



A Vital Bridge with the Community

PeaceHealth Sacred Heart Medical Center at RiverBend

2025 Community Health Needs Assessment

Our report to the community

The importance of a Community Health Needs Assessment

Every three years, each PeaceHealth location conducts a Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) as required by the 2010 Patient Care and Affordable Care Act.

Tax-exempt hospitals like ours — as defined by IRS Section 501(r) — use the CHNA to report current community needs, statistics and activities. We are also expected to develop an Implementation Strategy outlining our plans to improve the health and well-being of the communities we serve.

We see our CHNA report and Implementation Strategy as much more than a requirement or obligation. Through this narrative, we are presenting the story of our dedication and service to the community and people we serve. Beyond traditional medical services and care, we are committed to helping people in need.

Click to view previous editions of our [CHNA](#) and [Implementation Strategy](#).

What is our community needs assessment process?

We conducted a thorough review of publicly reported data from national, state, and local sources to assess our community's needs. We convened community stakeholders from multiple sectors to review the data and provide feedback on community-wide needs. Our data collection and analysis were completed in the fall of 2024.

Our key findings

Our assessment aligns with national trends and often indicates that the challenges and priorities being faced locally are part of broader, widespread issues.

Our assessment identified a critical call for improved health equity for the Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) and Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Queer plus (LGBTQ+) communities, those living in rural and remote areas and other vulnerable and at-risk members of our community.

Investment in housing availability and affordability for families was a key theme, as well as supporting housing access and options for our unhoused and medically fragile community members. Access to healthcare, getting care in a timely manner, wrap-around services for frequent healthcare utilizers and individuals in crisis and transportation for healthcare needs were highlighted. We further identified the need for access to mental health care and substance abuse treatment and prevention, noting a concerning trend of worsening mental health among Lane County residents, especially youth. The need for support services, including childcare and after-school programming, food security and access to healthy food, was noted.

Our assessment also acknowledged a decrease in the workforce and subsequent strain on filling crucial roles in our community.

We hear these needs, and we are committed to leveraging our resources, funding, voices and partnership to address disparities and gaps to provide whole-person care in Lane County.

Who we are and what we believe in

Since its opening in 1936, Sacred Heart Medical Center has served the healthcare needs of Lane County residents. Today, PeaceHealth Sacred Heart Medical Center at RiverBend is a cutting-edge tertiary care medical facility and level II trauma center. Clinics in the Eugene-Springfield area provide a comprehensive array of primary and specialized medical services to further support the community's healthcare needs.

Situated along the McKenzie River in the beautiful Willamette Valley in Springfield, Oregon, PeaceHealth Sacred Heart Medical Center at RiverBend serves as a vital bridge to our rapidly growing and increasingly diverse surrounding community. That is why PeaceHealth — as the region's major hospital system, including our medical groups and network of primary and specialty clinics — must provide equal access to high-quality, appropriate and integrated community care. With a focus on serving the needs of each patient, from hospital care to recovery, we are committed to patient safety, transparency and continuous improvement.

With the closure of PeaceHealth University District in late 2023, the Eugene emergency department transitioned to RiverBend. Outpatient clinics, along with Inpatient behavioral health and rehabilitation services, remained intact without interruption. A new PeaceHealth urgent care was opened in a centralized Eugene location that will help to better serve the downtown and University of Oregon populations with walk-in and same-day care. We have also made progress with numerous state and local partners on care options for those who frequently present to the emergency department with social rather than medical needs.

Additions to PeaceHealth service offerings include plans for a new inpatient rehab building and behavioral health hospital. Inpatient rehab will feature 42 inpatient beds with additional space for future expansion and will be located near the RiverBend Hospital. Groundbreaking on the facility is planned for the spring of 2025, with an official opening in 2026. With plans to open in 2027, PeaceHealth's Timber Springs Behavioral Health Hospital will nearly triple PeaceHealth's current 35-bed inpatient behavioral health unit at University District, addressing a growing community need.

Throughout our history, when the community has needed us, we have consistently risen to meet the call. PeaceHealth and its dedicated caregivers have stepped up in a myriad of creative ways to support the underserved, the at-risk, the unhoused and other vulnerable members of our community that are too easily overlooked. As an organization, we strive to leverage the strengths and expertise of our caregivers as well as those of our community partners to maximize our positive impact.



About PeaceHealth Sacred Heart Medical Center at RiverBend

272.4

Average daily census

384

Total licensed beds

4.32

Average length of stay (days)

23,074

Inpatient discharges

146,685

Outpatient clinic visits

15,681

Surgeries

69,947

ED visits

2,288

Births

4,050

Caregivers

1,002

Physicians and clinicians

Source: PeaceHealth FY 2024



"I am continually amazed and inspired by all the ways PeaceHealth collaborates with and supports other organizations to care for our community. Our skills, expertise and creativity will continue to be needed in the coming years. We are confident in leading the way in addressing the complicated issues that impact our patients and require a community-wide effort to help solve them. The process alone will unify us and make us stronger, more resilient and more inclusive as a community."

*— Jim McGovern, MD, chief hospital executive,
PeaceHealth Oregon*

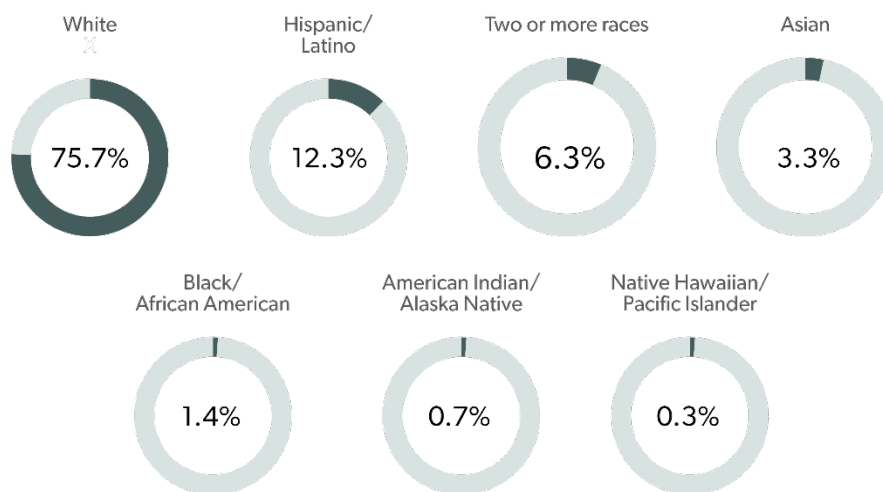
Building a network of care from the inside out

We recognize that change starts from within, believing that our caregivers can best focus on others when we put our focus on caring for them. With more than 4,000 employees throughout the Sacred Heart Medical Center at service area — PeaceHealth is one of the largest employers in Lane County. Our RiverBend caregivers are a vital part of our community, and we recognize the weight and responsibility of caring for both our community and our caregivers. We are committed to implementing change that is reflective of our core values: respect, stewardship, collaboration, and social justice. PeaceHealth's Mission Integrity and Cultural Fulfillment department supports caregivers by hosting Caregiver Resource Groups (CRGs). CRGs are voluntary, employee-led groups that serve as a resource for members who have shared cultural identities and/or life experiences. These groups create an inclusive environment to advocate for shared interests, build awareness among PeaceHealth Caregivers, engage in external community partnerships, enhance culturally responsive care, and build a culture of belonging at PeaceHealth.

The community we serve

The Oregon network service area, including Eugene and Springfield, saw a population growth of 10.78%, according to 2020 census data. Lane County saw a population growth of 8.89%, which is slightly lower than the state-wide increase of 10.6% in Oregon. In our community, non-Hispanic whites make up most of the population in Eugene, Springfield, and Lane County, followed by the Hispanic or Latino community. In the Eugene-Springfield service area, those identifying with two or more ethnic groups make up 6.3% of the population and 6% of the population in Lane County, indicating a diverse community with a strong representation of different racial and ethnic groups, contributing to the rich cultural tapestry of the region.

Eugene-Springfield's race and ethnicity profile



Source: U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey 2019-2023

A growing community... Eugene-Springfield, Oregon

239,162 Population

10.78% 2010-20 population growth

Survey 2019-2023 and U.S. Census 2010-2020

Supporting health justice for all

Our Mission

We are committed to our Mission: We carry on the healing mission of Jesus Christ by promoting personal and community health, relieving pain and suffering, and treating each person in a loving and caring way. We are driven by our belief that good health, prevention and community well-being are fundamental rights. We support health justice for all and are especially called to be in service to the most vulnerable members of our community. And we believe that every person should receive safe and compassionate care — every time, every touch.

Poverty and the connection to health and wellbeing

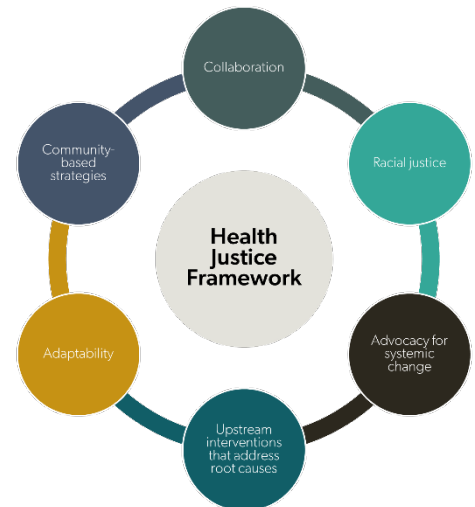
Poverty and health are deeply interconnected and impact individuals and communities. According to the World Health Organization, people living in poverty have a decreased life expectancy and increased child mortality rates.

Poverty profoundly impacts the social drivers of health (SDOH) — the conditions in which people are born, grow, live, work and age. These factors are responsible for a significant portion of health inequities within and between societies. Poverty shapes these drivers in ways that worsen health outcomes and increase vulnerability to disease.

Poverty's expansive grip

The poverty rate in the Oregon network service area of Eugene and Springfield exceeds that of the county, state, and national levels, emphasizing the need for targeted equitable support for individuals and families at or below the federal poverty level. To expand the picture of poverty in our community, ALICE, an acronym for Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed, broadens the picture of poverty to include those just above the federal poverty level. These are individuals and families earning more than the federal poverty level but less than the cost of living for the county and do not qualify for financial assistance. Many ALICE individuals and families continue to struggle, especially with the rising cost of household essentials such as housing, childcare, food, transportation, health care and technology.

Similarly to the poverty rate, the ALICE rate for the Oregon network service area of Eugene and Springfield exceeds that of the county, state, and national levels. The impact of these figures on the community underscores the ongoing struggle for financial stability faced by a significant portion of the population. These numbers highlight the need for targeted support and intervention to address the economic challenges faced by these households. Improving poverty rates requires a multi-faceted approach underlying the root causes of poverty while also providing support to those facing poverty in their everyday lives.



	Eugene/ Springfield	Lane County	Oregon
At or below the Federal Poverty Rate ¹	17.49%	15.28%	11.89%
Below ALICE threshold (ALICE + Poverty) ²	49%	47%	45%

PeaceHealth's commitment to health equity

PeaceHealth has taken steps to increase awareness of social inequities and promote health justice among patients, caregivers and the greater healthcare community. With the goal of eliminating healthcare disparities, PeaceHealth aims to ensure that all communities receiving care at PeaceHealth are treated justly and respectfully, with equitable access to opportunities and resources and by transforming structures that perpetuate injustice. We partner with diverse organizations, communities, and sectors to address social, economic and environmental factors that impact health. These partnerships aim to improve health outcomes for underserved populations, reducing disparities and ensuring equal access to resources and opportunities for health.

PeaceHealth Sacred Heart Medical Center's health equity partner

Volunteers in Medicine (VIM)

provides health care to low-income, underserved adults in Lane County. With a mission to understand and serve the health and wellness needs of the medically underserved in the greater Lane County area, VIM believes that those who live and work in our community deserve access to health care, regardless of their ability to pay for services. A true safety net clinic, VIM serves the community by offering primary care, behavioral health, women's care, diabetes management, and onsite pharmacy services. To offer comprehensive health services, VIM relies on corporate and individual donations, along with medical providers volunteering their time and services to those in need. PeaceHealth is proud to support this legacy partner with clinical and administrative office spaces alongside over \$25,000 annually in community benefit.



¹ U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey 2019-2023

² United Way 2022

Our community health pillars

We are determined to help create a healthy community beyond the walls of our medical centers and clinics. Our four pillars inform the purpose of community health. Across these pillars is the awareness of our solemn responsibility to protect the most vulnerable and underserved people in our communities while promoting diversity, equity and inclusion in everything we do. These four pillars include:

- **HOME:** Improve access to service-enriched housing,
- **HOPE:** Increase education and access to treatment and prevention of dependence,
- **CARE:** Expand knowledge, access and engagement with community caregivers, and
- **NOURISH:** Address food insecurities to enhance family and child well-being.

Bridging the gap in our community

Our priority is to provide the overall best care possible to our entire community. To do this, we need to provide an equitable system of support that recognizes needs, focuses on overcoming barriers and builds resiliency for key segments in our community:

- Youth, seniors, BIPOC communities and those who identify as LGBTQ+,
- Low-income families,
- People experiencing mental health needs,
- People experiencing homelessness or are at risk of homelessness,
- People with disabilities, and
- People living in rural areas.

“The Community Health Needs Assessment process serves as a conversation starter that leads to an understanding of our communities that statistics cannot create alone. At PeaceHealth, we find value and joy in building the relationships that make those conversations never-ending.”

– Liz Dunne, PeaceHealth President and CEO

Recognizing inequities and elevating partnerships

We are stronger when we work together, this is why community-based partnerships like the ones described in this CHNA report are crucial to our community’s success. They enable all of us to address social drivers of health and improve care and access — regardless of where individuals are in their health journey.

In service to the most vulnerable members of our community, PeaceHealth has partnered with [White Bird Clinic](#), [NAACP of Eugene/Springfield](#), [Catholic Community Services of Lane County](#), [Food for Lane County](#), [Eugene Family YMCA](#), [Looking Glass Community Services](#), [Meals on Wheels People](#), [Pearl Buck Center](#), [St. Vincent De Paul](#)



Home



Hope



Care



Nourish

of Lane County, [HIV Alliance](#) and [Volunteers in Medicine](#) to support essential community programs.

Community benefit contributions in Lane County

PeaceHealth's long history of support to the communities we serve dates back to 1936 when the Sisters of St. Joseph arrived in Eugene to rescue the then-failing Doctors' Hospital, and this legacy has continued throughout the decades. Guided by a commitment to compassionate care and equitable access, we have prioritized investments in programs, services, and partnerships that address critical health needs and foster a healthier, more resilient community. Our community is blessed with a strong network of nonprofit service organizations delivering programs to improve physical and mental health and increase access to care. PeaceHealth is proud to support these partnerships and contribute to the overall well-being of the community.

In 2024, PeaceHealth contributed over \$1.2M in community benefit cash donations to community partner organizations in Lane County, many of whose stories are told in the pages of this report. To assist our nonprofit community partners in maintaining sustainable operations in suitable facilities, PeaceHealth contributed an additional \$600,000 of in-kind, no- and low-cost property leases for clinical and administrative workspaces.

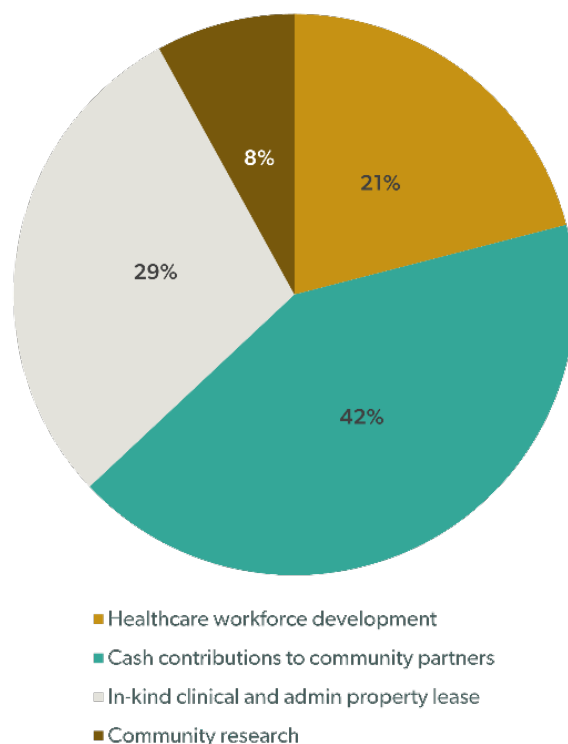
As the largest employer and healthcare system in the region, we are committed to healthcare workforce development programs and creating pathways to healthcare careers for underserved communities. This commitment drove an additional \$810,000 in cash investment to nursing and career technical education programs in Lane County.

PeaceHealth's academic partnership and funding with the [University of Oregon Knight Research Campus](#) since 2019 conducts projects aimed at improving care delivery and outcomes and achieving equity in research fellowship opportunities. With the leadership of [PeaceHealth Oregon Heart and Vascular Institute](#) and a 2024 investment of \$50,000, our partnership and initiatives continue to ensure cutting-edge technologies and a robust and diverse cohort of future healthcare providers in our community.

Looking Ahead

While we are proud of our community benefit investments and partnerships, we recognize that much work remains. Rising healthcare costs, health inequities and the increasing need for behavioral health and substance abuse treatment in Lane County require sustained effort and innovation. As we continually expand our community benefit partnerships, we remain diligent in ensuring that our community benefits extend to those who need it most.

PeaceHealth community benefit contributions in Lane County (FY 2024)





Community Priority: Improve access to residential services for youth in crisis

Community need

Recent data show that the United States is in a mental health crisis experienced by people of all ages, including youth and young adults.

Looking Glass Community Services

Looking Glass Community Services is a non-profit organization dedicated to serving Lane County since 1970. In addition to providing comprehensive services to teens in crisis, Looking Glass has established programming for children and adults, allowing them to provide outstanding care to a larger portion of our community. Programs span the diverse fields of behavioral health, alcohol and drug abuse support, basic human services, juvenile justice, education, youth development, and workforce readiness.

Looking Glass's mission is to "build a better future for children, youth, adults, and families." Over the years, Looking Glass has established a reputation as the leader in supportive services to youth and families in Lane County and partners with over 35 local providers, government agencies and community leaders to provide essential social services.

Oregon's youth in crisis

- 12th highest youth suicide rate in the United States
- 14.2 youth suicide per 100,000 vs. 10.0 nationally

Source: CDC, 2022 data



"We are thankful for our partnership with PeaceHealth. As a longtime leader in the use of collective impact approaches to care, we recognize that effective partnerships will be a key contributor to the overall health of our community for generations to come."

— Chad Westphal, President and CEO, Looking Glass Community Services

Regional Crisis Center

Looking Glass' Regional Crisis Center (RCC) provides psychiatric and subacute level residential treatment to Oregon Youth. Specialized programs help youth deal with abuse, delinquency, addictions, and mental health issues. Supervised group living combined with clinical treatment in a therapeutic setting for youth experiencing an acute mental health crisis. Counselors teach youth new skills and behaviors while working with their families to create individualized service and support plans. These plans address areas such as mood and behavior regulation, social skills and family-centered relational therapy.

In Spring 2023, the RCC expanded capacity and staffing through a partnership with the Oregon Department of Human Services and the Oregon Health Authority to serve more youth.

PeaceHealth investment

Through a generous donation from PeaceHealth's Community Impact Fund, Looking Glass Community Services Regional Crisis Center received a \$250,000 donation in 2024 to expand the regional crisis center. PeaceHealth Sacred Heart Medical Center's Community Collaboration Committee donated an additional \$5,000 to Looking Glass' youth nutrition programs.

Looking Glass Community Services by the numbers

Addressing the needs of at-risk youth

16,509	basic needs supplies provided
5,349	nights spent at Station 7 or peer shelter
3,283	unique clients served
1,134	clients received psychiatry services
1,005	crisis support calls
182	families received services in rural areas
81	youth served at the Regional Crisis Center
26	trafficking victims given safety through housing
\$550K	in rental assistance provided to youth

Eugene Parks Foundation: Strengthening community through nature and collaboration

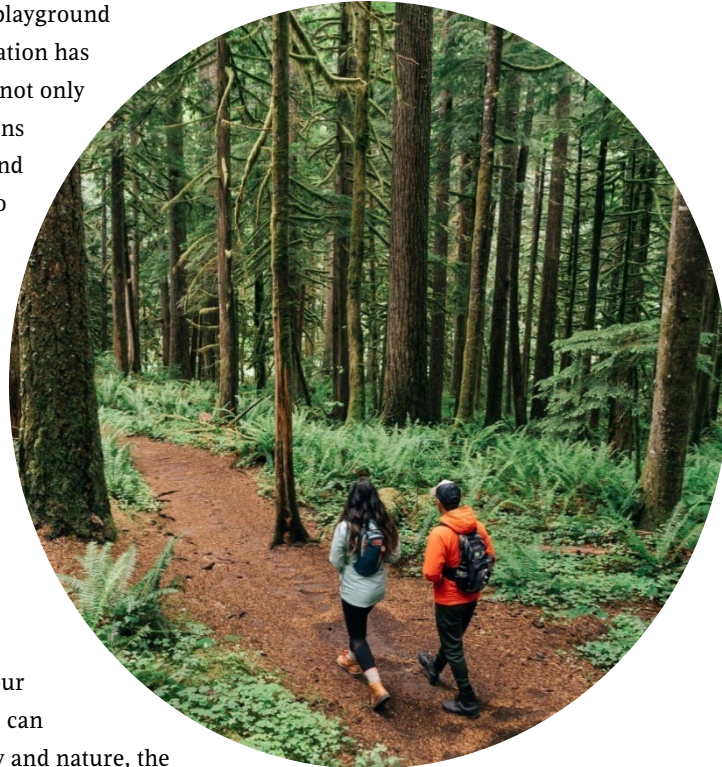
The Eugene Parks Foundation has long been a cornerstone of community enrichment in Lane County, Oregon. With a mission to enhance and preserve the city's parks and natural spaces, the foundation supports initiatives that promote recreation, sustainability, and wellness. Through fundraising, volunteer engagement, and strategic partnerships, the foundation has helped ensure that Eugene's parks remain vibrant spaces for residents and visitors to enjoy.



From building miles of new trails in Spencer Butte Park to funding playground equipment in underserved neighborhoods, the Eugene Parks Foundation has left a tangible mark on the city. Its community-driven projects have not only bolstered the city's green spaces but also fostered stronger connections among residents. By hosting events like community clean-up days and educational workshops, the foundation reinforces its commitment to a greener, healthier Eugene.

PeaceHealth shares Eugene Parks Foundation's mission of promoting community health and wellness. Collaborating on initiatives such as fitness programs in parks, mental health walks, and accessible recreation options for patients can offer profound benefits to the community. Together, our organizations can amplify the message that parks and outdoor recreation are vital for physical and mental health while also addressing health equity in the region through increased access to green space and cross-generational activities.

PeaceHealth is excited to explore this partnership, which can align our shared values and showcase how community-focused collaborations can enhance the quality of life in Eugene. By investing in healthy activity and nature, the Eugene Parks Foundation and PeaceHealth can create a healthier, more connected Lane County.





Community Priority: Improve access to services for unhoused youth

Community need

After years of steady decrease, youth homelessness rose sharply across the U.S. in 2023. In Oregon, family and youth homelessness has risen 5.48% since 2015.³ Youth homelessness is associated with other risk factors, such as high-risk substance use and an increased risk of mental illness. High-risk drug use increases the likelihood that youth will engage in risky behaviors that can have dramatic and lasting effects on their health and academic performance. Youth with substance use disorders also experience higher rates of physical and mental illnesses, diminished overall health and well-being, and potential progression to addiction.⁴ Twenty-six percent of homeless LGBTQ youth report being forced out of their homes solely because of their sexual orientation or gender identity.⁵

Homeless youth in Lane County

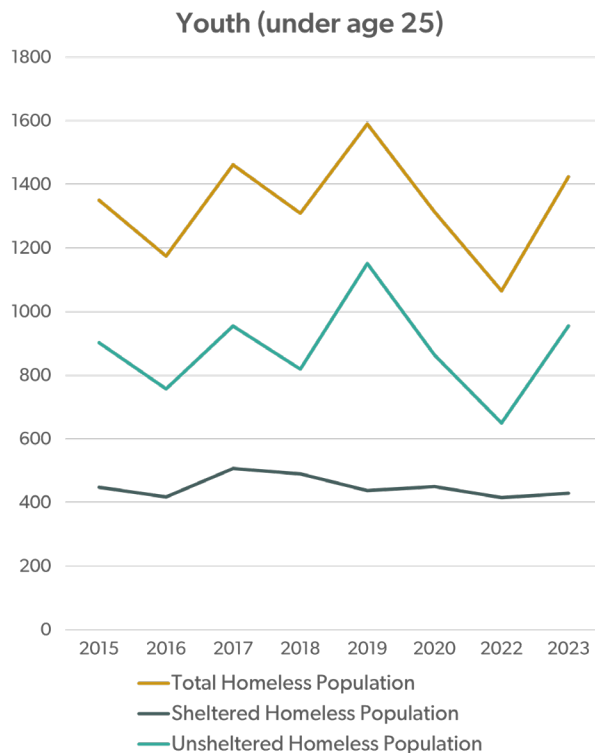
Lane County estimates of homeless young people:

500 between ages 0 and 17

317 between ages 18 & 24

~40% of homeless youth identify as LGBTQ

October 2024



³ U.S. Dept of Housing and Urban Development, 2023 Annual Housing Assessment Report to Congress

⁴ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

⁵ National Coalition for the Homeless



"For many of the young people we serve, we are their primary source of food, clothing and hygiene. Our Resource Center is a focal point of care, service, safety, love and support. We are working hard to keep our young homeless community from entering a life of chronic homelessness, and we hope each will pursue a life of health and purpose"

– Brad Bills, executive director, HOSEA Youth Services

Hosea Youth Services

Hosea Youth Service (HOSEA) believes in building lives of health and purpose and is dedicated to providing support, assistance and opportunities for homeless and vulnerable young people in Eugene.

Through their Day Use Resource Center, young people are provided services, resources and tools to pursue lives of health and purpose. Resource center offerings include two meals a day, clothing, toiletries, showers, laundry, computer access and a safe place off the streets. Staff and volunteers strive to develop relationships, learn guest stories and help youth work through barriers.

To better serve the complex needs of young guests, HOSEA recently added a new classroom and counseling space. This space provides many different learning opportunities, such as life skills, financial literacy, job readiness, musical instruction, and spiritual learning. Through a partnership with Christians as Family Advocates (CAFA), HOSEA offers counseling services to support guests.

PeaceHealth investment

Through a generous donation from PeaceHealth Sacred Heart Medical Center's Community Collaboration Committee, Hosea Youth Services will receive \$90,000 over a three year period starting in 2025. Funds will support and expand Hosea's ongoing work in the community.

Hosea Youth Services Resource Center by the numbers

13,000+ meals provided

11,000+ visits

3,283 unduplicated clients

1,000s showers provided

700 young people seeking support

300 new young people seeking support

100s loads of laundry

100s pieces of outdoor equipment provided

62 attendees of life skills classes

50 phones provided

20 transitional housing opportunities provided

Through October 2024

Partnering to expand critical behavioral health services in Lane County

Lane County Health and Human Services and PeaceHealth have built a strategic partnership with the goal of building a co-located behavioral health campus. The campus will be home to PeaceHealth's new behavioral health hospital, and adjacently Lane County will construct the [Lane Stabilization Center \(LSC\)](#).

By entering an exciting innovation of private-public partnerships, the two facilities will provide a convenient and centrally located collection of behavioral health resources for the community.

In partnership with [LifePoint Health](#), the new Behavioral Health Unit will be a standalone inpatient behavioral health hospital close to PeaceHealth Sacred Heart Medical Center at RiverBend. The 96-bed facility will nearly triple PeaceHealth's current inpatient behavioral health capacity and intensive outpatient programs will also be offered at the new location. Lane County Health and Human Services is partnering with

[Connections Health Solutions](#) to open the Lane Stabilization Center, which will provide immediate access to behavioral health care and treatment for youth and adults. The center will offer rapid, intensive treatment that prioritizes compassionate and personalized care, filling a critical gap in our community's behavioral health system.

"Our inpatient behavioral health hospital and the county's stabilization center will fill a critical need in our community with full, wrap-around care at a time when individuals need it the most," said Alicia Beymer, Chief Administrative Officer, PeaceHealth Sacred Heart Medical Center at RiverBend. "Not only will both facilities vastly expand our resources, but thanks to this innovative public/private partnership, we will be better equipped to more efficiently connect people with the best care for their needs and have an even greater positive impact in our community."





Community Priority: Expand access and engagement with community caregivers

Community need

Community connections play a vital role in healthcare. Strong community ties bridge gaps in care, making healthcare more accessible, equitable and effective for everyone. PeaceHealth understands the importance of these connections and continues to collaborate with community caregivers to improve continuity of care.

Physical fitness has long been essential to a healthy lifestyle, and as our understanding deepens, the critical role of mental health in overall well-being is undeniable. Research increasingly reveals how closely physical and mental health are linked.

Mental health resources in Lane County are severely limited, especially for low-income families, with 24% reporting high levels of anxiety nearly every day, according to United Way's 2024 ALICE report. The [Eugene Family YMCA](#) is working to support the community in two vital ways: by easing financial burdens and by offering programs that strengthen both physical and mental health.



Eugene Family YMCA

Since opening the new YMCA in December 2023, over \$1.1M in financial assistance has helped about 6,400 households access memberships, childcare and programs. The facility has recorded more than 600,000 visits. Each visit is an opportunity for social engagement that's often vital for mental well-being.

Since January 2024, the YMCA has welcomed over 80,000 participants to group fitness classes, where individuals improve heart health, balance, and strength while building friendships. In September 2024 alone, drop-in childcare spaces saw over 3,000 visits, giving parents a secure environment to focus on their health.

Eugene Family YMCA by the numbers

1.1M	in financial assistance provided to 6,400 households
600,000+	visits
80,000+	group exercise class participants
3,000+	drop-in childcare spaces in September 2024 alone

December 2023 through November 2024



"During our community listening sessions, mental health challenges emerged as one of the most urgent issues. At the Eugene Y, we are identifying how our programs can bring in new partners and provide resources that address factors contributing to mental health conditions."

– Brian Steffen, Eugene YMCA CEO

PeaceHealth investment

In a unique collaboration aimed at improving health outcomes in Lane County, PeaceHealth and the YMCA have signed a 10-year \$1.25M contract to develop a suite of combined educational, wellness and health programming for youth, adults and families. The YMCA's partnership with PeaceHealth also aims to innovate through programs like 5-2-1-0 Move More, Eat Better — a lifestyle education initiative for families designed to promote lifelong healthy habits in children — and Bingocize®, a fall prevention education initiative for older adults. The Joint Programming Committee with YMCA and PeaceHealth leaders will continue to bring new programs to the community for the next decade!



"Not only did PeaceHealth invest \$1M to ensure the successful completion of the capital campaign for our new facility and \$250,000 to support operations; it then partnered with us to form a joint committee to coordinate innovative programming that specifically addresses community health needs regularly seen in clinical settings."

– Brian Steffen, Eugene YMCA CEO

Innovating childcare on no-school days

As parents skim through the list of school holidays and professional development days, many feel a familiar wave of anxiety. For working families, intermittent days off school often mean facing impossible choices: the time-consuming scramble to find affordable and reliable childcare, the juggle of missed days from work or the decision to leave kids home alone.



Lane County is considered a childcare desert, a community with more than three children for every regulated childcare slot.⁶ Research shows that lack of high-quality childcare contributes to stress, financial instability, and even health disparities in families. Parents forced to miss work may lose income or, worse, risk their jobs. Meanwhile, children left unsupervised are more likely to experience accidents, injury and behavioral problems.

This issue hits home with [Kidsports](#), a private non-profit organization that provides youth sports programs for pre-K through 12th graders in Eugene-Springfield and surrounding areas. Kidsports teaches children and families the value of physical fitness, mental health, sportsmanship, practice and teamwork through sports.



"We are happy to contribute to Kidsports and this wonderful program that helps fill a need in our community. We hope these play days build healthy habits for local children while also providing parents with peace of mind on no-school days."

— Jim McGovern, MD, chief hospital executive, PeaceHealth Oregon

In 2024, PeaceHealth teamed up with Kidsports to offer parents childcare that incorporates safe and fun activities for their kids on no-school days. The "PeaceHealth Play Days" are open to kids in first through fifth grades when schools are closed for various professional development or parent-teacher conference days and observed holidays. Scholarships are available for qualifying families. Play Days are packed with sports and games and can serve up to 80 children per day.

When we help families, we strengthen the entire community and build a better future. PeaceHealth is proud to partner with Kidsports to create a community where no parent must choose between work and their children's safety, success and well-being.

⁶ Oregon's Child Care Deserts 2020: Mapping Supply by Age Group and Percentage of Publicly Funded Slots. Oregon State University

Equity in action: Lane Transit District's approach to community health

When [Lane Transit District \(LTD\)](#) launched its \$3.8M modernization of Eugene Station, the project's priorities included inclusiveness, safety and equity. Harm Reduction and Inclusive Design LTD's Community Resource Liaison Sarah Koski led a “lived experience” focus group to address public health concerns tied to restroom design. With the opioid crisis escalating — unintentional opioid overdoses in Oregon rose from 280 in 2019 to 1,416 in 2023 — there were discussions about sharps containers for safe needle disposal, onsite peer mentors and a trauma-informed approach to those with special needs using LTD's restrooms. Collaborating with diverse community voices, including [Restored Connections Peer Center](#), [HIV Alliance](#), [White Bird Clinic](#) and [St. Vincent de Paul of Lane County](#), LTD staff implemented practical changes, such as undercut stall doors for safety checks and time limits.



Lane Transit District



“Our main goal is a safe environment for all. The focus group considered perspectives our architects couldn’t have.”

— Todd Smith, project manager, LTD

Innovative Solutions for Accessibility: Shoes are a requirement to ride the bus, but some of LTD's riders lack adequate footwear. Recognizing this barrier, LTD's Community Resource Liaison initiated a “slipper program.” After extensive research, LTD sourced inexpensive rubber-soled slippers for riders without shoes. This program quickly expanded through partnerships with [Lane Community Health Council](#), local health providers, the county jail, and [Willamette Family's Buckley Detoxification Center](#). Additionally, LTD's public safety vehicles are stocked with blankets, bathing wipes and slippers, enabling officers to support vulnerable individuals in real time.

Equity as a Practical Investment: Through initiatives like the Slipper program and focus groups, LTD connects the dots between its mission of “connecting our community” and the individuals who rely on its services the most. These pragmatic, equity-focused solutions improve everyone's transit experience.



Community Priority: Addressing food insecurity

Community need

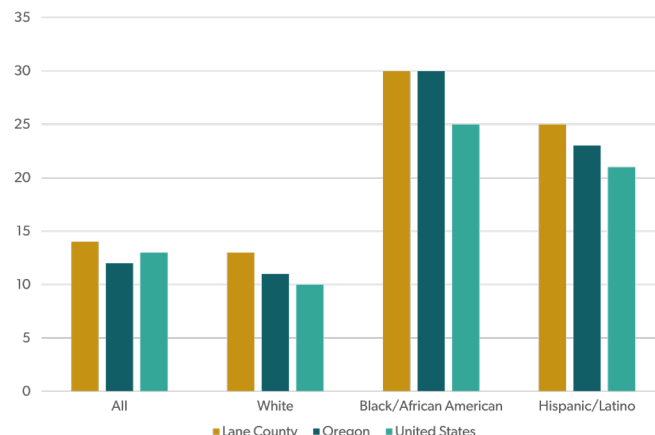
Food insecurity, defined as limited or uncertain access to adequate food, is a pressing issue that affects communities across the United States. Food insecurity increases the risk for multiple chronic health conditions such as diabetes, obesity, heart disease and mental health disorders,⁷ and places a burden on the healthcare system due to longer hospital stays and higher readmission rates for adults in food-insecure households. Lane County's food insecurity rate of 14.6% exceeds that of the state and national level at 13.1% and 13.5%, respectively,⁸ stressing the importance of targeted programs aimed at reducing food insecurity in our communities.

In Lane County, the data reveals disparities in food insecurity rates among different racial and ethnic groups. Black and Hispanic/Latino populations experience significantly higher levels of food insecurity compared to the overall population and white individuals. The impact of these disparities on the affected communities is substantial, highlighting the need for targeted interventions to address food insecurity among marginalized groups.

Food insecurity and health

- Increased risk for multiple chronic health conditions such as diabetes, obesity, heart disease, and mental health disorders.⁹
- Burden on the health care system and increased costs. Longer hospital stays and higher readmission rates for adults in food-insecure households.¹⁰
- Increased risk for adverse health outcomes and health disparities.¹¹

Food insecurity by race/ethnicity, 2022
Lane County and comparison



Food For Lane County by the numbers

8.3M	pounds of food distributed
465,464	meals served
169,547	pounds of fresh produce harvested at FFLC's Grassroots Garden and Youth Farms
20,140	volunteer hours in support of FFLC programs
151	partner agencies

According to a Food for Lane County survey...

48%	of respondents with children reported sometimes or often cutting the size of their children's meals or having to skip meals because they did not have enough money.
68%	of respondents said they had been hungry and could not eat because they did not have enough money.

⁷ National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities, 2024

⁸ Map the Meal Gap 2022, Feeding America

⁹ National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities, 2024

¹⁰ Men F, Gundersen C, Urquia ML, et al. Food insecurity is associated with higher healthcare use and costs among Canadian adults. Health Affairs. 2020;39(8):1377-85

¹¹ Healthy People 2023



"We are excited to collaborate with PeaceHealth through our shared understanding that access to wholesome, nutritious food supports positive health outcomes."

– Carrie Copeland, FFLC Education and Programs director

PHMG pediatric meal kit program

In partnership with [Food For Lane County \(FFLC\)](#), a non-profit food bank serving all of Lane County, PeaceHealth Medical Group (PHMG) staff have distributed 1,387 meal kits to families in need since program inception in 2021, averaging 52 meal kits per month. Families in need of food are identified by completing a Social Drivers of Health questionnaire upon clinic check-in.



Twice a month, PeaceHealth caregivers, along with FFLC staff, pack 60 boxes of food for distribution at the three pediatric clinics in the Eugene-Springfield area. Each box contains shelf-stable food to make a healthy meal for a family of four and information on food resources in the community.

PeaceHealth investment

Through the support of Sacred Heart Medical Center at RiverBend's Community Collaboration Committee, PeaceHealth has invested \$100,000 (\$25,000 per year) in community benefit funds since 2021.



"Helping patients and families access healthy food is important for supporting growth and development in children and preventing childhood obesity. Our goal in primary care is to help families access food for today and to connect them with sustainable resources in the community for food for the future."

– Serena Black, MD, PeaceHealth's Children's Services medical director

Final thoughts

At PeaceHealth, we recognize that the journey to health and well-being is constant. Driven by our belief that good health, prevention and community well-being are fundamental rights, we are humbled and honored to serve and learn from our communities. Our Community Health Needs Assessment process holds us accountable for listening and learning from our communities and informs the development of our Community Health Improvement Plan. The needs are forever evolving — and so are we. We pledge to continue our collaborative work in the community and invite you to join us in our pursuit of health justice for all.

