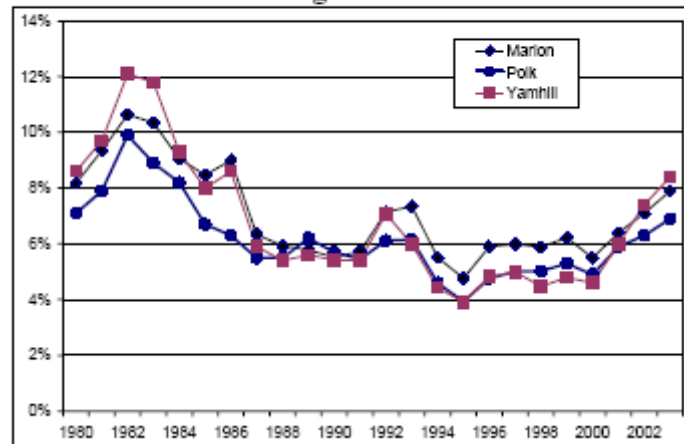


Figure 9.1 – Patrick O’Connor, *Regional Profile: Industry Employment in Region 3, 2005*, Oregon Employment Department.

Figure 9.2 – Patrick O’Connor, *Regional Profile: Industry Employment in Region 3, 2005*, Oregon Employment Department.

<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

<sup>11</sup> Pamela Ferrara, *An Employment Snapshot: Dallas, Monmouth and Independence*, February 16, 2005, Oregon Employment Department.

<sup>12</sup> Pat O’Connor, *Regional Profile Labor Force, Employment and Unemployment in Region 3*, Oregon Employment Department.



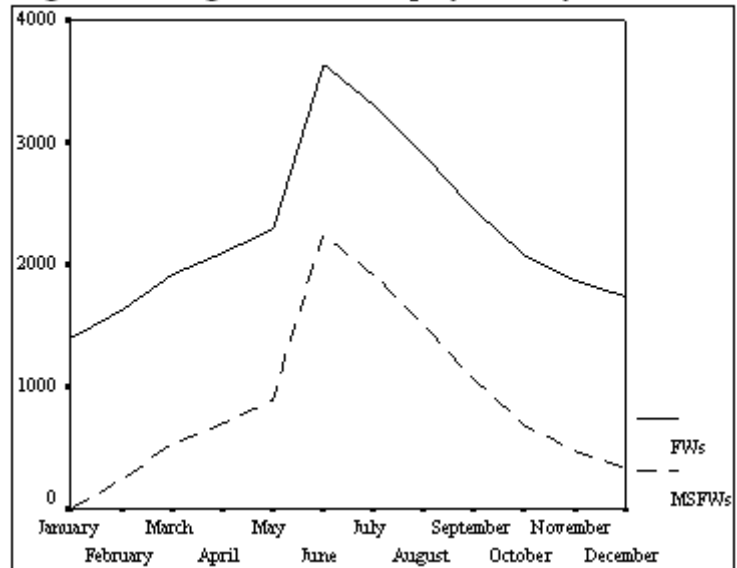
higher than the national unemployment rate of 5.1 percent.

Occupations and industries currently reporting steady job growth tend to include the professional and business service industry. This growth is, in part, attributed to the outsourcing of human resource functions, including hiring and payroll, with intermediary staffing agencies also reporting steady job growth through “leased workers.”<sup>13</sup> In general, economists note that the fastest growing industries are those most closely tied to the Polk County’s growing population; so, for example, retail salespersons, food prep workers, and cashiers.

In 2005, 18 percent of Polk County businesses ranked employee turnover as a significant problem, citing the nature of the work environment as a primary cause.<sup>14</sup> While not included in these figures, agricultural employees are no exception. In addition to the seasonality of agricultural work, migrant farmworkers in Polk County are among the worst paid in the state of Oregon earning, on average, \$7.87 per hour.<sup>15</sup> Agricultural operations in Polk County employ some 2,279 farmworkers per month.<sup>16</sup> Monthly agricultural employment estimates are shown in Figure 9.3 for both the general population of farmworkers (FWs), as well as for migrant and seasonal farmworkers (MSFWs).<sup>17</sup>

The labor peak corresponds with the [berry] harvests during the summer months, beginning with strawberries. Following strawberries, raspberries, blueberries and blackberries are harvested, lasting into September and October when growers will transition into harvesting wine grapes and preparing for Christmas trees.

**Figure 9.3 - Agricultural Employment by Month**



Although excluded by Migrant Seasonal Head Start enrollment criteria, the majority of agricultural workers are employed in logging and forestry support activities, with the next largest employment category being nurseries and greenhouses.<sup>18</sup> Table 9.1 displays total harvested acreage, production and sales for crops typically utilizing the labor of migrant and seasonal farmworkers in 2004 and 2005. Overall, 2005 was a good year for most agricultural operations in

<sup>13</sup> Pat O’Connor, *Polk, Polk, and Yamhill Counties Have Many Growing Occupations*, April 3, 2006, Oregon Employment Department.

<sup>14</sup> *Training and Retaining Oregon’s Workforce: Employer’s Perspective*, March 2005, Oregon Employment Department.

<sup>15</sup> *2002 Wages: Farmworkers and Laborers, Crop, Nursery and Greenhouse*, 2002, Oregon Employment Department.

<sup>16</sup> *2005 Oregon Agricultural Employment Estimates*, 2006, Oregon Employment Department.

<sup>17</sup> *2005 Oregon Agricultural Employment Estimates*, 2006, Oregon Employment Department.

<sup>18</sup> Pamela Ferrara, *Agricultural Employment in Marion, Polk and Yamhill Counties 2003*, March 22, 2005, Oregon Employment Department.



Polk County, with total sales increasing by 4 percent from the previous year.<sup>19</sup> The total number of harvested acres of strawberries declined by nearly 17 percent over the one-year period. Likewise, the total number of harvested acres of blackberries and raspberries also declined by an average of 12 percent between 2004 and 2005. Blueberries are showing some improvement, doing so as international competition has increased, most notably with China, Chile and countries in Eastern Europe.

*“Price instability and market volatility depressed earnings in some sectors of the farm...economy.”*

*-Larry Burt  
Oregon State University Extension*

**Table 9.1 - Selected Crop Outputs<sup>20</sup>**

Polk County	2004			2005		
	Acres	Production	Sales (in \$000s)	Acres	Production	Sales (in \$000s)
Strawberries	30	336	\$185	25	325	\$162
Blackberries	320	2,239	\$1,441	300	2,126	\$1,431
Raspberries	85	253	\$324	70	219	\$281
Blueberries	90	731	\$621	95	860	\$748
Wine Grapes	1,495	3,140	\$4,741	1,530	3,213	\$4,884
Nursery & Greenhouse	---	---	\$13,665	---	---	\$14,010
Christmas Trees	330	490	\$9,555	350	518	\$9,246

Agriculture in Polk County is steadily moving towards the nursery and greenhouse industries. Polk County has shown consistent growth in this area over the past three years, with sales increasing by nearly 3 percent between 2004 and 2005, growth that has had the effect of keeping seasonal farmworkers in the area given more stable employment for up to 10-11 months. Accounting for 14 percent of all agricultural employment, nurseries and greenhouses often pay better than other agricultural work, in many cases because of the level of skill involved in the work

**Table 9.2 - Estimates of Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers**

	2002	2005
<b>Polk County</b>		
MFWs	1,443	1,525
SFWs	3,229	1,853
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,672</b>	<b>3,378</b>

To migrant farmworkers, declining strawberry acreage and increasing mechanization of crops means less work in the area, with only 33 percent of growers surveyed indicating that they expect to employ about the same number of workers as they did the year before.<sup>21</sup> In 2002, Alice C. Larson estimated the number of migrant and seasonal farmworkers in Polk County.<sup>22</sup> These estimates, as well as 2005 estimates computed by the Oregon Child Development Coalition, are shown in Table 9.2.

<sup>19</sup> Craig Coleman, *2005 Was a Good Year for Most Polk County Farming Operations*, 2006, Polk County Itemizer Observer.

<sup>20</sup> Oregon Agricultural Information Network, 2006.  
Unit of production varies by commodity.

<sup>21</sup> *Agricultural Employer Survey*, 2006, Oregon Child Development Coalition.

<sup>22</sup> Alice C. Larson, *Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker Enumeration Profiles Study: Oregon*, 2002, Larson Assistance Services.

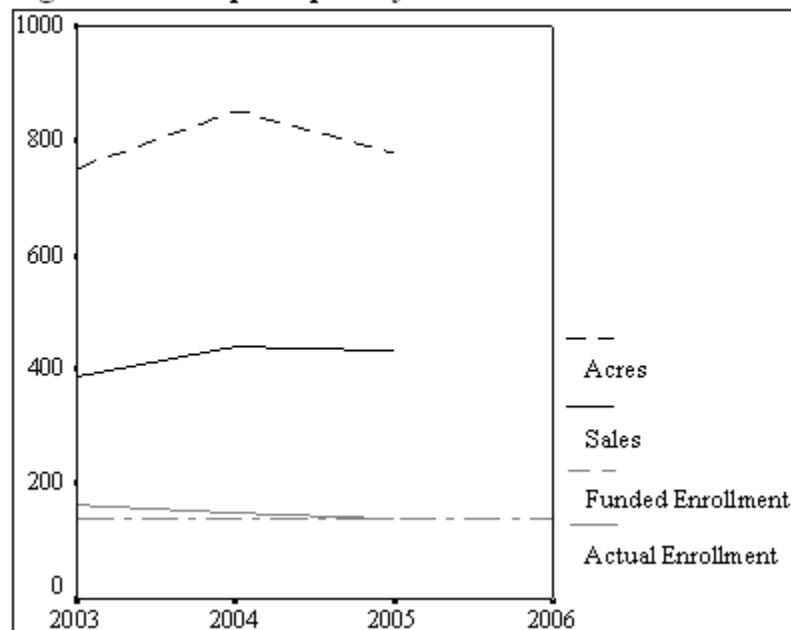


Between 2002 and 2005, the number of migrant farmworkers increased by 6 percent, while the number of seasonal farmworkers decreased by 43 percent. As these figures appear to counter the earlier assertion that migrant farmworkers are no longer coming to the area, a brief discussion of the method used to arrive at the estimates in Table 9.2 is appropriate. While 2005 estimates assume a rigid distinction between the types of crops worked by migrant and seasonal farmworkers, they are nonetheless based on 2002 estimates which simply look at the temporality of agricultural employment. What is not accounted for, however, is residency. The fact is that many “migrant” farmworkers counted in Table 9.2, while working temporarily for multiple employers over any one-year period, are new - and, hence, are “migrants.” Thus, in the case of Larson’s estimates in 2002, there obviously exist some questions around whether the categories - migrant and seasonal - are mutually exclusive.<sup>23</sup>

The above findings are also of importance in program planning for the Oregon Child Development Coalition. Figure 9.4 provides information on harvested acres, total sales, and enrollment counts for the Oregon Child Development Coalition in Polk County.<sup>24</sup> It is important to note that, like in other counties, Figure 9.4 does confirm that growers in Polk County are farming less acreage. Accordingly, if we understand enrollment in the Oregon Child Development Coalition’s Migrant Seasonal Head Start program as a function of harvested acres, it is not surprising that actual enrollment in the Migrant Seasonal Head Start program decreased between 2003 and 2005.

That said, adequate enrollment planning for the Oregon Child Development Coalition must attend to the fact that farmworking families in Polk County, specifically seasonal farmworkers, need more weeks of service. In other words, there are more seasonal families in the area than there are slots in the Migrant Seasonal Head Start program.

**Figure 9.4 - Crop Outputs by OCDC Enrollment**



<sup>23</sup> It is noted that the current method used to estimate the number of migrant and seasonal farmworkers in 2005 does so adequately for the remainder of the Oregon Child Development Coalition’s service areas and that the situation in Polk County appears to be atypical.

<sup>24</sup> Note, the scale in Figure 9.4 has been adjusted. Harvested acres are in 0s and total sales are in \$00,000s. Additionally, crop outputs reflect the set of all crops in the Polk County area, not just those typically employing migrant and seasonal farmworkers.



► **DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE**

The 2000 Census reported the population of Polk County to be 62,380 persons. From this, the Population Research Center at Portland State University estimated the population of Polk County to be 65,670 as of July 1, 2005, demonstrating 5 percent growth in the population over the five-year period. Table 9.3 displays these estimates for each of the major cities and towns in Polk County.

With the exception of Falls City, note the explosive growth in each of the locations listed. The figures in Table 9.3 lend support for the earlier assertion that cities in Polk County such as Independence are essentially becoming suburbs for the city of Salem in neighboring Marion County. In fact, compared with neighboring Marion and Yamhill Counties, the rate of net migration to Polk County (17.4) is over 150 percent greater than that of its neighbors, and 287 percent higher than that for the state of Oregon (4.5).<sup>26</sup> That said, economists note that while Polk County is currently experiencing rapid growth, it is predicted to add the fewest number of residents over the long term (between 2005 and 2040) relative to neighboring counties.<sup>27</sup>

**Table 9.3 - Population<sup>25</sup>**

	Year		Percent Change
	2000	2005	
Polk County	62,380	65,670	5.3
Dallas	12,459	14,040	12.7
Falls City	966	960	-0.6
Independence	6,035	7,515	24.5
Monmouth	7,741	8,795	13.6

Polk County’s population tends toward the younger and older age brackets with only a small fraction of residents between the age of 25 and 54.<sup>28</sup> Those in the younger age bracket tend to be affiliated with Western Oregon University in Monmouth, while those in the older age bracket tend to be retirees. The median age is 36.5 years old, nearly 2 years younger than the median age for the state of Oregon. Table 9.4 displays the age distribution for Polk County. As of July 1, 2004, 25 percent of Polk County’s population was under the age of 18. In general, 51 percent of the population in Region 3 - an area that includes Polk County - is younger than 34 years of age. Two explanations for this are the growing Hispanic population, which tends to be much younger than the general population, and the contingent of students affiliated with Western Oregon University.

<sup>25</sup>2004 Oregon Population Report, March 2005, Population Research Center, College of Urban and Public Affairs, Portland State University.

<sup>26</sup> Pat O’Connor, *Regional Profile: Population in Region 3 (Marion, Polk and Yamhill Counties)*, Fall 2005, Oregon Employment Department.

<sup>27</sup> Pat O’Connor, *Regional Profile: Population in Region 3 (Marion, Polk and Yamhill Counties)*, Fall 2005, Oregon Employment Department.

<sup>28</sup> Pat O’Connor, *Regional Profile: Population in Region 3 (Marion, Polk and Yamhill Counties)*, Fall 2005, Oregon Employment Department.



**Table 9.4 - Population by Age<sup>29</sup>**

	Age						
	0-4	5-9	10-17	18-29	30-49	50-64	65+
Polk County	3,814	4,512	8,122	11,003	17,747	10,255	9,497

Oregon Housing and Community Services reports that the number of individuals living in poverty in Polk County increased by 7 percent between 1990 and 2000, with the Oregon Department of Education reporting the poverty rate to be 16.0 percent as of January 2006.<sup>30</sup> Further, these two sources also estimate nearly 900 children under the age of 6 to be living in poverty each year, including nearly 300 of these 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>31</sup>

During the 2004-2005 school year, 40 percent (n=2,547) of students in Polk County were eligible for free or reduced lunch. As displayed in Table 9.5, relative to the previous academic year, this represents nearly a 9 percent decrease in the number of students receiving free or reduced lunch over the one-year period. This decrease was felt especially in the Dallas School District, with the Central School District seeing only a minimal decline.

**Table 9.5 - Free & Reduced Lunch Count<sup>32</sup>**

Polk County	Academic Year	
	2003-2004	2004-2005
Central School District	1,553	1,500
Dallas School District	1,033	853
Falls City School District	117	131
Perrydale School District	86	63
<b>Polk County Total</b>	<b>2,789</b> <b>(43.9%)</b>	<b>2,547</b> <b>(39.9%)</b>

► **DATA ANALYSIS: ELIGIBLE, UNSERVED 3-4 YEAR OLD CHILDREN<sup>33</sup>**

The Oregon Department of Education estimated there to be 1,709 children between the ages of 3 and 4 in Polk County in 2006.<sup>34</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 Polk County, 16.0 percent. Thus, **the total number of eligible**

**Table 9.6 - Estimated Number of Eligible Children**

Polk County	
Total Children	1,709
Percent in Poverty	16.0
<b>Eligible</b>	<b>274</b>

<sup>29</sup>2004 Oregon Population Report, March 2005, Population Research Center, College of Urban and Public Affairs, Portland State University.

<sup>30</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>31</sup> County Comparisons: Incidence and Distribution of Poverty, 2004, Oregon Health and Community Services.

<sup>32</sup> Students Eligible for Free and Reduced Lunch, 2003-2004 & 2004-2005, Oregon Department of Education

<sup>33</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>34</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.



**Head Start children in Polk County is 274 children**, as displayed in Table 9.6

From this, the number of Head Start children currently being served in Polk County by Head Start programs is subtracted. Head Start programs such as Community Action Head Start of Marion and Polk Counties (650 total slots in two counties), Grande Ronde Tribal Head Start (42 total slots in two counties), and Head Start of Yamhill County (187 total slots in two counties) serve a total of 140 children in Polk County between 3 and 4 years of age.<sup>35</sup> Thus, considering the number of eligible Head Start children currently being served, **the total number of unserved, eligible Head Start children is 134 children** as shown in Table 9.7. Thus, 51 percent of eligible Head Start children are currently being served in Polk County.

**Table 9.7 - Estimated Number of Unserved, Eligible Children**

Polk County	
Eligible	274
Served	140
<b>Unserved, Eligible</b>	<b>134</b>

In the sections that follow, the Oregon Child Development Coalition will further refine the estimate in Table 9.7 to provide estimates for the number of unserved, eligible Migrant Seasonal Head Start children in Polk County.

## RACIAL & ETHNIC COMPOSITION

### ► POPULATION & ANCESTRY

Table 9.8 displays the racial and ethnic composition of the population in Polk County.

*“The region’s relatively large Hispanic population helps explain the region’s age class distribution.”*

*-Pat O’Connor  
Regional Economist,  
Oregon Employment Department*

**Table 9.8 - Population by Race, 2000-2005<sup>36</sup>**

Polk County	One Race						Two or More Races	Hispanic
	White	Black	Native Indian	Asian	Native Hawaiian	Some Other Race	---	---
2000	55,639 (89.2%)	263 (0.4%)	1,151 (1.8%)	683 (1.1%)	1,53 (0.2%)	2,792 (4.5%)	1,699 (2.7%)	5,480 (8.8%)
Dallas	11,621	22	222	69	13	173	339	500
Independence	4,447	25	90	35	22	1,185	231	1,818
Monmouth	6,632	71	81	158	57	481	261	753
2005	59,837 (88.2%)	48 (0.1%)	1,621 (2.4%)	972 (1.4%)	---	2,911 (4.3%)	2,484 (3.7%)	6,909 (10.2%)

<sup>35</sup> Total slot counts for individual Head Start programs include Early Head Start and Head Start programs.

<sup>36</sup> *Fact Sheet*, 2000-2005, American Community Survey, United States Census Bureau.

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



Note, the Hispanic population accounts for over 10 percent of Polk County’s population, up from the year 2000.<sup>37</sup> Of the population in Polk County, 93 percent were born in the United States, with 90 percent of the population as monolingual English speakers.<sup>38</sup> Of those born outside of the United States (n=4,024), 4.5 percent are currently not U.S. citizens, with 6.7 percent having entered the United States between 1990 and 2000, and 61 percent of those born outside of the United States coming from Latin America. Accordingly, aside from English and relative to other languages, 7.1 percent of the population identified as primary Spanish speakers (n=4,164).<sup>39</sup> Of these, more than one-half self-identified as able to speak English less than “very well.”

► **PROFILE OF PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS<sup>40</sup>**

In 2004, 121 children were enrolled in the Migrant Seasonal Head Start program on the basis of public assistance or income eligibility. Table 9.9 displays the age distribution for children enrolled in the Migrant Seasonal Head Start program. Overall, nearly all 150 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. A small contingent of enrolled children (n=25) was either biracial or multiracial. Lastly, the majority of program participants were primary Spanish speakers, with an additional 7 program participants as primary English speakers.

**Table 9.9 - Enrolled of Children by Age**

Age	Number of Children
<1	4
1	14
2	16
3	30
4	43
5	43
<b>Total</b>	<b>150</b>

► **DATA ANALYSIS: ELIGIBLE, UNSERVED MIGRANT CHILDREN<sup>41</sup>**

The Oregon Child Development Coalition has developed a method for estimating the number of children of migrant and seasonal farmworkers in Polk 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. The estimates in Table 9.10 suggest that there

**Table 9.10 - Estimated Migrant and Seasonal Children**

Polk County		
Age	Number Migrant Children	Number Seasonal Children
<1	---	18
1	3	16
2	8	16
3	16	16
4	15	16
5	20	16
<b>Total<sup>42</sup></b>	<b>62</b>	<b>98</b>

<sup>37</sup> Pat O’Connor, *Regional Profile: Population in Region 3 (Marion, Polk and Yamhill Counties)*, Fall 2005, Oregon Employment Department.

<sup>38</sup> *DP-2: Profile of Selected Social Characteristics, 2000*, United States Census Bureau.

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

<sup>40</sup> Data is taken from the *Program Information Report, 2004 & 2005*, Oregon Child Development Coalition.

<sup>41</sup> See Appendix C1.3

<sup>42</sup> Totals vary due to rounding.



were 62 migrant children and 98 seasonal children in Polk County in 2005.

To estimate the number of unserved, eligible Migrant Seasonal Head Start children, the number of children currently being served in Polk County by the Oregon Child Development Coalition’s Migrant Seasonal Head Start program is subtracted from the estimates in Table 9.10. The Oregon Child Development Coalition of Polk County serves 138 Head Start eligible children through the Migrant Seasonal Head Start Program, 100 of which are migrant children and 38 of which are seasonal children. Thus, the total number of unserved, eligible Migrant Seasonal Head Start children in Polk County is 60 children and is broken down in Table 9.11. Overall, roughly **75 percent of eligible Migrant Seasonal Head Start children are currently being served in Polk County.**

**Table 9.11 - Unserved, Eligible MHS Children in Polk County**

Polk County		
	Number Migrant Children	Number Seasonal Children
Eligible	~62	~98
Served	100	38
<b><i>Unserved, Eligible</i></b>	<b><i>~0</i></b>	<b><i>~60</i></b>

Results of the above analysis indicate that the Oregon Child Development Coalition in Polk County could serve more seasonal children assuming that the agency had both the means and the capacity. Additionally, in light of acceptable transportation times per Head Start Performance Standards, having only one program center in Independence limits the ability to recruit outside of the Independence area.

**STRENGTHS & NEEDS**

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

► **EDUCATION**

Adult Education

The median level of education in Polk County is some college, no degree, with 25 percent of the total population having earned a bachelor’s degree or higher.<sup>43</sup> Relative to other counties in Oregon with a similar median level of education, Polk County residents tend to be better educated than residents from surrounding counties. Data from the Oregon Department of Education show total public school enrollment in Polk County to be approximately 6,355 students annually, 24 percent of which are non-white.<sup>44</sup> Across all high schools in Polk County, the total number of high school dropouts is 73 students with an 11.1 percent high school dropout

<sup>43</sup> DP-2: Profile of Selected Social Characteristics, 2000, United States Census Bureau.

<sup>44</sup> Oregon Department of Education, 2004-2005.



rate over the past four years.<sup>45</sup> The Oregon Department of Education also reports that while zero students dropped out of high school during the 2003-2004 school year specifically because they did not speak English well enough, 3 students dropped out citing a lack of adequate parental support in pursuing their high school degree.

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

- Chemeketa Community College provides staff and parent trainings. The college's Economic and Training Development Center also provides GED and ESL courses to 60 students annually, as well as conversational and command Spanish to nearly 300 students annually.
- The Polk County Commission on Children and Families has indicated that they are engaged in a continuous gap analysis project to identify needs in the community. They also emphasized a focus on bringing in more culturally appropriate resources for parents.
- The Polk County Public Library offers a Conversation Hour in Spanish, as well as provides Spanish books and resources. Currently, the library is awaiting news of a grant which would bring computer classes to the library, as well as additional parenting and nutrition programs.
- Somos Hispanics Unidos is a new non-profit organization focusing on literacy, ESL, domestic violence, citizenship and volunteerism.

Representatives from the above agencies were surveyed to determine the greatest educational needs of children and families in the Polk County area. In the area of adult education, respondents emphasized the need for additional ESL and GED courses in the community. Such calls were echoed by parents of program participants who noted that, in light of transportation barriers, they are often unable to self-transport into Salem for these classes. Local service providers noted that classes need to be offered at convenient times for families with work schedules in light of the fact that most classes are currently offered while families are in the fields. Parents also expressed some confusion around how to obtain professional training and certification for those spouses of farmworkers who were not employed in agriculture.

Data on the educational attainment of parents of program participants from the Oregon Child Development Coalition's Program Information Report show that 79 percent of parents served by the Oregon Child Development Coalition in Polk County have less than a high school degree. And, in fact, of all families served by the Oregon Child Development Coalition in Polk County, none are enrolled in either job training or school, suggesting that seasonal agricultural work and low wages require that both parents work to make ends meet.<sup>46</sup>

In general, respondents also indicated that an opportunity exists for the Oregon Child Development Coalition in Polk County serve as an informational hub in relaying information to the migrant population. One respondent noted that it is difficult to get information directly to families working in agriculture and that their agency could benefit from greater collaborative efforts with the Oregon Child Development Coalition in this area.

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<sup>45</sup> Oregon Department of Education, 2003.

<sup>46</sup> *Program Information Report*, 2004, Oregon Child Development Coalition.



## Early Childhood Education

In the area of early childhood education, the Oregon Child Development Coalition has an interagency agreement with Head Start programs in the area, including Community Action Head Start of Marion and Polk Counties, currently funded to serve 650 children. In an interview with the director of Community Action Head Start it was noted that they plan to serve more children in Polk County - specifically, in the Independence area - and are looking to develop a formal referral process with the Oregon Child Development Coalition in Polk County. Other programs that serve the migrant population include Migrant Education. Seasonal and age-specific enrollment counts are displayed in Table 9.12 for the Willamette ESD. On the basis of these figures, it is worth pointing out that summer programs for migrant families are inadequate in the sense that only about 31 percent of migrant children continue to be served by Migrant Education in the summer.

Partnerships in the area of early childhood education include:

- Community Action Head Start of Marion and Polk Counties (Region X Head Start) and the Oregon Child Development Coalition of Polk County have developed an interagency agreement, which focuses on jointly implementing strategies in such areas as recruitment, transitions, health, disabilities, and training and technical assistance.
- Located on the campus of Western Oregon University, the Teaching Research Early Childhood and Training Department improves the quality of education for young children through the study, development and demonstration of innovative models of service. They provide a variety of training opportunities to educators, administrators, paraprofessional and related service personnel.
- The Independence School District provides the Migrant Education program (40 slots), conducts joint grant writing, and shares childcare workers.
- The Central School District's Literacy Coordinator provides the school's literacy program to children enrolled in the Migrant Seasonal Head Start program.
- The Polk County Public Library provides a number of kids programs, including Kid's Hour, to promote literacy and parent involvement.
- The Oregon Child Development Coalition in Polk County has continued to develop partnerships with local elementary schools, including Henry Hill Elementary School with whom the agency is working on a shared space agreement.

*"[We] have to take a critical look at literacy skills -- if we don't close the gap for kids...they'll spend all their time trying to catch up in middle and high school."*

*-Joseph Hunter  
Superintendent, Central School District*

**Table 9.12 - Migrant Education Enrollment<sup>47</sup>**

Polk County	2004-2005	
	Willamette ESD	
Regular Enrollment	3,736	
Summer Enrollment	1,154	
<b>Total Enrollment</b>	<b>4,890</b>	
<1 year old	---	
1	1	3
2	1	8
3	1	16
4	1	15
5	1	1
<b>Total Enrollment</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>43</b>

<sup>47</sup> Oregon's Migrant Education Regional Programs, 2004-2005, Oregon Department of Education.



Representatives from the above agencies were surveyed to determine the greatest educational needs of children and families in the Polk County area. In the area of early childhood education, respondents highlighted that nearly 50 percent of eligible Head Start children are currently unserved; thus, the need for more [Head Start] slots, especially for infants and toddlers.

Additionally, parents of program participants indicated that they wish to spend more time volunteering in the classroom as both a strategy for promoting greater parent involvement and possibly gaining employment with the agency. Additionally, parents who are more familiar with the Migrant Seasonal Head Start program also noted that the level parent involvement is proportionate to the number the opportunities for involvement, as well as the level of clarity around specific roles and responsibilities. Parents also suggested that consequences of sort be imposed on those parents currently not involved as a strategy for increasing the level of parent involvement in the classroom.

## ► MENTAL HEALTH & DISABILITIES

Access to care is limited by the fact that many Polk County residents are low-income. In fact, the Health Resources and Safety Administration has identified Polk County as a mental health professional shortage area due in large part to the number of low-income families in the area.<sup>48</sup> Related to this, service providers - mental health and otherwise - emphasized the increasing use of methamphetamines among Polk County residents over the past few years which currently ranks as the second most used illicit drug in Polk County behind marijuana.<sup>49</sup> Accordingly, the Oregon Department of Corrections reports 188 persons incarcerated for drugs as of January of 2006.

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 1,125 children with some sort of mental health issue in Polk County under the age of 18, of which 338 are estimated to suffer from co-occurring disorders.<sup>50</sup> Overall, approximately 1300 adults and 600 children receive some form of community based mental health care in Polk County each year.<sup>51</sup>

Data from the Oregon Child Development Coalition's Program Information Report show that 5 children in Polk County were provided mental health services in 2004, with 3 of these children also receiving referrals for additional services. On average, mental health professionals spent 2 hours per month on-site. Likewise, **5 children were determined to have a disability, roughly 13 percent of enrolled seasonal children and 3 percent of enrolled migrant children in 2005.** Of these 5 children, each was determined eligible to receive special education and related services.

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<sup>48</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>49</sup> *Oregon Data Book*, 2003, Oregon Department of Human Services, Office of Mental Health and Addiction Services.

<sup>50</sup> *Oregon Data Book*, 2003, Oregon Department of Human Services, Office of Mental Health and Addiction Services.

<sup>51</sup> *Oregon Data Book*, 2003, Oregon Department of Human Services, Office of Mental Health and Addiction Services.



Primary disabilities included non-categorical developmental delays and speech or language impairments.<sup>52</sup>

The following is a breakdown of the agencies providing services - both in the areas of mental health and disabilities - to children in Polk County.

- The Oregon Child Development Coalition in Polk County shares an interagency agreement with Willamette ESD.
- Additionally, the Mid-Oregon Regional EI/ECSE program works to provide services to children with disabilities in Marion and Polk Counties.
- Northwest Human Services operates the West Salem Mental Health Clinic and also has a program for the deaf and hard of hearing. They note that approximately 21 percent of their clients are served in a language other than English.
- Oregon Parent Training and Information Center provides advocacy information for children with disabilities and training for parents in transitioning their children with special needs to kindergarten.
- The Polk County Mental Health Department provides consultation services for children with mental health concerns. Per contractual agreement, PCMH also provides training to parents and staff on mental health topics.
- The Oregon Child Development Coalition in Polk County participates in the Early Childhood Advisory Group with other public and private service providers to streamline the referral process.
- Juntos Podemos also works with children with disabilities in the Salem area.

Representatives from the above agencies were surveyed to determine the greatest mental health and disabilities needs of children and families in the Polk County area. Respondents indicated that they tend to experience high no-show rates among the farmworker population for a number of reasons, including transportation in getting families to appointments and limited comprehension on the part of clients about the referral process and the need for continued follow-up.

An interview with the Mental Health and Disabilities Coordinator for the Oregon Child Development Coalition in Polk County revealed that while referral processes are in place with the local ESD, there is often a lengthy wait time. Accordingly, efforts are being made to work collaboratively with a number of service providers to streamline this process. One strategy mentioned during this interview included expanding the number of contracted providers to include the Polk County Mental Health Department.

During a focus group with parents of program participants, parents strongly emphasized the need for targeted services to children and families who have experienced loss of some sort. Parents noted that while there are a number of classes available to them - parenting, living skills and parent involvement - parents and children would also benefit from classes that addressed newly emerging issues such as loss and grief.

## ► **HEALTH & NUTRITION**

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<sup>52</sup> *Program Information Report, 2004 & 2005, Oregon Child Development Coalition.*



In August of 2005, the Oregon Office of Rural Health released a report identifying migrant and seasonal farmworkers as a medically underserved population in eastern Polk County, including the areas surrounding Independence, Oregon.<sup>53</sup> This report confirms others released by the Oregon Department of Human Services, identifying both medical and dental shortages in this area, as well as migrant and seasonal farmworkers as a medically underserved population.<sup>54</sup> In 2004, there was less than 1 doctor for every 1,000 residents in Polk County.<sup>55</sup> Approximately 18.4 percent of the population is without any form of health insurance, with some institutions such as the Oregon Health and Sciences University reporting that, of the 25,722 visits from Polk County residents in 2004, 46 percent were only partially or not reimbursable.<sup>56</sup>

In the preceding section, children's mental health was discussed and it was noted that children's mental health is often tied to a number of risk factors including poverty status, low birth weight, abuse and neglect, and family history.<sup>57</sup> Over the past several years, the number of live births with low-birth rate has increased in Polk County. In 2004, the rate of low birth was 64.2 (n=53), whereas in 2001, the rate of low birth had been as low as 50.5 (n=38).<sup>58</sup> A similar trend is noted for live births with the frequency of very low birth weight increasing by 11 percent between 2001 and 2004.<sup>59</sup>

The increasing rate of low-birth may in part be due to limited resources focusing on prenatal care. In 2004, 7 percent of live births in Polk County were also identified as lacking adequate prenatal care, a rate that is significantly different from the rate for the state of Oregon of 5.8.<sup>60</sup> Since 2001, this figure represents a 61 percent increase in the number of live births with inadequate prenatal care. It is also noted that the percent of live births with inadequate prenatal care among Hispanics (8.7 percent statewide) is generally higher than that of non-Hispanics.<sup>61</sup> Thus, the increase in the percent of live births with inadequate prenatal care, while to be interpreted cautiously, may reflect actual disparities in care.

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

- The Oregon State WIC program serves 1,493 children under the age 5 and 624 pregnant women annually, with 60 percent of those served in Polk County at or below the poverty level.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> *Oregon Medically Underserved Areas/Populations (MUA/MUP)*, 2005, Oregon Office of Rural Health.

<sup>54</sup> *Oregon Health Professional Shortage Areas, Dental Designations as of 2/28/2006*, Health Resources and Services Administration, Bureau of Health Professionals.

<sup>55</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>56</sup> *2004 Percentage Without Health Insurance by Region*, 2004, Oregon Office of Rural Health.

*OHSU and Polk County Statistics*, 2004, Oregon Health and Sciences University.

<sup>57</sup> Note, individual risk factors are discussed in Health and Family Services sections of this assessment.

<sup>58</sup> *Live Births with Low Birthweight by County, Oregon Residents, 2001-2004*, Oregon Department of Human Services.

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

<sup>60</sup> *Prenatal Care by Mother's County of Residents, Oregon Residents, 2004*, Oregon Department of Human Services.

<sup>61</sup> *Prenatal Care by Mother's Race and Ethnicity, Oregon Residents, 2004*, Oregon Department of Human Services.

<sup>62</sup> *2005 WIC Facts*, 2005, Oregon WIC Program, Oregon Department of Human Services.



- The Polk County Health Department provides core public health services, including family planning, disease prevention, investigation, immunization, environmental health, home visiting, and maternal child health.
- The Oregon Health and Sciences University provides patient care and education in Polk County, receiving nearly 6,000 visits annually, 46 percent of which were only partially or not reimbursable.
- Operated by the Oregon Health and Sciences University, Doernbecher's Children's Hospital and Clinics reports 1,627 "incidents of service" in Polk County in 2004.
- Northwest Human Services operates three medical and dental clinics throughout the Salem area. In 2005, they served nearly 2,000 children under the age of 6. Nearly one-third of their client base is Hispanic or Latino.
- Linda Mann, RDH, applies fluoride varnish to all children enrolled in the program at very low cost. She also offers parent and staff education at no cost.
- Marion-Polk Community Medical provides transportation services to those clients with the Oregon Health Plan.
- The Salem and West Valley Hospitals also provide education and outreach, as well as emergency services to the general community. The Salem Hospital also operates a birthing center for the uninsured and provides help at low cost for imaging studies.
- The Polk County Public Health Department offers prenatal care for uninsured pregnant women with referrals for those high-risk patients to local obstetricians at low cost. They also give support to families to apply for Oregon Health Plan benefits for the delivery.
- Dr. Roseanne Knowles, an optometrist in Independence, has evaluated several children with abnormal eye screenings, as well as provides exams and prescription lenses. Currently, the Oregon Child Development Coalition in Polk County is working to coordinate interpretation services.
- Dr. Evan Evans offers audiology services at low cost in Independence for families.
- The Lions Club in Independence offers resources for vision and hearing testing and lenses for low-income families, covering 33 percent of the cost. This resource is available for both children and adults. The Lions Club also organizes health fairs at least twice per year, with free health screenings and multiple local resources.
- The Oregon Child Development Coalition in Polk County is increasing participation with the Oregon Health Action Campaign to work on legislative efforts around sliding scale fees.
- The Benton County Health Department has the closest Federal funded free clinic available for those uninsured. They offer exams, laboratory and imaging at low cost or free if patients cannot afford it.

Representatives from the above agencies were surveyed to determine the greatest medical and dental needs of children and families in the Polk County area. Providers overwhelmingly emphasized difficulties around recruiting qualified doctors and pediatric dentists who are bilingual and bicultural. Respondents also noted that, in some cases, family support systems could be improved to ensure that patients have the necessary support in place to make lifestyle changes to improve their health and well-being.

Other needs and barriers mentioned include that of working collaboratively with other agencies to reach out to the farmworker population. Due to current funding streams, medical and dental



providers are under increasing scrutiny to document employment and legal status. Thus, a need exists for joint outreach and recruiting, as well as providing families with the information and resources necessary to obtain proper documentation. According to one provider, in several instances, clients' inability to provide documentation has made them ineligible for medical and dental assistance.

*"Poverty does not respect race or ethnicity."*

*-Executive Director  
Local service provider  
Marion & Polk Counties*

In the area of partnerships, Northwest Human Services has indicated a desire to work with the Oregon Child Development Coalition in Polk County to develop educational materials focused on the importance of late obstetrical (OB) care. Other opportunities mentioned during interviews include the continued building and expansion of current partnerships with WIC, local dentists, and local hospitals.

Data from the Oregon Child Development Coalition's Program Information report show that 102 children entered the Migrant Seasonal Head Start program in Polk County in 2005 with health insurance, up by 1 percent from 2004.<sup>63</sup> The majority of those with some form of insurance were covered by Medicaid (n=97), while a few others were covered by private insurance. For those without health insurance, the Oregon Child Development Coalition has worked with families to reduce the number of children without health insurance by 2 percent following enrollment. Additionally, most children (n=79) receive services through a migrant community health center with common health conditions including anemia, obesity, and vision problems.

In 2005, following dental screenings, 23 children were identified as needing continued dental treatment and care. An interview with the Health Manager for the Oregon Child Development Coalition in Polk County revealed concerns around limited pediatric dental care in the area, a problem currently being addressed by targeted recruitment efforts of local providers. It was also noted that about one-half of enrolled children this year are anemic, prompting the Health Manager to continue to work with WIC to not only expand educational resources, but also treatment options. Additional needs identified include the fact that Polk County has limited prenatal services for uninsured mothers, a gap that is complicated by additional concerns around the lack of bilingual providers in the county.

A focus group with parents of program participants revealed that while parents did not identify any barriers to health and dental care, they would benefit from efforts designed to educate them about how to navigate the system. Parents distinguished between the need to be referred and the need to be educated, suggesting that future partnership opportunities should address both components.

## ► **FAMILY SERVICES**

In 2004, the Oregon Department of Human Services released figures estimating the number of child abuse victims in Polk County to be 104, a 46 percent increase from the previous year.<sup>64</sup>

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

<sup>64</sup> *The State of Children in Oregon's Child Protective System, 2004*, Oregon Department of Human Services.



These figures amount to approximately 11 child abuse victims per 1,000 children. Additionally, shelter counts in Region 3 - an area which includes Polk County - show that 174 children under the age of 6 spent one or more nights in a shelter in 2005, with the total number of actual *child nights* equal to 5,547.<sup>65</sup> These regional figures are the second highest in Oregon, with over 15 percent of those receiving shelter services for 30 days or more.

Each month in Polk County, over 2,100 individuals receive food stamps, with over 300 receiving TANF cash assistance. Figure 9.5 displays the above figures over time. According to the Oregon Department of Human Services, between 2005 and 2006, the number of TANF cases has decreased by nearly 17 percent, while the number of food stamp cases as increased by nearly 68 percent over the same period.

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

- The Oregon Child Development Coalition in Hood Polk 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 Polk County providing social and health related services to children, adults and families, as well as to seniors and people with disabilities.
- The SABLE House provides shelter services in Polk County to victims of domestic violence.
- Marion Polk Food Share provides 34 food pantries, 18 emergency meal programs and 5 supplemental programs. Each month, 62,390 food boxes are distributed, serving some 19,987 individuals.<sup>66</sup> Currently, Marion Polk Food Share is working on additional programs, including community gardens and *Grow A Row*.
- Polk County Healthy Start provides one-time and intensive home visitation services for first time parents.
- Mid Willamette Valley Community Action Agency provides 10 core services focusing on information and referral and housing assistance, serving over 15,000 clients annually.
- The Oregon Employment Department provides information and referral services, as well as job placement and training in collaboration with other service agencies.
- Northwest Human Services operates the Homeless Outreach and Advocacy Project (HOPE) and the HOST Youth Family Program, serving nearly 700 homeless clients in 2005.
- The Ella Curen Center in Independence is a dependable resource for families that are in need of food and diapers.
- The Oregon Child Development Coalition in Polk County is involved with the Hispanic Advisory Committees of Polk, Linn and Benton Counties.

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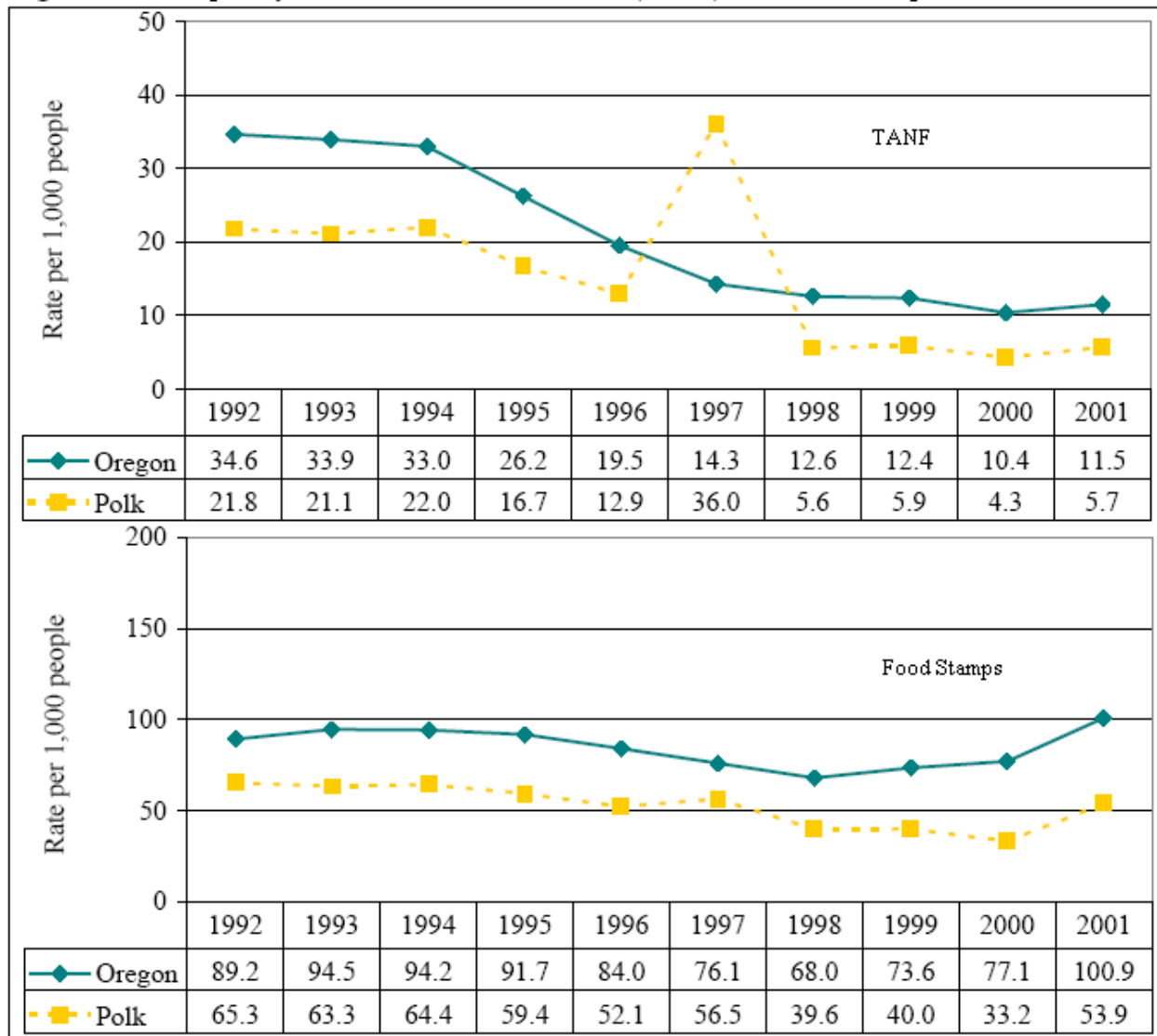
Figure 9.5 – *Polk County Data Book*, 2002, Office of Mental Health and Addiction Services, Oregon Department of Human Services.

<sup>65</sup> *Summary of Services Provided by Domestic and Sexual Violence Service Programs Funded by DHS*, 2005, Oregon Department of Human Services.

<sup>66</sup> *Regional Food Banks at a Glance*, 2005, Oregon Food Bank.



**Figure 9.5 - Temporary Assistance to Need Families (TANF) and Food Stamps**



Representatives from the above agencies were surveyed to determine the greatest family services needs of children and families in the Polk County area. Providers identified affordable housing, transportation and affordable medical care as the three most critical needs facing children and families in Polk County. Additionally, in light of Independence’s growing population, service providers are hearing from their clients that they often feel isolated from the larger community. In the words of one provider, “Many of the families are not comfortable [and do not] feel that they fit into these middle class groups.”

In 2005, 8 percent of all families served by the Oregon Child Development Coalition in Polk County identified as single parent families. In each case was the parent or guardian employed; whereas, of the total number of two-parent families, only 37 percent had both partners in the workforce.<sup>67</sup> In 2005, 2 families received benefits under the TANF program. In addition, the

<sup>67</sup> Program Information Report, 2004 & 2005, Oregon Child Development Coalition.



Migrant Seasonal Head Start program responded to a range of family needs, the most common being health education, transportation assistance, parenting education and ESL.

Interviews with the Family Service Manager and Parent Involvement Coordinators for the Oregon Child Development Coalition in Polk County revealed that more trainings are needed in the areas of parenting, fatherhood involvement and family planning, a call that was echoed by parents of program participants. The Family Service Manager especially emphasized the need for family planning as a way to build on similar efforts currently being undertaken by social service providers in Latin America.

In the area of recruitment, staff suggested that the current center location in Independence inhibits the recruitment of unserved families in other areas (e.g., Dallas, NE Salem and SE Salem) given Head Start Performance Standards around acceptable transportation times. In addition, staff are seeing a need for a greater number of slots for seasonal families, as well as slots to accommodate more toddlers.

► **CHILDCARE**

The Oregon Childcare Research Partnership lists a total of 125 certified childcare providers in Polk County, with approximately 1,491 childcare slots. These figures translate into 13 childcare slots for every 100 children, 12 slots short of the state benchmark of 25 childcare slots per 100 children.<sup>68</sup>

Depending on family type, the Oregon Childcare Research Partnership found that nearly 51 percent of some families with children under the age of 13 use some form of paid childcare in Polk County, with 35 percent of all children enrolled in some form of paid childcare. In addition, the report found that families use on average nearly 39 hours of paid childcare per week.

**Table 9.13 - Childcare Costs by Type of Care**

Childcare costs in Region A - an area that includes most of Polk County - are the highest 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	\$2.39	\$393	\$2.66	\$424	\$3.29	\$526
Toddler	\$2.12	\$361	\$2.39	\$382	\$3.18	\$509
Pre K	\$2.12	\$340	\$2.22	\$359	\$2.34	\$372

9.13. Researchers from Oregon State University found a statistically significant difference in childcare costs between Region A and other regions of the state of Oregon, suggesting a unique childcare market in this area.<sup>69</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 Polk County.

<sup>68</sup> *Estimated Supply of Childcare in Oregon as of July 1, 2004*, April 26, 2005, Oregon Childcare Research Partnership.

<sup>69</sup> *2004 Oregon Childcare Market Rate Study*, August 2004, Oregon State University Family Policy Program, Oregon Childcare Research Partnership.



In 2004, 125 children in the Migrant Seasonal Head Start program received childcare in the home of a relative or acquainted adult.<sup>70</sup> Individual interviews with county management team members for the Oregon Child Development Coalition in Polk County revealed that childcare is an issue currently affecting all service areas given the recent switch to a 6 hour day for the agency's long-term program.

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

- Child Care Information Services in Marion and Polk Counties makes approximately 2,000 referrals annually. They also provide trainings to local childcare providers.
- There are 11 certified childcare centers and 83 family childcare homes - 8 of which have identified as Spanish as their primary language - operating in Polk County. In addition, there are an unspecified number of exempt childcare providers.

Representatives from the above agencies were surveyed to determine the greatest childcare needs of children and families in the Polk County area. Considerable emphasis was placed on the need for quality child care in Polk County. One respondent indicated that they were exploring training options to equip parents with information about how to identify quality childcare, as well as providers with information about how to accommodate special needs children. Additionally, it was noted that more child care slots are needed for infants and toddlers.

Also of interest was that Child Care Information Services is continuing to explore ways to recruit qualified providers. The declining center-based child care supply has moved this service to develop better materials to recruit home-based providers, including better quality trainings and other educational opportunities such as helping providers work towards their Child Development Associates (CDA) degree.

Parents of program participants also expressed frustration that providers sometimes raise prices without notice. One parent, in particular, noted that she has currently worked with 5 providers this year simply because hours and fees change without warning. In addition, several parents expressed an interest in learning more about becoming certified childcare providers, a need that was also expressed by Child Care Information Services, namely - the recruitment of additional [Spanish speaking] providers.

## ► **TRANSPORTATION & HOUSING**

In an interview with the County Director of the Oregon Child Development Coalition in Polk County, it was noted that more and more families are moving to the Salem area. Such a shift raises obvious questions around the feasibility of self-transport and the Migrant Seasonal Head Start program providing transportation services. Currently, enrolled families in the Migrant Seasonal Head Start program living the Salem area have elected to self-transport to a local shopping center so that their children can meet the bus. And, while this works for some families, those without some form of transportation remain unserved.

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



The above discussion is further complicated by the lack of public transportation services in Polk County. For those attempting to commute from the Salem area, there are several impediments. First, while local transportation providers are attempting to increase routes in NE and SE Salem, both areas are currently underserved. Second, as noted by parents of program participants, it takes approximately one hour to travel from Salem to Independence, a distance of less than 15 miles. For those working in the fields or packing houses, they simply do not have an additional two hours to spend on a round trip to the Independence area and back.

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

- Cherriots provides transportation services in and around the Salem metro area. They are currently working to boost ridership on poorly performing routes, as well as increase services in targeted areas.
- Chemeketa Area Regional Transportation (CARTS) is operated by Wheels Community Transportation, offering two fixed routes and Dial-a-Ride services in Polk County, serving over 8,000 children and youth annually.
- The Central School District provides maintenance for school busses and center van.

Representatives from the above agencies were surveyed to determine the greatest transportation needs in Polk County. Transportation providers expressed that they have experienced difficulties communicating with their riders. Aside from developing materials in Spanish, they have struggled to return to the level of outreach and education that they once were able to provide prior to the funding cuts. Come next fall, Cherriots is looking for additional support from a ballot measure which would provide more outreach and customer service staff. The measure had failed the year prior due to less than 50 percent voter turn out.

Related to the earlier discussion of childcare, it may be helpful to get a sense of the location of childcare providers relative to where families live in order to demonstrate the challenges that transportation providers face. Appendix C9.2 contains a map of locations of low-income housing complexes, manufactured home parks and farm labor camps in Polk County.

- At least 3 apartment complexes in Polk County cater to low-income and farmworker families, including the current construction of Colonia Amistad.
- There are 16 manufactured home parks in Polk County, 5 of which are located in the Independence area.
- There are 3 farm labor camps in Polk County operated by multiple growers. Together, these camps are able to accommodate 112 individuals.
- The Farmworker Housing Development Corporation works to develop farmworker leadership for stronger and more secure families and communities through affordable housing, social services, education and economic development. Currently, FHDC is working on Colonia Amistad, a farmworker housing complex, off of Gun Club Road near Independence.
- Habitat for Humanity of the Mid-Willamette Valley also works to provide affordable housing.

In general, there is a shortage of affordable housing in Polk County. In a recent housing assessment prepared by CASA of Oregon, it was concluded that farmworking families need larger units with more bedrooms to accommodate larger family sizes. Given long waiting lists



and high rents, families are often forced to share apartments with one another. Additional barriers identified in this assessment include the lack of resources to pay fees and deposits associated with renting a unit (e.g., last month’s rent, application fees, etc.).

A focus group with parents of program participants revealed that parents pay between \$325 and \$525 per month to rent a two-bedroom apartment. In one case, several families shared a rental house with rent totaling \$1,300 per month. Parents were cautious about estimating the percentage of their household income spent on rent because their income tends to vary depending on crop conditions, harvests and the labor supply.

Other issues mentioned during this focus group included the need for continued education around tenant rights. Several parents recalled instances where they believe their rights as tenants were compromised and, in some cases, denied them. However, at the time, with only limited knowledge of the rights and the legal process, they were in essence forced from their residence.

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

**Figure 9.6 Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats**

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Bilingual, bicultural parent and staff trainings are recognized as a resource in the community.</li> <li>* Community partners view the agency as an information hub in messaging to the migrant population.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Interviews with community agencies revealed evidence of segmentation among service providers; thus, follow up and appropriate response times could be improved.</li> <li>* Service providers expressed that they have experienced difficulties in reaching out to and educating the migrant population.</li> </ul>
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Opportunities exist in continuing to educate parents. Parties internal and external to the agency - including parents - identified the need for more resources, more classes - in short, more education.</li> <li>* Partners and community agencies emphasized the need to formalize agreements as a way to ensure greater continuity of services and follow up.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Explosive population growth in the Independence area not on threatens agricultural lands, but also to displace low-income and farmworking families.</li> <li>* More migrant families are moving to the Salem area, an area that is currently difficult for the agency to serve in light of transportation times and service area boundaries.</li> </ul>



## ► **KEY RECOMMENDATIONS BY SERVICE AREA**

The following 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 of Polk 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 Polk County**

**Observation:** The composition of the migrant population in Polk County is more complicated than the numbers show, with estimates showing an inflated number of migrant families in the area.

**Recommendation:** Build relationships with local growers and grower's associations to not only predict the number of farmworkers in the area year to year, but also allocate slots accordingly and in light of the fact the composition of the labor supply is changing and adapting in light of the changing agricultural industry in Polk County.

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

**Observation:** In general, there are limited resources available to meet the educational need of both adults and children.

**Recommendation:** Service providers highlighted the need for increasing collaborative efforts in the community to both identify existing resources and develop joint strategies to service gaps (e.g., GED and ESL courses, as well as the limited number of Head Start slots).

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

**Observation:** The agency continues to building collaborative working relationships with mental health consultants and ESDs.

**Recommendation:** In light of emerging issues mentioned by parents, educate new and existing partners about these needs to inform services and develop collaborative responses the compliment existing processes.

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



**Observation:** There is shortage of vital medical and dental services to the uninsured and the underinsured in Polk County, with migrant and seasonal farmworkers as an underserved population.

**Recommendation:** The influx of residents into Polk County - many of which are paraprofessionals - may help offset existing service gaps. Thus, as the agency is doing with local dental providers, continue targeted recruitment efforts, perhaps involving local community organizations and faith groups.

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

**Observation:** Like other areas in the state that are growing rapidly, there is seemingly a widening gap between those in Polk County with and without means.

**Recommendation:** Identify community efforts which are, first and foremost, concerned with the integration of low-income and farmworking families. Such efforts may include greater opportunities for education in the community and community events.

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

**Observation:** Child Care Information Services is working to counter a shortage of quality childcare providers by recruiting new providers and providing incentives for completing the certification process.

**Recommendation:** Continue to collaborate with Child Care Information Services to identify parents who may wish to become certified childcare providers, and work to develop joint training and educational opportunities to promote this.

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

**Observation:** There is a need to connect transportation providers to parents, as both providers and parents have expressed a desire to learn more about available bus routes and transportation services in their area.

**Recommendation:** Continue to create educational opportunities for parents by not only bringing in outreach workers from transportation providers, but also by participating in their processes (e.g., focus groups and planning meetings) toward expanding routes and other services.



## **SUMMARY**

The Oregon Child Development Coalition in Polk County is viewed as a leader in the community. Thus, it is of vital importance that the agency expand its partnerships as a way to continue advocating for children and families. Part of this will involve working collaboratively to further specify exactly what type of farmworkers (e.g., single men, families who have just moved to the area but plan to stay, etc.) are electing to call Polk County home. What is clear is that limited resources and changing population demographics threaten to isolate farmworking families and, over the long run, force them to other areas (e.g., Salem) where more resources are available, but also where it becomes more difficult to serve them given the current program center location in Independence.

