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Rural Youth Futures

School of Forest Resources

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## Coos County (OR)

Mindy Crandall

Jessica Leahy

Nicole Bernsen

Jesse Abrams

Autumn Ellison

*See next page for additional authors*

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**Authors**

Mindy Crandall, Jessica Leahy, Nicole Bernsen, Jesse Abrams, Autumn Ellison, Alexa Carleton, and Liz Capodilupo

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# RURAL YOUTH FUTURES: COOS COUNTY, OREGON

SURVEY RESULTS • SUMMER 2020

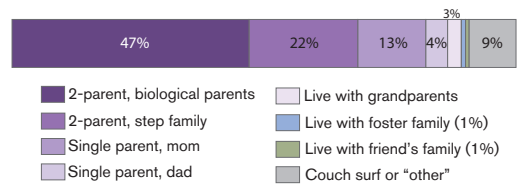
**A**s rural communities face changes in local economies, populations, and workforce needs, what does the next generation of residents and workers value and want? That question was the motivation for the Rural Youth Futures project. Researchers and extension agents from several universities joined forces with local non-profits to find out what middle and high schoolers think in two forest-dependent regions: Coos County in Oregon and Piscataquis/Northern Somerset Counties in Maine. This is one in a series of fact sheets designed to present summary information to each participating school and county about the perceptions and aspirations of local youth.

## APPROACH

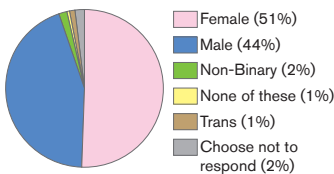
With permission from school principals, students at 7 schools in Coos County were given a link to an anonymous, electronic survey between January and May in 2019. Participation was voluntary. The schools had a combined 2,902 students enrolled during 2018–2019, 1,332 of which took the survey for a participation rate of 46%. Every question was optional, so the number of responses varies by question. Fact sheets for all schools and each county are available online at: <http://ewp.uoregon.edu/RuralYouth>.

## DEMOGRAPHICS

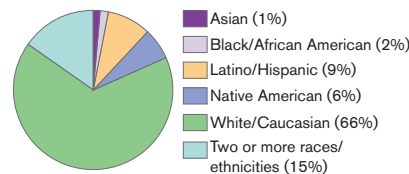
Describe the family structure you live with:



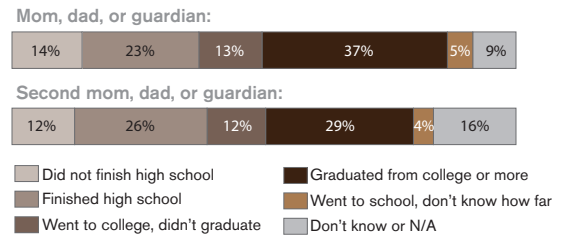
Gender that you identify as:



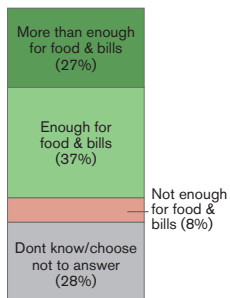
Category that best describes you:



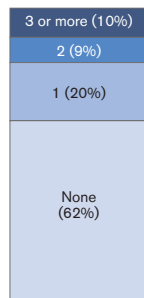
What level of education did your parents or guardians, whom you live with, complete?



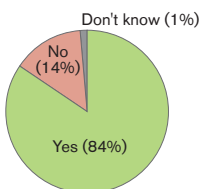
Perception of family finances:



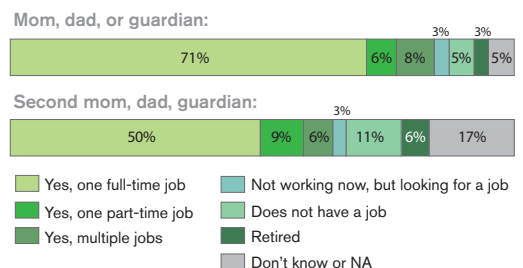
School changes from moving in past 5 years:



Born in Coos County:



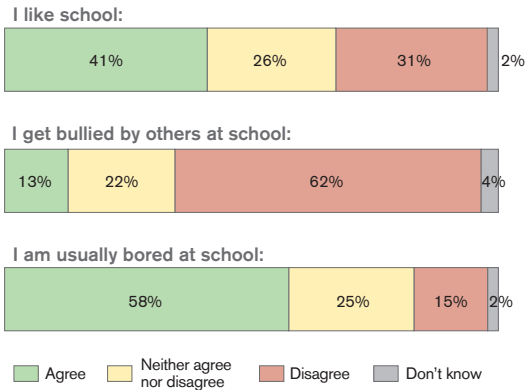
Do your parents or guardians work for pay?



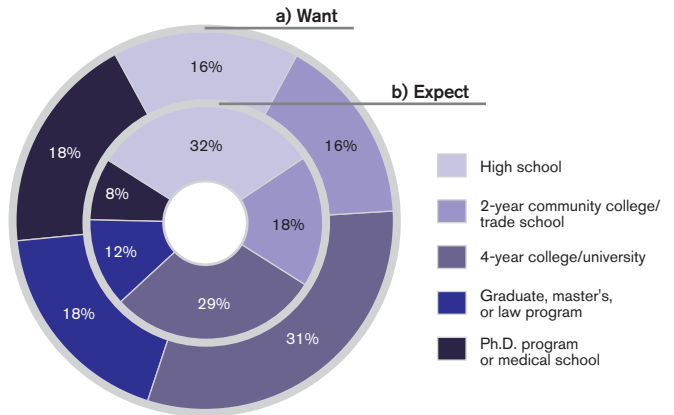
# SCHOOL RESULTS

Schools in rural communities are critical. They bring families together, support civic interaction, and foster workforce development. Schools also influence youth aspirations for future education. To learn more about these things in Coos County schools, we asked students to tell us about their school experience and future goals, what they felt were barriers to those goals, and the extracurricular activities they participated in.

How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements about your school?

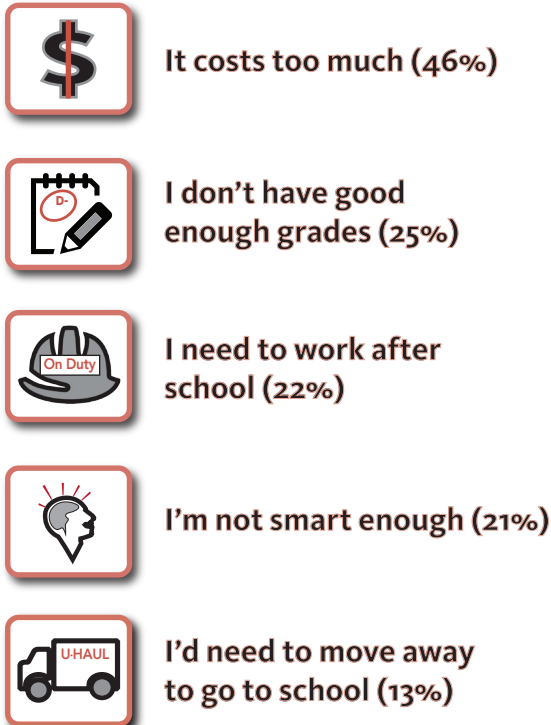


What is the highest level of education that you a) want, and b) expect to complete?



What could prevent you from going as far in school as you would like?

## TOP 5 BARRIERS

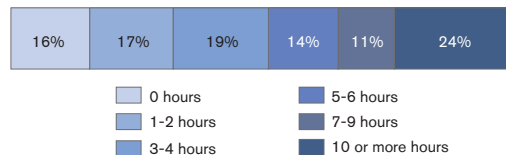


Which of the following activities have you participated in the last year?

## TOP 5 ACTIVITIES



On average, how many hours per week do you spend participating in all the above activities combined?

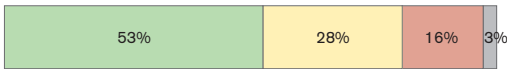


# COMMUNITY RESULTS

Increasing the number of young people and working families is a critical issue in many rural towns. Natural amenities and attachment to community can retain young people or attract in-migration. We asked students to tell us about their community to better understand what the community has to offer. We also asked them where they want to live in the future to see if there's an interest in living in these places among young people.

## How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements about your community:

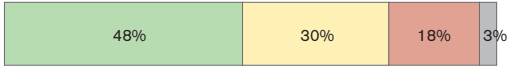
This is a good place to grow up:



I care about my community:



I feel like I am part of my community:



Legend: Agree (Green), Neither agree nor disagree (Yellow), Disagree (Red), Don't know (Grey)

## What would you like to see more of in your community?

### TOP 5 WISHES



**More shops and retail stores (64%)**



**More indoor recreation (60%)**



**More restaurants (58%)**

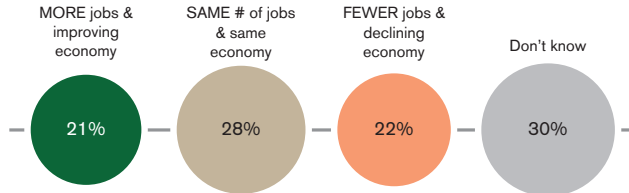


**More outdoor recreation (47%)**

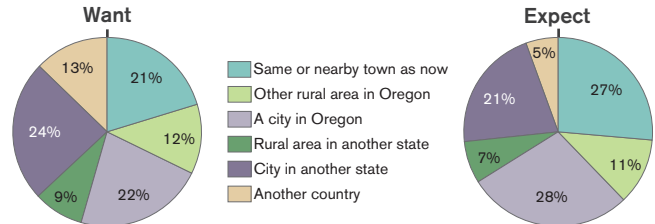


**More arts and culture (46%)**

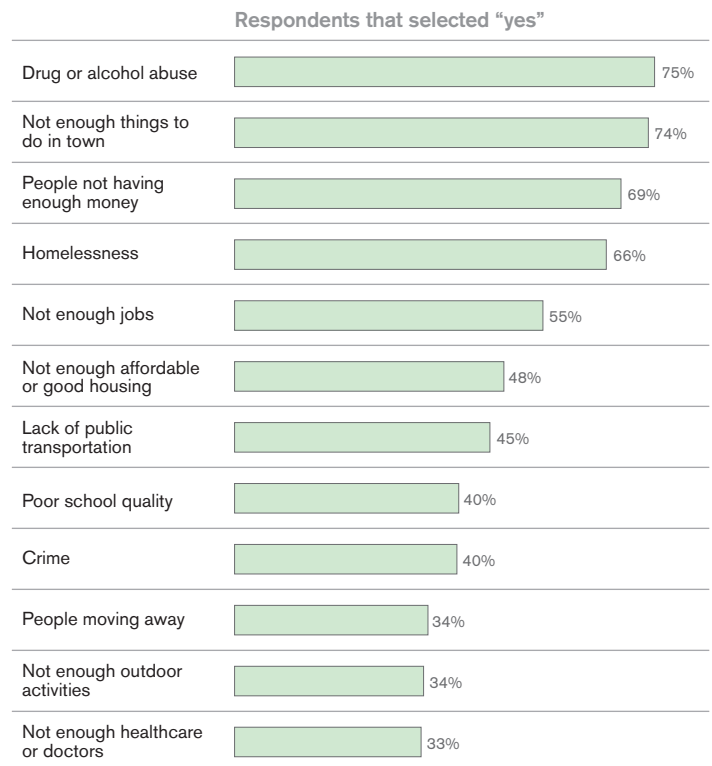
## Where do you see your community in the future in terms of jobs and the economy?



## Where do you want to live and expect to live when you are 30 years old?



## Do you think the following are important problems facing your community?



# YOUTH PROGRAMMING

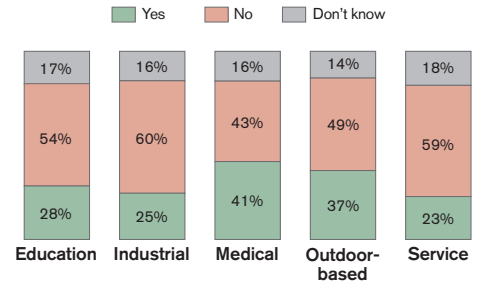
Youth today are the community's future labor force. How prepared they feel, and how willing they are to work in local industries, influences their success in the workforce. We asked students to tell us about their career plans, including what barriers they may face and what training support they need. Because the outdoors is so important to our community, we also asked them about outdoor recreation activities that they participated in.

## What would be your dream job when you are 30?

For this question, students could type in any answer to the question of what their dream job would be. We wanted to get a sense of their ideal career aspirations. All responses were entered into a program that generated this word cloud, where the larger and darker an entry is, the more times it was mentioned by students. Some students didn't name a particular job, but described in general what they hoped they'd be doing.



## Would you want to work in one of the following industries in Coos County?



## Do you think the following things will prevent you from getting the job you want?

### TOP 5 BARRIERS

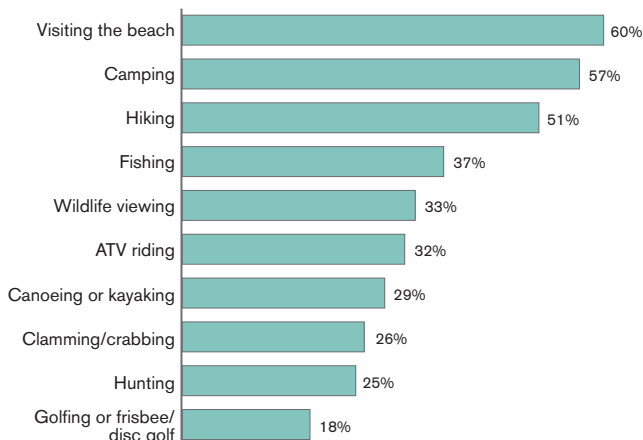
- I don't have enough money to get the education I need (30%)
- I don't know the right people (24%)
- I don't have enough good grades in school (16%)
- There aren't enough jobs in that field (14%)
- I don't have the necessary skills (14%)

## What sort of help would you like preparing for a job?

### TOP 5 TRAINING NEEDS

- Training in hands-on skills (48%)
- Education or college advice (44%)
- Job advice (40%)
- Help with job applications (35%)
- Interviewing skills (30%)

## Which of the following outdoor recreation activities have you done in the last year? (top ten):



## Percentage of students who agree or strongly agree with statements about their attachment to the outdoors (top two):

**71%** of students said **they can be themselves in the outdoors here**

**52%** of students said **they feel happiest when in the outdoors here**