

ONE ROGUE VALLEY



REIMAGINED

Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy
2025-2030





TABLE OF CONTENTS

03	Initiative 1: Business Development
07	Initiative 2: Innovation and Entrepreneurship
09	Initiative 3: Talent
12	Initiative 4: Tourism
15	Initiative 5: Placemaking
18	Implementation and Next Steps
19	SWOT Analysis
20	Regional Data
34	CEDS Committee



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2025, partners and staff updated the Jackson and Josephine County One Rogue Valley Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS), which was originally created by TIP Strategies, to match the economic climate following massive events like a global pandemic and local wildfire destruction. The updated plan is designed to guide the region toward long-term economic prosperity by promoting innovation, resilience, and opportunities for Jackson and Josephine County.

This new 2025-2030 'One Rogue Valley: Reimagined' CEDS meets the requirements for Southern Oregon Regional Economic Development, Inc. (SOREDI) set forth by the US Economic Development Administration (EDA) to maintain Southern Oregon's Economic Development District (EDD).

The strengths of the region, such as its natural beauty and strong higher education, provide a solid foundation for economic development. However, weaknesses like limited affordable housing and an aging population pose challenges. Opportunities exist in expanding workforce development programs and attracting workers, while threats include climate-related disruptions and economic reliance on a few dominant sectors.

Addressing these issues requires a collaborative approach, leveraging the region's strengths to mitigate weaknesses, capitalize on opportunities, and guard against threats. By focusing on inclusive economic strategies, Southern Oregon can work towards reducing disparities and promoting equitable growth.

Strategies are organized under five initiatives: business development, innovation and entrepreneurship, talent, tourism, and placemaking. Within each initiative, there are tactics that are currently being implemented in the region, in addition to new strategies created to address the needs and challenges of the community.

Just as an impactful CEDS cannot be developed by a single entity, an effective CEDS cannot be implemented by a single entity. It is imperative that the entire region works collaboratively to implement the strategies set forth in the plan.

ONE ROGUE VALLEY: CEDS INITIATIVES

1. **Business Development**
2. **Innovation & Entrepreneurship**
3. **Talent**
4. **Tourism**
5. **Placemaking**

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS (KPIs)

- **Collaboration Score**
- **Connections Made**
- **Workforce Readiness/Degrees**
- **Per Capita Compensation**
- **Innovation & Entrepreneurship Incubation**
- **Primary/Secondary Jobs**
- **New Business Establishments**
- **Increase in Tax Revenue**
- **Capital Investment**
- **Loans Activity**



ONE ROGUE VALLEY INTRODUCTION

The name “One Rogue Valley” embodies the vision for Jackson and Josephine Counties as a united region that prioritizes collaboration. The region contains two major geographic landmark valleys, the Illinois Valley in the western half of Josephine County and the Rogue Valley in the central part of Jackson County. Both valleys contain the Rogue River watershed, which is fed by Bear Creek, the Illinois River, and the Applegate River. The “Rogue” name is synonymous with both counties, as the public sector and the private sector have adopted the river’s name in everything from businesses to regional amenities like Rogue Community College (RCC) and the Rogue Valley International-Medford Airport (MFR).

The immense natural beauty and unique cultural offerings give the region many strategic economic advantages. Historically, the timber industry was the main economic driver for the region, though in recent years, Southern Oregon is committed to strengthening and diversifying its economic base. The region is home to an array of industries, including niche and artisanal businesses, as well as a growing entrepreneurial ecosystem. Tourism is also a major economic driver, due to the proximity of Crater Lake, and the region’s world-renowned festivals like Britt Music and Arts Festival and the Oregon Shakespeare Festival. This sector has potential to grow as the region continues to focus on outdoor recreational activities, including organized sports.

To reach its economic development and prosperity goals, Southern Oregon collaboratively commits to using the following CEDS to chart a course for the next 5 years and beyond. The Southern Oregon EDD is managed by Southern Oregon Regional Economic Development Inc. (SOREDI) and the organization is responsible for maintaining an EDA-approved CEDS, which must be updated every 5 years to retain the EDD designation, which allows the region to apply for economic development-related funding that aligns with the initiatives and priorities outlined in the strategy.



The CEDS cannot be implemented by one organization alone, which is why collaboration between partners is vital to success. These partner organizations consist of both public and private sector leaders who have committed to carry out the strategies and actions included in the CEDS.

The CEDS is divided into five key initiatives: Business Development, Innovation and Entrepreneurship, Talent, Tourism, and Placemaking. The strategies under business development focus on achieving the region’s goals for ensuring thoughtful, sustainable, and equitable economic growth. The second initiative, innovation and entrepreneurship, provides strategies for strengthening the entire innovation ecosystem. The third initiative, talent, prioritizes attracting a skilled workforce to meet the needs of current and future employers. The fourth initiative, tourism, highlights the region’s diverse amenities, from music and theater events, to rafting the Rogue River. The fifth initiative, placemaking, ensures that the region preserves outstanding quality of life for all residents, addressing issues ranging from workforce housing to creating vibrant downtown spaces.

Although the CEDS cannot address every issue and challenge the region faces, the purpose of the plan is to build a resilient community that works collectively to build economic prosperity. Although the CEDS is designed to be executed over the course of a 5-year period, the plan was designed from the perspective to meet long-term needs of the region, with the benefits extending beyond 2030.

INITIATIVE 1. BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

Ensure thoughtful, sustainable, and equitable economic growth by strategically promoting the region as a destination for business creation, expansion, and relocation.

The Rogue Valley is fortunate that a large group of partner organizations can help assist regional business development. This work encompasses traded and local sector businesses across the region connecting startups and established businesses with the appropriate resources needed to thrive. However, because of the unique nature and structure of the Rogue Valley economy we face unique challenges to economic development. Consequently, a collaborative regional economic development strategy is required to ensure economic development success and investment throughout the region. In addition to the economic centers of Ashland, Grants Pass, and Medford, the region is home to a number of successful businesses in smaller and rural communities in the region. It is essential that the region's economic development practitioners understand the unique needs of all the communities in Josephine and Jackson Counties, so each community is positioned to achieve their economic development goals. The following framework outlines the strategies and actions that will need to occur to meet the business development priorities for the Rogue Valley.

STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

1.1. Strengthen the Jackson and Josephine county Business Retention and Expansion (BRE) program. A strong BRE strategy is essential for a successful economic development organization, as the bulk of job creation (and contraction) comes from established businesses. (1) Promote economic development and business support services throughout the region, including rural communities.

1.1.1. Increase the number of annual private sector business visits by economic development organizations.

- Conduct business visits by a range of economic development professionals, including those in business development, recruitment, entrepreneurship, and lending positions. Often leads for recruitment projects are uncovered during existing business visits and existing businesses offer valuable insight that can be relayed to the entrepreneurship community.
- Prioritize visits with companies in the region's target sectors and traded sector companies. Due to the diverse nature of businesses in the region, thorough groundwork is required to understand the needs of businesses and build connections.
- Ensure broad and diverse representation of private sector and public sector partners on SOREDI's BRE Committee. A business from each targeted industry (including aspirational targets) should be represented on the committee.
- Support Chamber of Commerce BRE surveys and assist where applicable with identified opportunities/challenges.

(1) Congressional Research Service, Small Business Administration & Job Creation, 11 September 2019, fas.org/sgp/crs/misc/R41523.pdf

1.1.2. Coordinate business visits with regional partners, including workforce and technical assistance, based on identified needs of the business.

1.1.3. Maintain a comprehensive database with customer relationship management (CRM) with regional businesses and projects.

1.1.4. Develop a mergers and acquisitions (M&A) connection strategy. With so many boutique manufacturers in the region, the opportunity of M&A activity is high, and it is critical to develop a connection strategy that will retain and grow businesses after an M&A event and also create an avenue for business recruitment.

- Discuss succession planning with business leadership during business visits. Continue events that focus on M&A, such as SOREDI's Launch|Talk: M&A 101—Buying and Selling a Business.
- Position SOREDI as a first resource to the new company, in the event of a merger or an acquisition.
- Proactively develop relationships with consultants in the M&A space to highlight regional amenities and benefits of doing business in Southern Oregon.

1.2. Focus the region's outbound business attraction efforts on target industries, which represent the best opportunities for new investment and employment growth.

1.2.1. Utilize industry publications and reports to monitor trends, understand supply chain needs, and identify potential recruitment markets.

- Expand event programming to highlight innovation within target sectors by bringing in panels or industry experts to discuss trends and offer industry insights (strategy 2.2.1).

1.2.2. Cultivate relationships and build networks of industry leaders in target sectors, including site selectors and location consultants. Promote the potential of sites such as PH3 and PH5 (Phoenix), MD5 (Medford), and the White City parcels.

1.2.3. Expand marketing efforts to reach new audiences. Marketing will be focused, asset driven, and leverage existing efforts with other Chambers of Commerce and Destination Marketing Organizations (DMOs) throughout the valley (strategy 3.6.1 and strategy 4.1.2).

1.3. Nurture a business-friendly environment where businesses can, and want to, thrive.

1.3.1. Champion efforts to advocate for pro-business policies and practices at the state and local levels. The region should pride itself on being nimble and creative to meet the needs of business.

1.3.2. Identify and support investment in new sites, buildings, and infrastructure to support the growth of existing employers and the attraction of new businesses, while leveraging existing real estate, transportation, and infrastructure assets (strategy 5.4).

- Explore opportunities to expand access to broadband infrastructure, especially in rural areas such as the Applegate, Butte Falls, Illinois Valley, and Shady Cove, so they can grow and retain businesses.
- Look for opportunities to increase infrastructure development in Grants Pass, with projects such as the Illinois Valley Airport and the Spalding Industrial Park infrastructure Project.

1.4. Collaboratively develop and establish a regional brand and identity.

1.4.1. Create a favorable brand and image for the region and launch an internal marketing campaign. Ensure all residents, members, and partners talk about the Rogue Valley in a consistent, positive way.

- Collaborate on and promote marketing materials such as a logo, website, and regional quality-of-life video, that can be used on multiple platforms for tourism and talent/business attraction.
- Utilize social media to build brand awareness.

1.4.2. Promote unified internal and external messaging among partner organizations. Ensure all regional partners are sending the same message regarding the economic vision and goals.

- Consider developing key messages with partners that can be shared widely throughout the region (e.g., hospitality staff, retail outlets).

1.4.3. Spread the message locally on the value of economic development through all partner channels.

- Strengthen and build relationships with local media partners to ensure economic development stories are shared. Local media will also be a critical partner in relaying information to the community on the progress of the CEDS implementation.

1.5. Proactively preserve and advocate for industrial and commercial sites for local, domestic, and international businesses that will ultimately provide high-quality jobs for the region. Ensure infrastructure development plans align to site readiness goals.

1.5.1. Utilize a database of potential sites in the region. Indicate if the site is shovel ready and timelines for development, noting challenges to development.

1.5.2. Communicate with public and private sector representatives focused specifically on permitting and infrastructure development.

- Support the development of a local Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) office in Medford, the development of the Croman site in Ashland, the Rogue Valley-International Medford Airport terminal expansion, Josephine County's Public Transportation system, and the Grants Pass Spalding Sewer development.
- Understand the infrastructure needs in rural communities required to support businesses, especially in communities such as the Applegate, Gold Hill, Illinois Valley, Shady Cove, and Butte Falls. Identify the rural assets that are advantageous to business and align those with industries and potential business opportunities (strategy 1.3.2).

1.5.3. Advocate for key industrial and commercial sites in the region, such as PH3/PH5/MD5 and the River Road Preserve; support transit-oriented development (TOD) around areas with a high concentration of workers.

- Support the implementation of Rogue Valley Transportation District (RVT) 2040 Transit Master Plan(2) which will include plans to expand routes and service areas in the region, including rural communities(3).

(2) Rogue Valley Transportation District, "RVT 2040 Transit Plan," 2019, www.RVT2040transitplan.com.

(3) Damian Mann, Mail Tribune, "New Bus Routes Headed Your Way," 13 June 2019, mailtribune.com/news/top-stories/morebus-routes-coming-to-the-greater-medford-oregon-area.

INITIATIVE 2. INNOVATION & ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Leverage regional assets to strengthen the innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystem in Southern Oregon.

Southern Oregon is uniquely positioned to catalyze a rural innovation economy by focusing on its natural strengths: advanced manufacturing, clean technology, value-added agriculture, and the outdoor and recreation industries. By building out the region's capacity to support innovation-led, traded-sector businesses (those that export goods and services beyond the local market), regional partners and local Entrepreneur Service Organizations (ESOs) will help fuel economic diversification and upward mobility for the region's workforce.

The Southern Oregon Innovation Hub (SOIH), launched with support from Business Oregon, embodies this vision. It fosters a thriving entrepreneurial ecosystem. For example, periods of disruption often spark innovation, which is what Southern Oregon has experienced through wildfires and the global pandemic. By connecting entrepreneurs with mentors, markets, and capital, the SOIH along with regional partnering agencies will lead the region toward a more resilient, dynamic, and export-ready economy.

STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

2.1. Foster innovation within our ecosystem through partnering locally, with the state and other trusted partner—bringing together businesses, educators, entrepreneurs, and public agencies to drive forward ideas, strengthen collaboration, and accelerate economic growth across the region.

2.1.1. Form a community action committee of public and private sector partners to forward the region's innovation-driven initiatives.

2.1.2. Identify funding partners and pursue grant opportunities to support innovation activities, including master planning efforts that address key regional barriers and unlock long-term economic potential.

2.2. Support innovation within existing companies. Foster relationships among companies and encourage collaboration.

2.2.1. Assist companies in locating the infrastructure and/or shared infrastructure resources needed to explore new ideas and take them to market. This could include broadband infrastructure (strategy 1.3.2), makerspaces, and technical assistance.

- Continue to support and invest in makerspaces, coworking spaces, and other entrepreneurial support organizations that provide access to shared technology, equipment, and collaborative environments essential for driving regional innovation and entrepreneurship.
- Expand events and speaker series to focus on innovation and improving business competitiveness. Examples include Pitch Nights, weekly entrepreneur presentation opportunities, and periodic innovation-themed workshops.
- Increase promotion of existing events through a shared calendar, like the Southern Oregon Innovation Hub's Event Calendar.⁽⁴⁾

2.2.2. Continue the SOREDI Industry Tours series to showcase businesses in Jackson and Josephine Counties and encourage collaboration among businesses.

2.3. Connect and convene regional networks of entrepreneurs to foster a collaborative environment.

2.3.1. Explore physical and virtual platforms to connect groups throughout the region.

- Informal networking examples include Meetups and Facebook Groups, formal networking could include pitch competitions, One Million Cups, and other entrepreneurial events.

2.3.2. Support the development of coworking spaces in the region, such as in downtown Ashland, Grants Pass, and Medford.

2.3.3. Develop a regional entrepreneurship and innovation ecosystem asset map.

2.3.4. Develop a community mentorship program that links entrepreneurs to established professionals.

2.4. Expand the availability of startup capital by building on Angel Investment Networks, formalizing access to existing venture funding in the region, and developing stronger ties to other sources of capital outside the area.

(4) <https://southernoregoninnovationhub.org/events/>

INITIATIVE 3. TALENT

Invest in the ecosystem that attracts, equips, and retains a strong pipeline of talent to meet the long-term needs of current and future employers. Without a skilled and equipped workforce, businesses cannot succeed. Furthermore, access to a skilled workforce consistently ranks at the top of site-selection factors. Therefore, it is critical to invest in the systems that strengthen the regional workforce. Additionally, there is a compelling need for expanded engineering programs in the Rogue Valley if the region wants to expand high tech and advanced manufacturing, including aviation and aerospace. With the region's highest employment sector being healthcare, continued workforce development for healthcare employees is also crucial for retaining talent. The following framework outlines strategies that support workforce development, leverage the outstanding educational facilities in the region, and enhance collaboration between public sector and private sector.

STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

3.1. Strengthen partnerships between the region's public sector and private sector, including economic development organizations, workforce development entities, and educational institutions, to ensure alignment of employer needs and training programs.

3.1.1. Ensure regular communication among groups in economic and workforce development (e.g., quarterly meetings). Convene Regional Economic Vitality (REV) chats regularly with Chambers, Workforce and other Economic Development partners to coordinate and design coordinated economic strategies and supports.

3.1.2. Prioritize cross-organizational board representation/participation between SOREDI and Rogue Workforce Partnership (RWP), at either the staff or board leadership level.

3.1.3. Work to coordinate business outreach efforts with regional partners using platforms like Rogue Business. Continue joint business outreach between SOREDI and RWP.

3.1.4 Build a vision for the future economic vitality of the Rogue Valley with target industry sectors for promising family wage careers and growth strategies to usher in a new era of prosperity.

3.2. Support regularly convening education committees, such as the Southern Oregon Education Leadership Council (SOELC), with Southern Oregon Education Service District (SOESD), K-12, community colleges, and universities to address educational attainment and labor participation. Ensure students are prepared to enter the workforce and aware of opportunities and career pathways within the region. Focus on science, technology, engineering, arts, mathematics (STEAM) initiatives and Career and Technical Education (CTE) (strategy 3.4.2).

3.2.1. Support programs which introduce high school students to companies and career pathways in the region.

- The Southern Oregon Career Center will serve as a vital nexus, actively strengthening partnerships between the region's public and private sectors. This career center will conduct ongoing industry needs assessments, the results of which will be shared with educational partners to inform curriculum development and the creation of demand-driven training initiatives.
- Look to Southern Oregon Youth Works and other related programs as potential models.
- Support Rogue Community College's existing and emerging workforce credit and non-credit training programs for high school students. Programs are in partnership with industry for work-based learning experiences such as clinical rotations, practicums, job-shadows, and internships.

3.3. Act as business connector to expand work-based learning and career exploration opportunities for higher education students. Leverage existing workforce and education resources to support real-world career pathway exploration. Students are more likely to remain in the region following graduation if they have local employer connections.

3.3.1. Grow existing internship programs at Klamath Community College (KCC), Rogue Community College (RCC), Oregon Institute of Technology (OIT), and Southern Oregon University (SOU). This helps keep students in the region after graduation, equips them with on-the-job training, and prepares them to enter the workforce.

3.3.2. Support internship and career fairs, such as Careers in Gear, to expose students to the opportunities and variety of industries in the region.

3.3.3. Support both industry tours and reverse industry tours to build student and educator awareness of companies and career paths in the region. In addition to tours and open houses, employers could also present on campus.

3.4. Support expanded career and technical education and higher education programming, especially for in-demand fields, such as healthcare, transportation, education, behavioral health, industrial technology, and other areas of emerging workforce needs.

3.4.1. Support the potential of an aviation and technical education training center, which offers hands-on training through STEAM curriculum.

3.4.2. Bolster the region's talent pipeline in critical in-demand fields through strategic partnerships and the facilitation of relevant educational programming.

- In the healthcare sector, a key area of focus, actively supporting the expansion of training opportunities in high-growth occupations.

3.5. Build a greater awareness of career opportunities in the region (i.e. [Roguecareers.org](https://roguecareers.org)), especially middle skill positions in rural communities. This will connect and showcase a resilient and adaptable workforce.

3.5.1. Support, and potentially expand, existing Next Gen sector-specific workforce development initiatives with RWP, such as the Rogue Advanced Manufacturing Partnership (RAMP), Rogue Transportation & Logistics partnership etc.

3.5.2. Encourage programs that upscale and cross-scale employees in multiple positions.

3.6. Develop a toolkit of resources focused on talent attraction. This could include promotional videos on the region, stories about why people choose Southern Oregon, and relocation guides.

3.6.1. Leverage tourism marketing for talent attraction, with a particular focus on high-wage remote workers. Typically, the first time someone visits a new place, it is as a tourist. This is a critical market to attract potential talent (strategy 1.2.3 and strategy 4.5).

3.6.2. Centralize resources for trailing spouses/partners and remote workers. Highlight examples of coworking spaces, meetups/support system for remote workers, innovation hubs, connectivity from the Rogue Valley International-Medford Airport (MFR), and community engagement opportunities.

3.6.3. Encourage advanced efforts to recruit health care providers to Southern Oregon to ensure that high-quality health care systems and programs support the region's growing population and trailing families.

- Look to Southern Oregon Alliance of Physicians and Providers (SOAPP) and other related-programs as a model.

INITIATIVE 4. TOURISM

Support the organizations and places that strengthen the tourism and experiential environment in Southern Oregon. Tourism is a key economic driver, from renowned arts and cultural events, such as the Oregon Shakespeare Festival (OSF) and the Britt Music & Arts Festival, to world-class outdoor recreation and high-quality sporting facilities. Southern Oregon is a gateway to Crater Lake National Park, the Oregon redwoods in the Rogue River–Siskiyou National Forest, and Oregon Caves National Monument and Preserve. Traditionally, the most popular tourism season is during the summer months, however, this has been affected by wildfires in recent years. Expanding activities in the shoulder and off-season months, and increasing promotion of these opportunities, will be critical to developing the Rogue Valley's tourism industry. Expanding the tourism season will also create greater resiliency in the local sector economy. In addition to strengthening recreational opportunities, the CEDS also outlines strategies for reaching new markets, including local and international, and expanding culinary and agritourism in the region. Furthermore, by boosting tourism and visitor attraction, these investments also enhance the community's appeal for existing and future residents.

STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

4.1. Support initiatives to expand tourism in Southern Oregon.

4.1.1. Support an increase in funding to Travel Southern Oregon and Destination Marketing and/or Management Organizations (DMOs) so they are more competitive with similar organizations in Oregon and the US.

4.1.2. Focus marketing and promotion efforts on shoulder and traditionally off-season months to expand the tourism season (strategy 4.4.2).

- Encourage organized year-round events at venues such as Mt. Ashland.

4.1.3. Strengthen international tourism to the region. Coordinate efforts with business development (strategy 1.2.3) and MFR.

- Leverage organized tours to Crater Lake, which attract foreign tourists, and events such as the Oregon Shakespeare Festival (OSF).

4.1.4. Support the development of convention centers (strategy 5.2.4) that can hold meetings, conferences, sports tournaments, and arts and cultural events.

- Work collaboratively to attract conferences and small conventions from outside the region to hold events at the center, especially in the region's target sectors.

4.2. Deepen partnerships among economic development and tourism.

4.2.1. Leverage the region's transportation assets and partners, such as the Rogue Valley International Medford Airport (MFR).

4.3. Leverage the region's thriving arts and culture industry to promote the region's amenities outside the Rogue Valley and also within the region.

4.3.1. Promote awareness of smaller arts and cultural events, such as the Rooster Crow, Art in Bloom, Art in the Garden, Art Along the Rogue, Concerts in the Park, Made in Southern Oregon, Taste of the Rogue, and others.

- Encourage residents, as part of the shop local campaign (strategy 5.2.3), to patronize events and activities in the region.

4.3.2. Support the Ashland Independent Film Festival, Boatnik, Britt Music & Arts Festival, OSF, the Rogue Valley Symphony, the Siskiyou Bluegrass and Folk Festival and other initiatives to engage communities with access to arts and cultural programming.

4.4. Grow the region's year-round outdoor recreation and organized sporting industries.

4.4.1. Support recreational facilities that draw tourism, such as the Lithia Driveway Fields and Rogue X in Medford.

4.4.2. Diversify outdoor recreation offerings to include year-round opportunities and promote tourism at lesser-known destinations, such as Butte Falls and Cave Junction.

- Support an increase of summer season activities, such as hiking and biking at Mt. Ashland, and work collaboratively to identify and overcome any barriers.
- Coordinate with DMOs to increase marketing of year-round tourism opportunities (strategy 4.1.2).
- Deepen relationships with recreation providers (e.g., rafting operations, fishing guides, mountaineering/hiking guides) to understand their needs and challenges.

4.4.3. Support the development of facilities that encourage tourism and longer stays, including boutique hotels and sporting venues.

4.5. Grow the region's agritourism industry and promote the region's unique culinary experiences. Expand farm-to-table offerings and partnerships among producers (farms) and makers (chefs/artisans).

4.5.1. Highlight the region's renowned wineries and promote events such as wine and food tours. Support the Rogue Valley Vintners association and tourism organizations to promote awareness of local vineyards.

4.5.2. Support initiatives that promote the local culinary scene, such as Restaurant Week, and festivals, such as Battle of the Bones barbecue competition in Central Point. The region is home to award-winning restaurants, including a James Beard awardee in Ashland.

- Encourage collaboration and creative idea generation to promote the local culinary industry, such as encouraging partnerships between restaurants and local food start-ups, such as the Food and Beverage Committee in Josephine County.

INITIATIVE 5. PLACEMAKING

Nurture an environment that preserves Southern Oregon's quality of life for residents, businesses, and visitors. Placemaking is defined as "the process of making quality places."⁽⁵⁾ Creating quality places is an essential component of building dynamic and vibrant communities, where people want to live. Although placemaking is typically associated with the physical or built environment, placemaking will also encompass the qualitative components that create a welcoming community. Communities that can cultivate, retain, and attract talent have a significant advantage in the competitive landscape of economic development. Therefore, it is critical for the Rogue Valley to prioritize these investments. In addition to nurturing placemaking for the benefit of residents and visitors, the region also needs to be attentive to the needs of businesses. The following recommendations tie together the strategies that strengthen the region's competitiveness across all five CEDS initiatives.

STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

5.1. Amplify access to affordable housing options across the region. Housing development has not kept pace with population growth in the region. Furthermore, the lack of executive housing and mid-priced houses has tightened the supply of traditionally entry-level homes. Although there is no one approach to solving this problem, there are numerous resources and best practices that have shown to improve housing affordability.

5.1.1. Explore creative and nontraditional options to increase the supply of workforce housing in the region.

- Identify potential sites for in-fill and redevelopment opportunities, especially in urban areas.
- Understand and identify roadblocks to redevelopment and collaboratively work toward solutions.
- Review best practices from other parts of the country on increasing housing supply.

5.1.2. Advocate for transit-oriented development (TOD) and increased density in urban areas. TOD is a form of community development that includes a mixture of housing, office, retail, and other amenities integrated into a walkable neighborhood concentrated within a half mile of quality public transportation.⁽⁶⁾

- Prioritize multimodal transportation solutions, including walkable and bikeable developments and ensure development aligns with public transportation infrastructure (strategy 5.4.3).

(5) Project for Public Spaces, "What Is Placemaking?" 2018, www.pps.org/article/what-is-placemaking.

(6) Federal Transit Administration, "Transit-Oriented Development," 11 April 2019, www.transit.dot.gov/TOD.

5.1.3. Cultivate relationships with real estate developers, landowners, and community partners to address shortages in workforce housing.

5.1.4. Engage partners traditionally outside of economic development to work toward common goals, such as SOAPP, ACCESS, and Rogue Community Health.

- Maintain a virtual presence (SOREDI Website and social media) where partners can find regional updates and news. Proactively work with organizations across the region, supporting common community goals.

5.1.5. Leverage financing programs and investment incentives, such as Opportunity Zones (OZs) and Enterprise Zones (EZs), to encourage affordable housing.

- Coordinate an outreach program to understand the needs and goals of the communities located in OZs and EZs. This should be done in conjunction with any active community organizations, such as neighborhood associations, if applicable.
- Develop an Opportunity Zones prospectus to highlight opportunities in the region. Accelerator for America created an Opportunity Zone Investment Prospectus Guide⁽⁷⁾ that can be used as a template. The website also includes examples for other communities.

5.2. Support quality-of-place initiatives that contribute to the unique identity of Southern Oregon's communities and encourage the development of vibrant downtowns.

5.2.1. Support arts and cultural amenities, especially in downtowns. Encourage festivals like the Britt Music & Arts Festival, OSF, the Rogue Valley Symphony, and others to perform at alternative venues in the region (e.g., Holly Theatre in Medford). Events can be held year-round to boost tourism resiliency (strategy 4.4).

- Support the modernization and revitalization of existing festival and event facilities in Southern Oregon, including the Jackson County Fairgrounds amphitheater and the Rogue Bowl.
- Support art and cultural amenities in downtown spaces in both counties, such as the Hivve Art Hub, the Grants Pass Museum of Art, the Cabaret, Camelot Theater, the Craterian, and more.

5.2.2. Support organizations that focus on downtown vitality, such as chambers of commerce, main streets, and downtown associations.

- Encourage efforts in underutilized downtown spaces to bolster foot traffic and community engagement. This may include beautification efforts, like landscaping, lighting, and wayfinding.
- Support public safety efforts to encourage pedestrian engagement.

(7) Accelerator for America, "Opportunity Zone Investment Prospectus Guide," October 2018, www.acceleratorforamerica.com/OZGuide.

5.2.3. Support Rogue Valley shop local initiatives and campaigns that highlight the region's craft and boutique industries, events, and arts and cultural amenities (strategy 4.3). In addition to supporting the local economy, buying local fosters resilient downtowns and creates a sense of community.

- Leverage social media and the regional brand to promote the initiative (strategy 1.4).

5.2.4. Champion placemaking projects that create community amenities for residents, including regional convention centers (strategy 4.1.4).

5.2.5. Support the preservation and revitalization of historic and historically significant buildings, especially in underserved areas and urban renewal districts.

5.3. Collaborate with partners who prioritize healthy, safe, and vibrant communities.

5.3.1. Adopt a comprehensive approach to wildland fire management and air quality standards through partnering and collaborative efforts.(8)

- Encourage partner communication on adverse air quality events in the region. Expand regional fire and air quality resources in Jackson and Josephine counties.
- Support partner platforms such as Jackson Alerts and Smokewise Ashland(9) to inform community residents on air quality standards.

(8) Grants Pass-Medford ranked #8 out of #10, in 'Cities with the Worst Air Quality in the U.S.' (Steven Ross Johnson, US News. 2024, April 25.)

www.usnews.com/news/healthiest-communities/articles/cities-with-the-worst-air-quality-in-the-u-s.

(9) Smokewise, www.smokewiseashland.org.

IMPLEMENTATION PLANNING AND NEXT STEPS

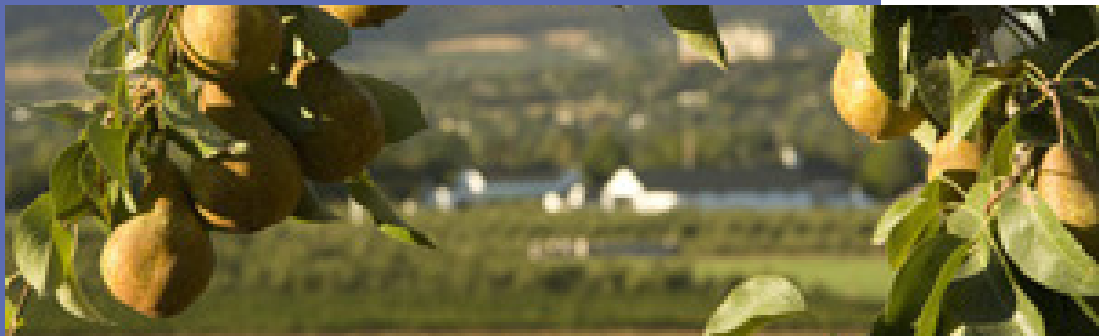


This plan represents the culmination of months of strategic planning that engaged a diverse range of stakeholders from across Josephine and Jackson Counties. The CEDS offers a coordinated roadmap to guide Southern Oregon's growth and resilience over the next five years. Its success will depend on the continued engagement and shared commitment of the One Rogue Valley Reimagined Alliance in advancing the strategies outlined in this document. This is a pivotal opportunity for the region to build toward a more vibrant future.

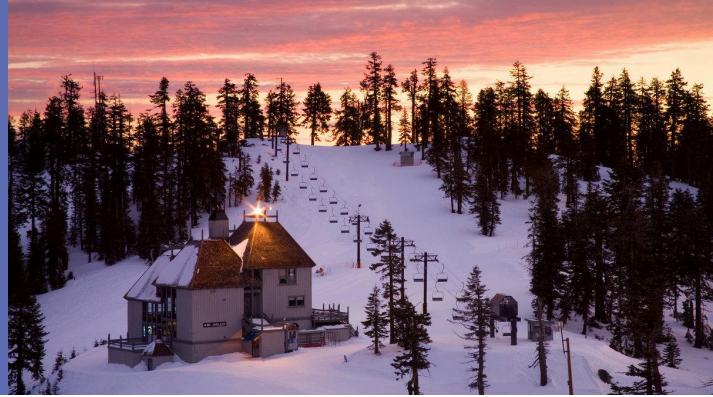
Designed to be a dynamic and adaptive framework, the CEDS will evolve in response to emerging needs and priorities within the community. The leadership team of the Reimagined Alliance will play a central role in stewarding this process—supporting implementation, monitoring progress, and guiding strategic adjustments. Continued partnerships across the public and private sectors will be vital to translating this plan into meaningful, long-lasting impact. No single entity can implement this work alone; progress will come through collaboration, shared leadership, and a collective investment in the region's success.

Strong relationships across jurisdictions and sectors remain essential to effective implementation. As Southern Oregon heads into the next five years, the region is well positioned to pursue its goals with renewed alignment, purpose, and partnership.

We invite all community leaders, organizations, and stakeholders to stay engaged, share insights, and contribute to this shared vision. By working together, we can build on our strengths, address challenges collaboratively, and shape a prosperous future for all who call Southern Oregon home.



SWOT ANALYSIS



STRENGTHS

- Strong regional collaboration.
- Established industry base with growth in healthcare and arts.
- Abundant natural resources supporting tourism and recreation.
- Robust community colleges and workforce training programs.
- Strategic infrastructure, including airports, rail, and I-5 access.

WEAKNESSES

- Limited affordable housing supply.
- Aging population and shrinking workforce pipeline.
- Broadband access gaps in rural areas.
- Historic underinvestment in certain infrastructure sectors.
- Labor shortages across key industries
- Wildfire and smoke impacts on livability, retention, and recruitment

Sources: Data USA; Rogue Valley Times.

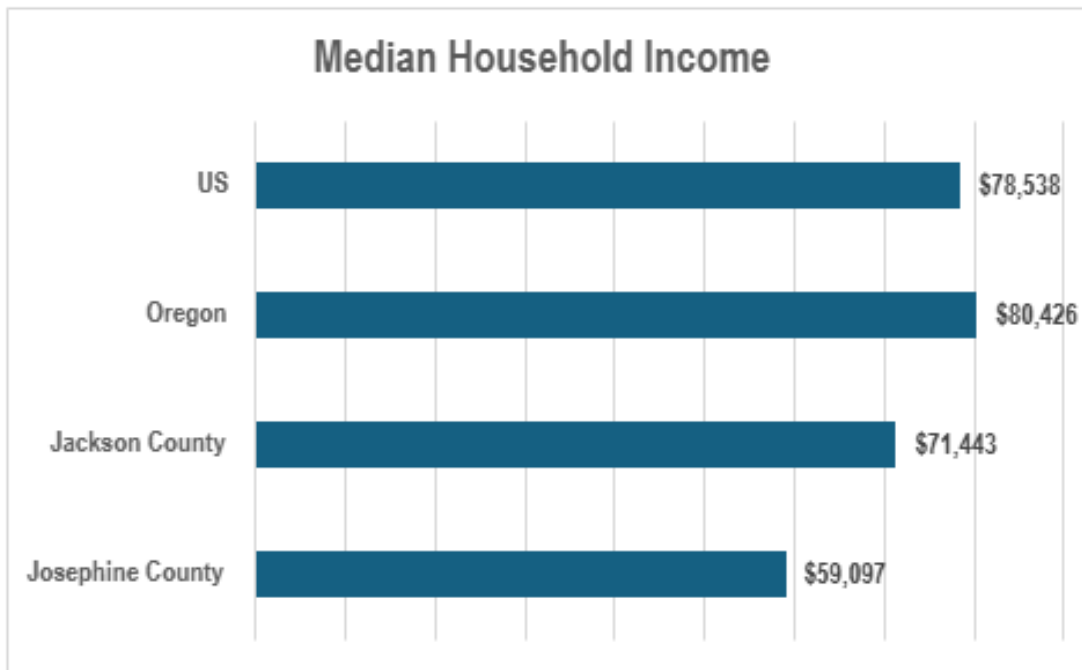
OPPORTUNITIES

- Diverse industry base with growth in education, manufacturing, and technology.
- Expansion of workforce development and apprenticeship programs.
- Support for business retention and expansion.
- Attraction of remote workers to the area.
- Investments in wildfire resilience and climate adaptation.
- Enhancement of innovation through public-private partnerships.

THREATS

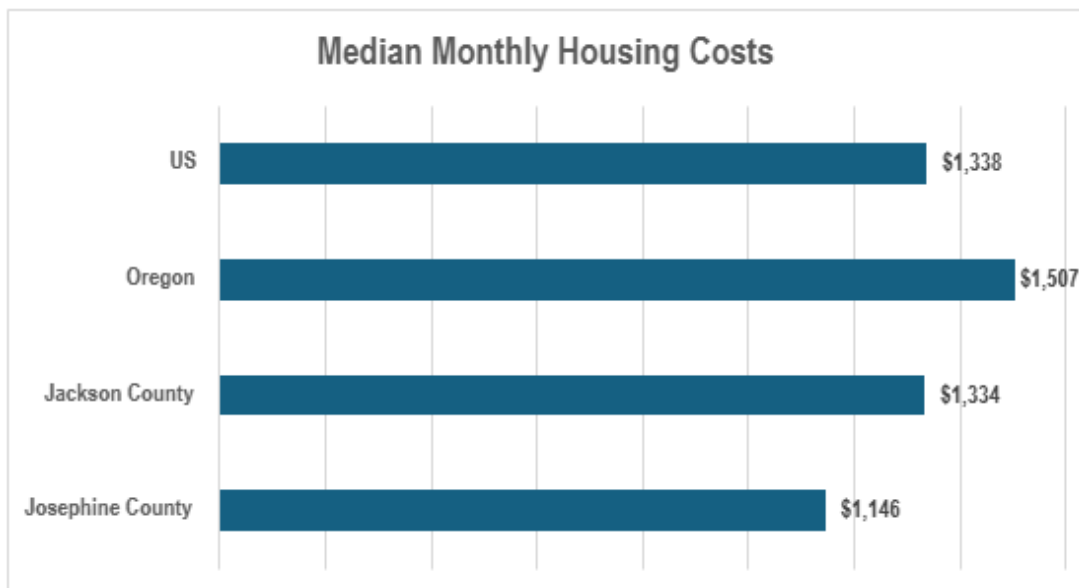
- Wildfires and other climate-related disruptions.
- Rising housing and living costs potentially displacing workers.
- Declining youth retention and outmigration.
- Uncertainty in public funding and policy changes.

HOUSING



Source

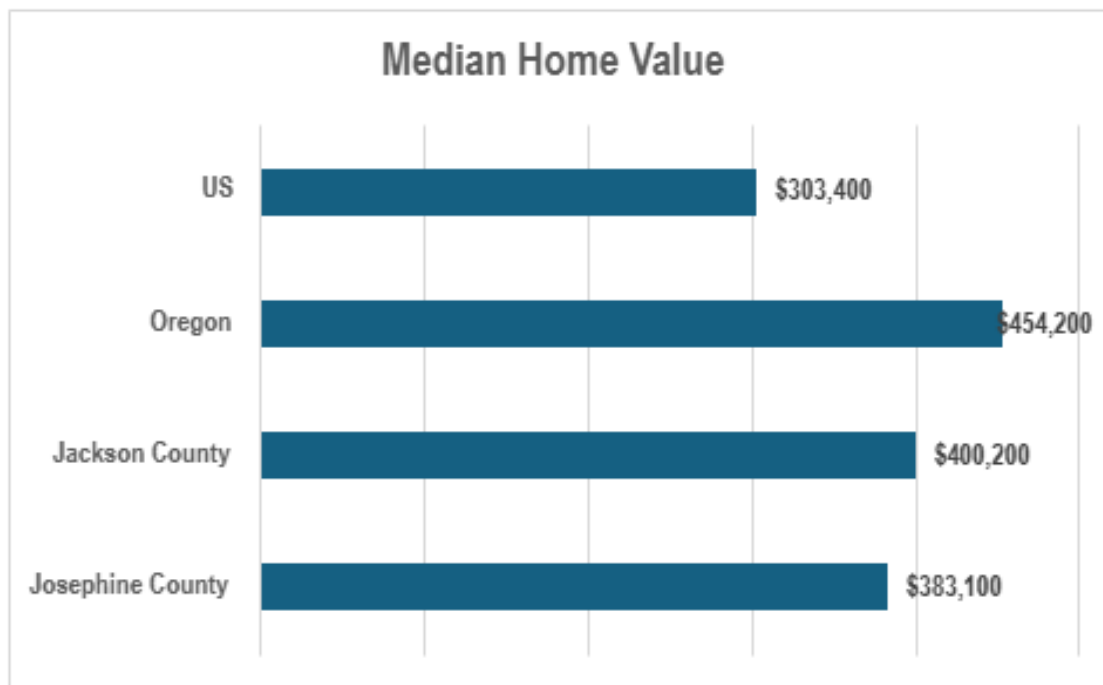
U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey 5-Year S1901 Tables



Source

U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey 5-Year B25105 Tables

HOUSING



Source

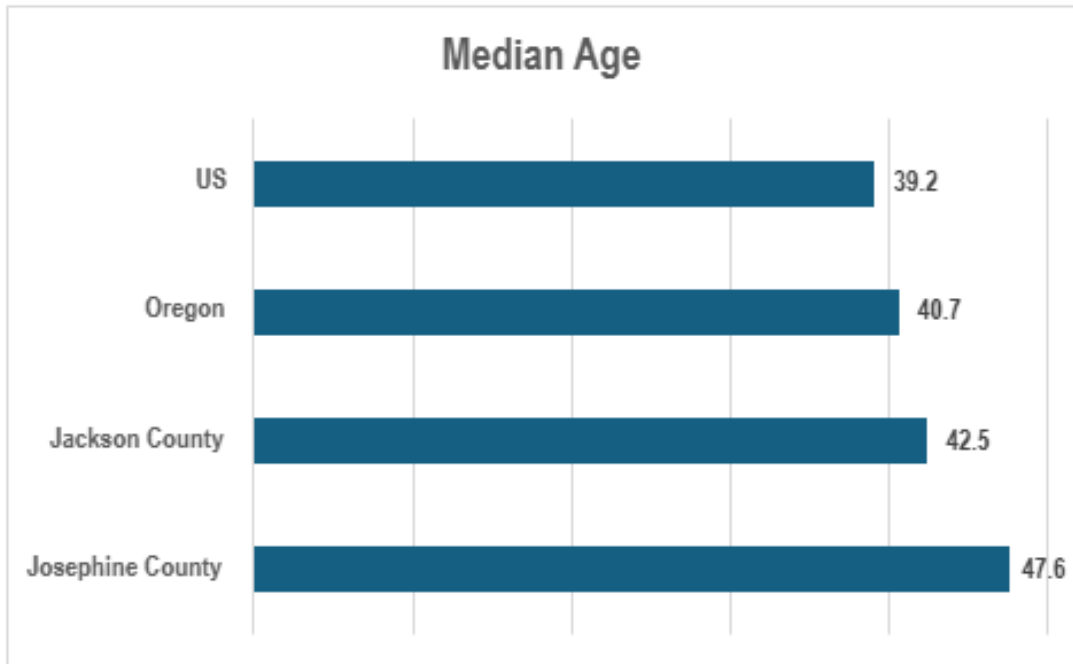
U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey 5-Year DP04 Tables



Source

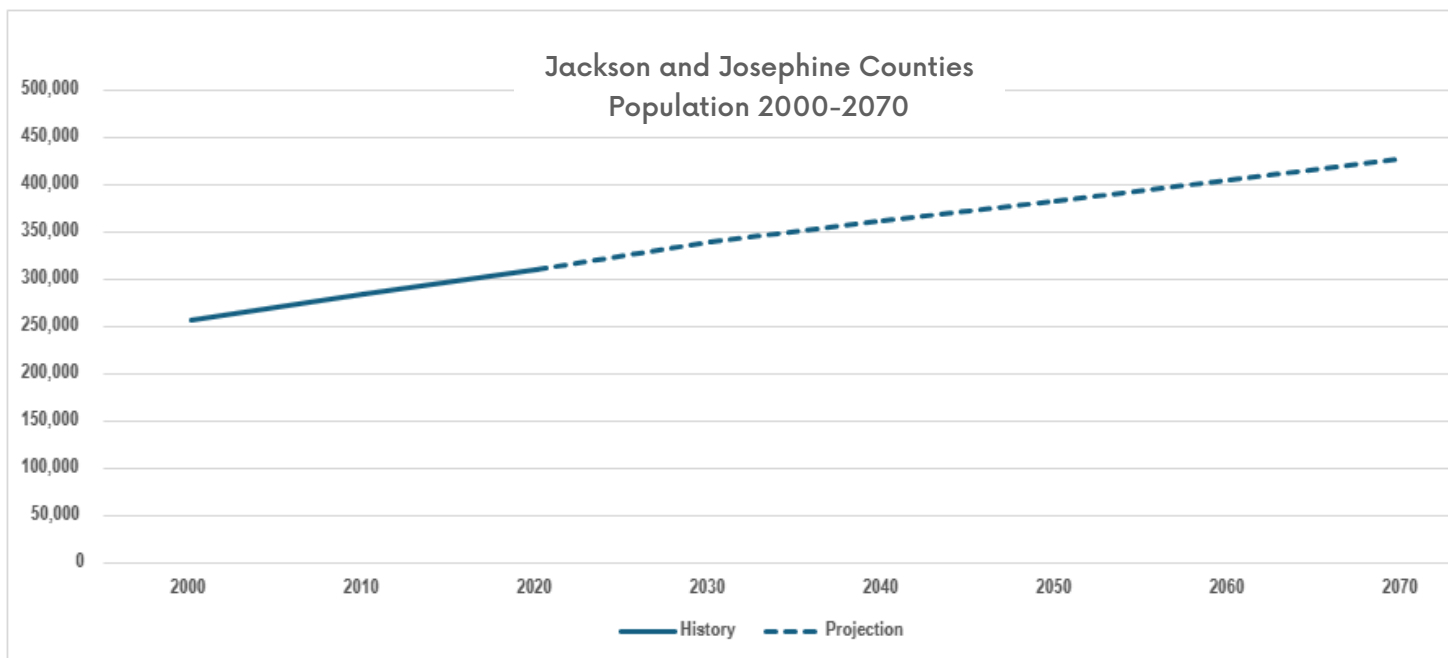
U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey 5-Year DP04 Tables

DEMOGRAPHICS



Source

U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey 5-Year S0101 Tables

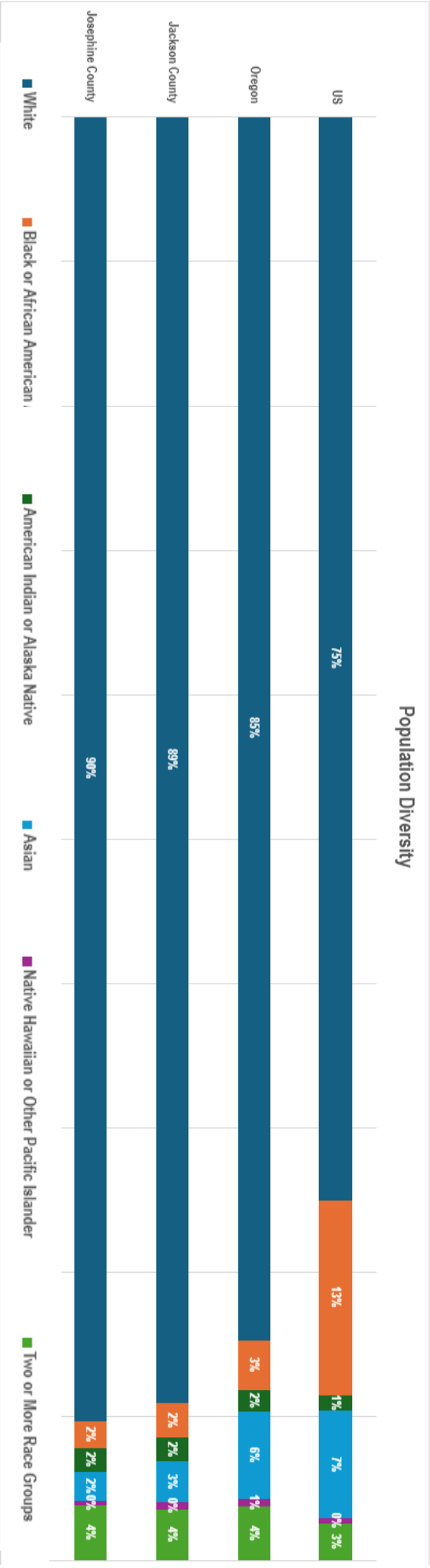


Sources

Portland State University Annual Population Report Tables

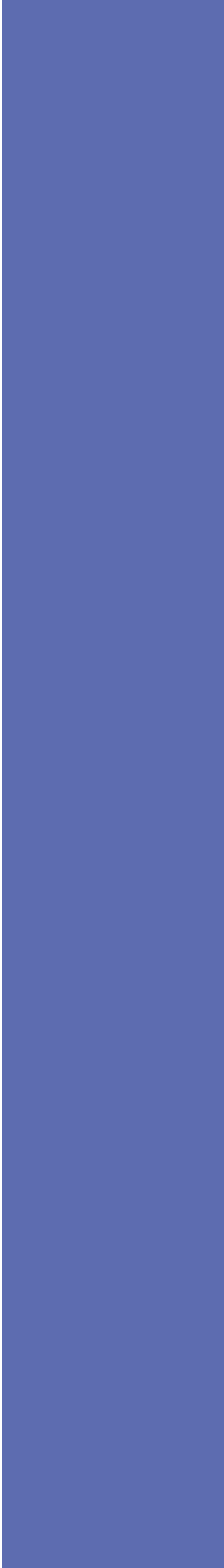
Portland State University Population Forecasts

DEMOGRAPHICS

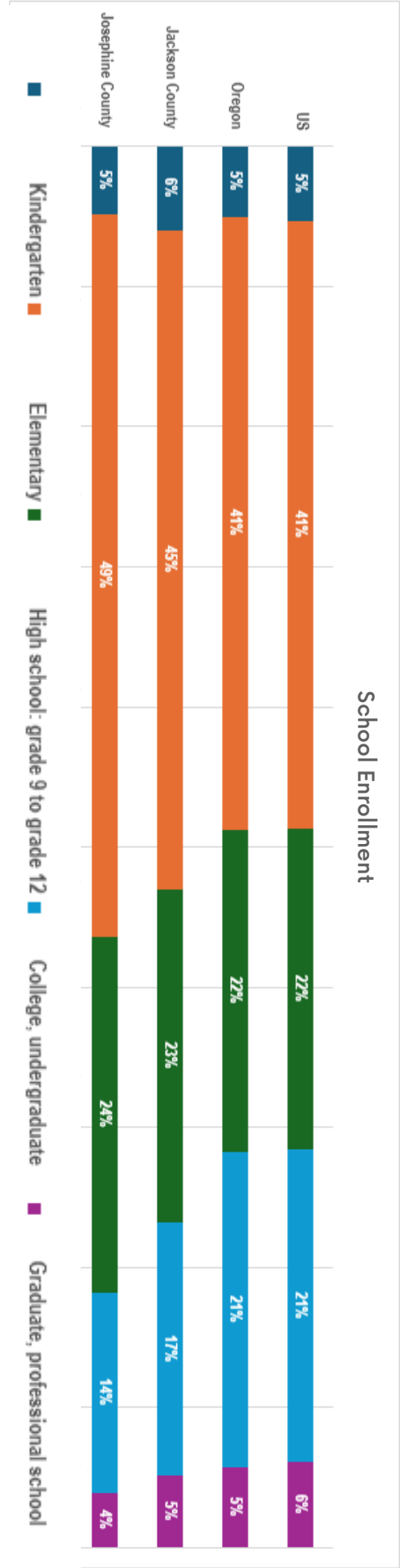


Source

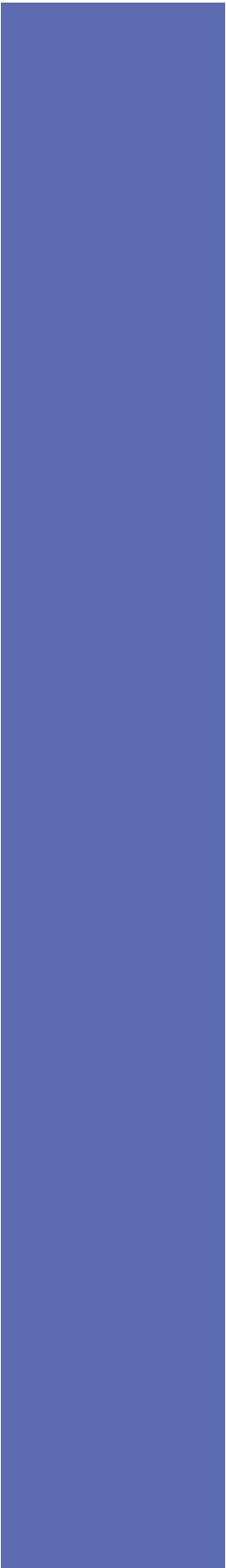
U.S. Census Bureau Quarterly Workforce Indicators



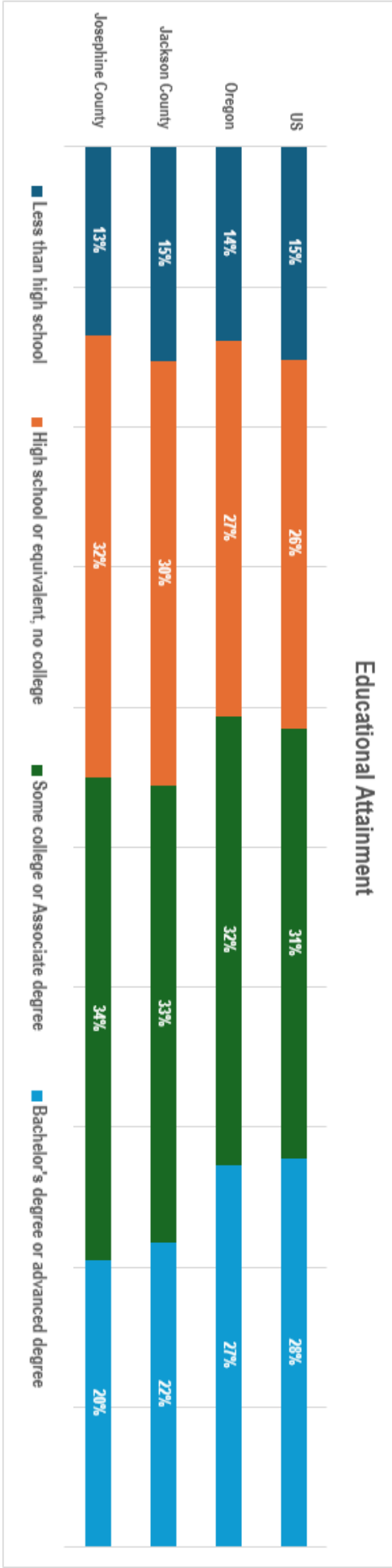
DEMOGRAPHICS



Source
U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey 5-Year S1401 Tables



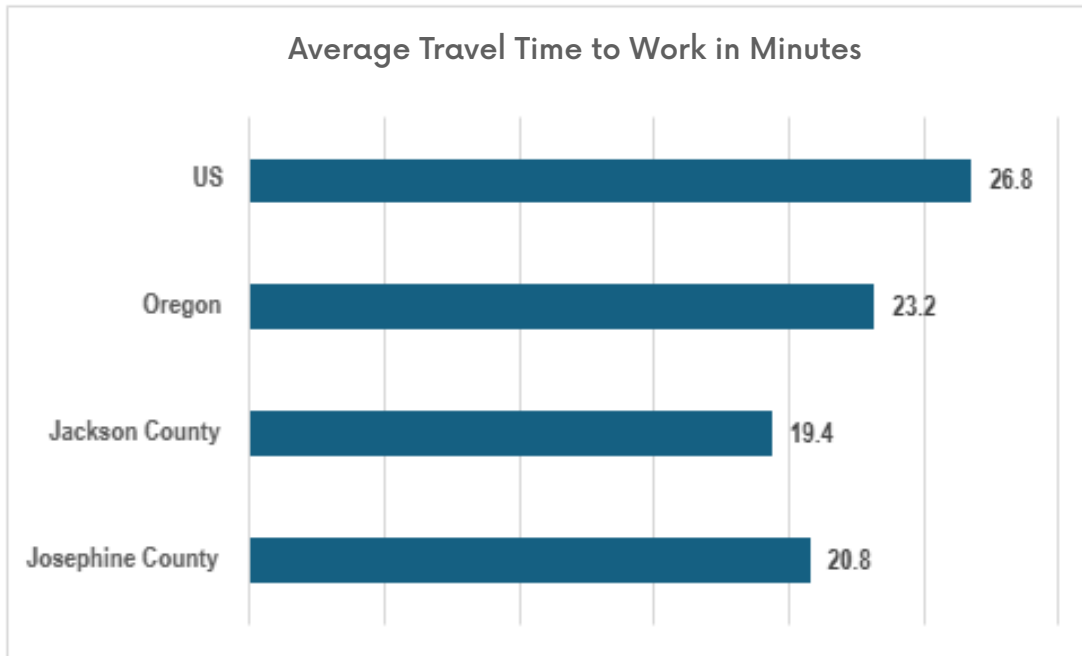
DEMOGRAPHICS



Source
U.S. Census Bureau Quarterly Workforce Indicators

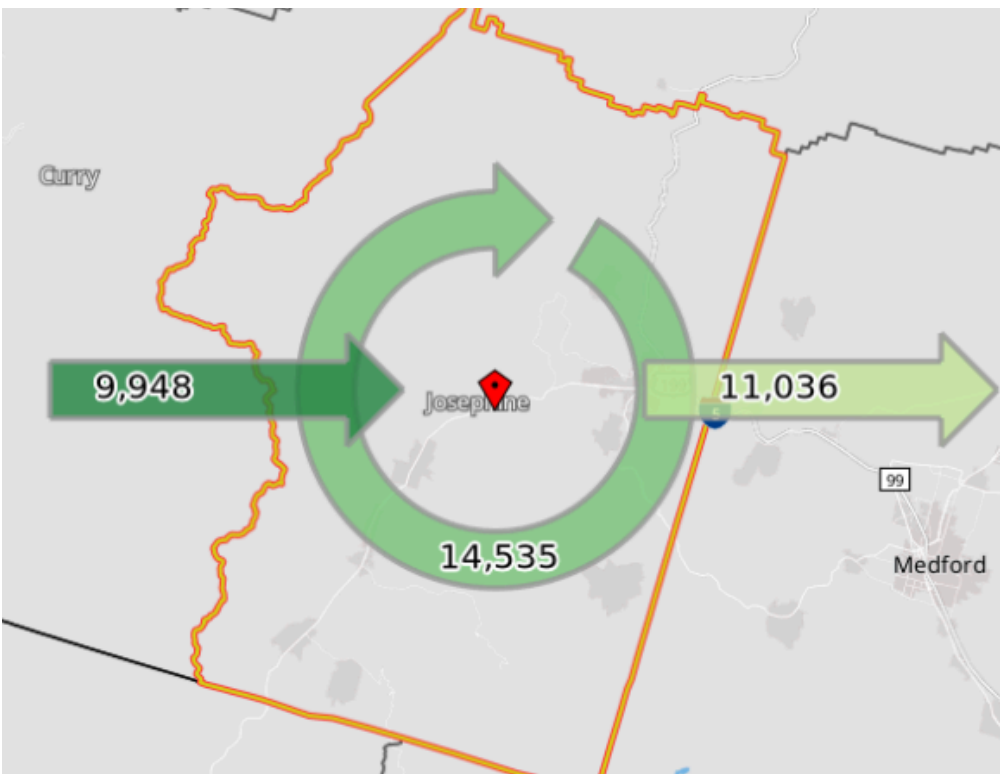
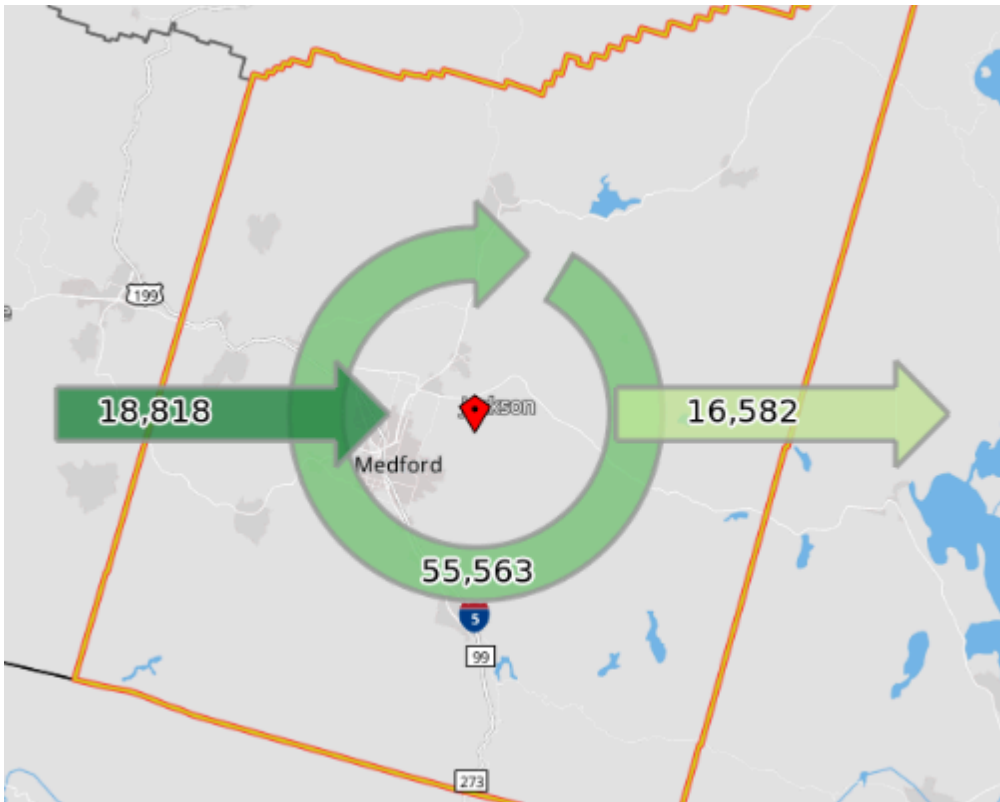


COMMUTING



Source
U.S. Census Reporter

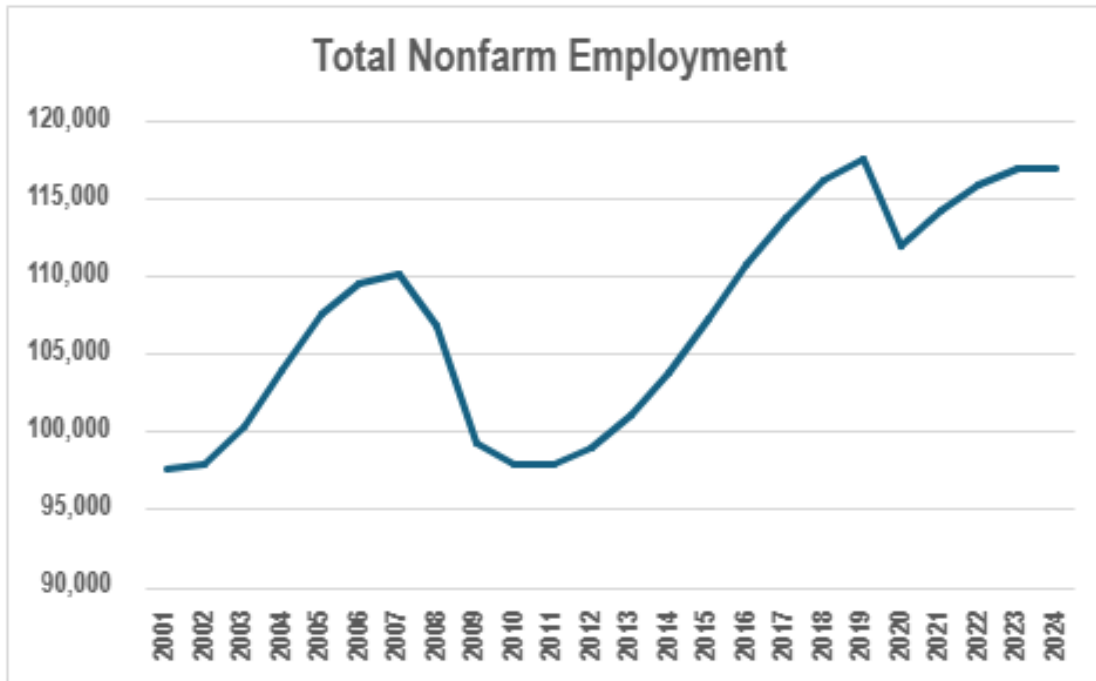
COMMUTING



Source

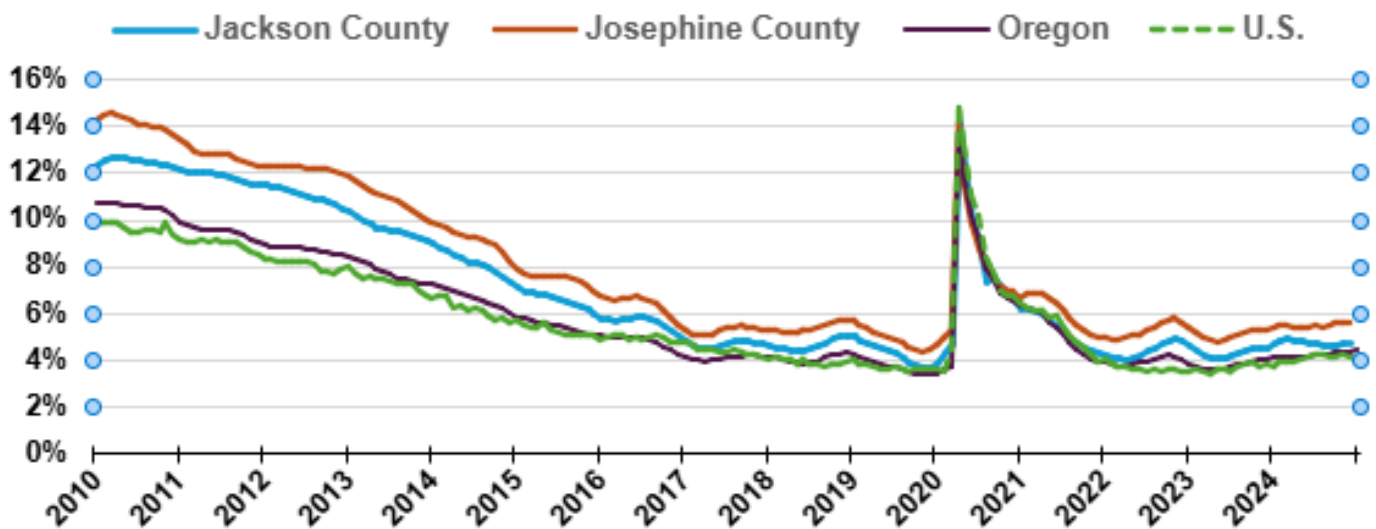
U.S. Census Bureau Local Employment Dynamics

EMPLOYMENT



Source

[Oregon Employment Department Current Employment Statistics](#)



Source

[Oregon Employment Department Local Area Unemployment Statistics](#)

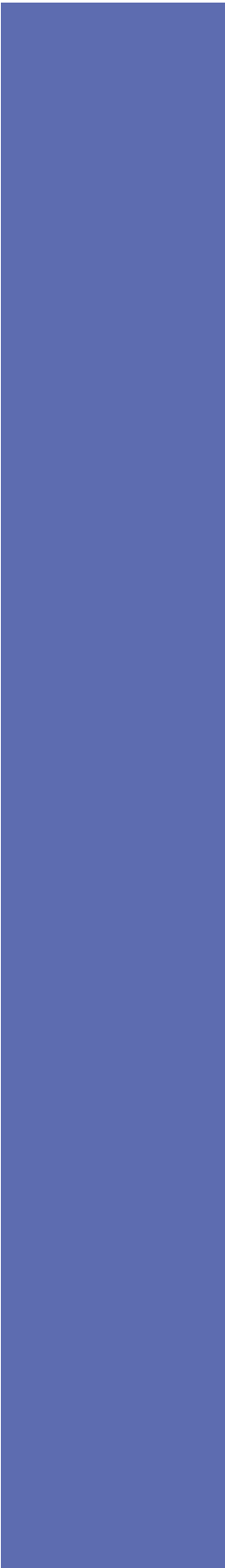
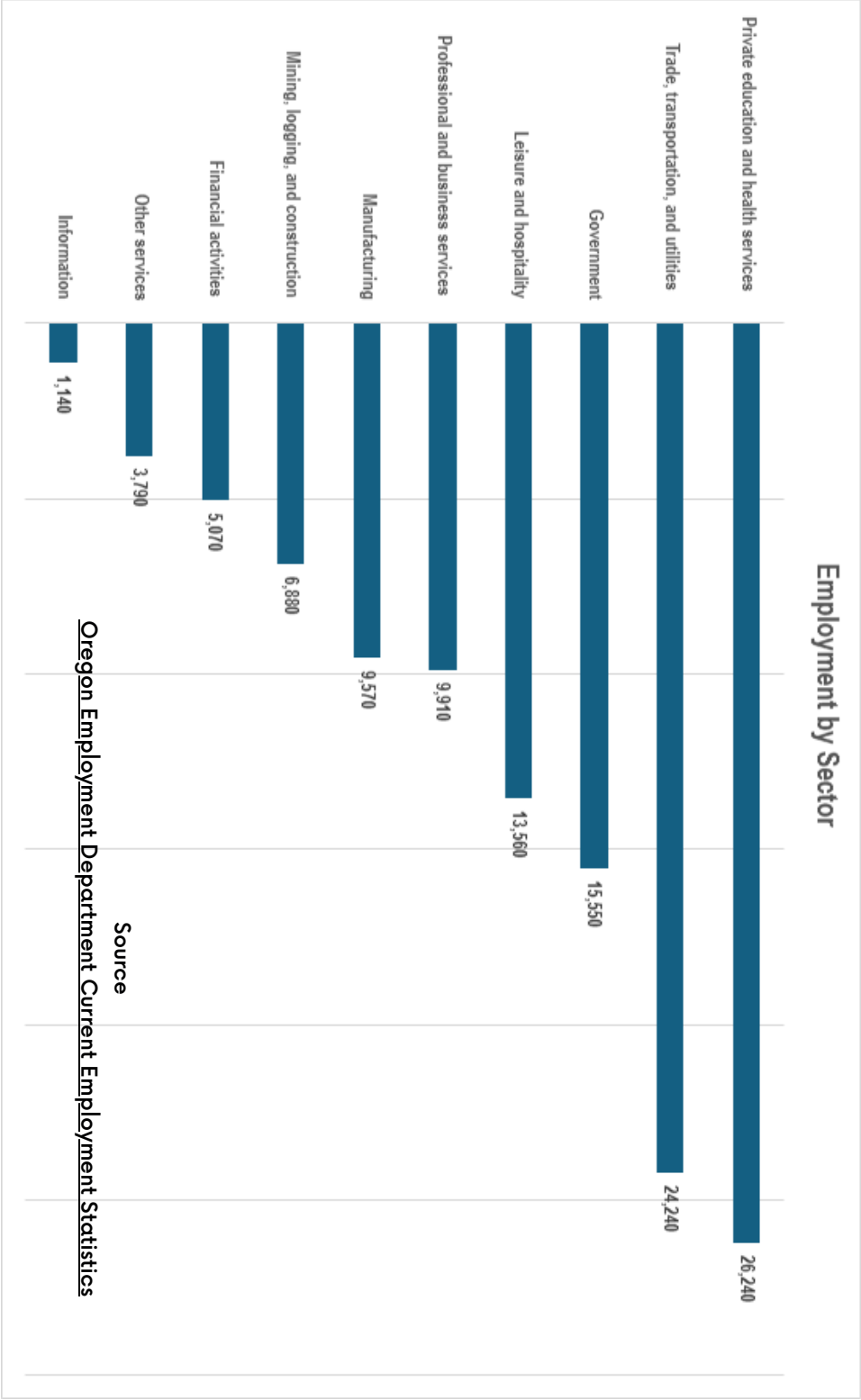
EMPLOYMENT BY SECTOR

March 2025	Jackson County	Josephine County
Industry	Employment	Employment
Total nonfarm employment	89,150	26,800
Total private	77,210	23,190
Mining, logging, and construction	5,660	1,220
Mining and logging	460	100
Construction	5,200	1,120
Manufacturing	6,810	2,760
Durable goods	-	-
Wood product manufacturing	-	530
Trade, transportation, and utilities	19,090	5,150
Wholesale trade	2,600	580
Retail trade	13,170	4,010
Transportation, warehousing, and utilities	3,320	560
Information	900	240
Financial activities	3,530	1,540
Professional and business services	8,100	1,810
Private education and health services	20,110	6,130
Health care and social assistance	19,130	-
Health care	-	-
Leisure and hospitality	10,240	3,320
Accommodation and food services	8,730	-
Other services	2,770	1,020
Government	11,940	3,610
Federal government	1,900	270
State government	1,290	510
State education		-
Local government	8,750	2,830
Local education	5,540	1,990
Local government excluding educational services	-	840

Source

Oregon Employment Department Current Employment Statistics

EMPLOYMENT BY SECTOR



NET GROWTH BY SECTOR

Rogue Valley, March 2015	
Industry	Employment
Total nonfarm employment	104,820
Trade, transportation, and utilities	22,630
Private education and health services	19,540
Government	16,060
Leisure and hospitality	12,750
Manufacturing	10,220
Professional and business services	9,040
Financial activities	4,910
Mining, logging, and construction	4,550
Other services	3,550
Information	1,570

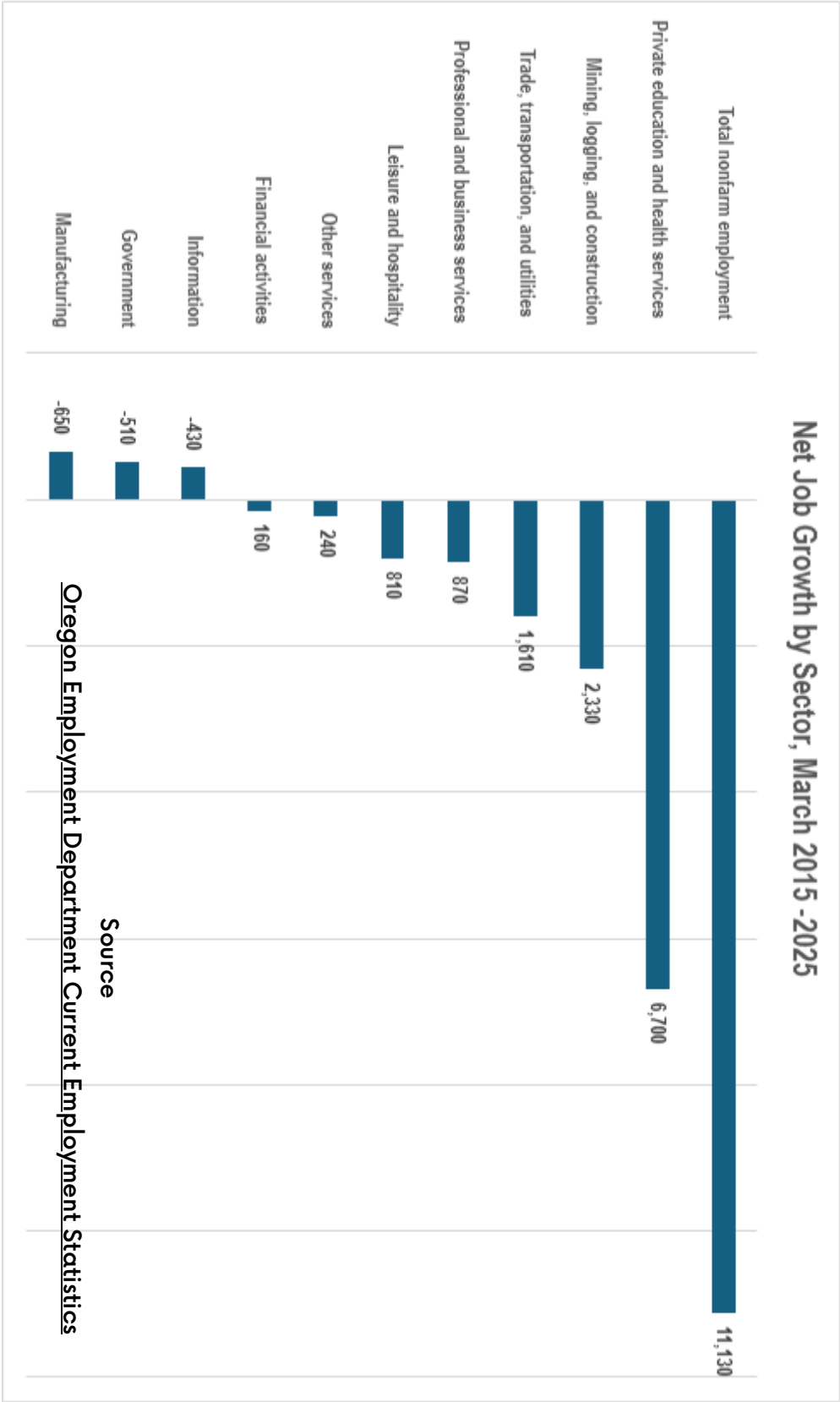
Rogue Valley, March 2025	
Industry	Employment
Total nonfarm employment	115,950
Private education and health services	26,240
Trade, transportation, and utilities	24,240
Government	15,550
Leisure and hospitality	13,560
Professional and business services	9,910
Manufacturing	9,570
Mining, logging, and construction	6,880
Financial activities	5,070
Other services	3,790
Information	1,140

Rogue Valley, March 2015-2025	
Industry	Employment
Total nonfarm employment	11,130
Private education and health services	6,700
Mining, logging, and construction	2,330
Trade, transportation, and utilities	1,610
Professional and business services	870
Leisure and hospitality	810
Other services	240
Financial activities	160
Information	-430
Government	-510
Manufacturing	-650

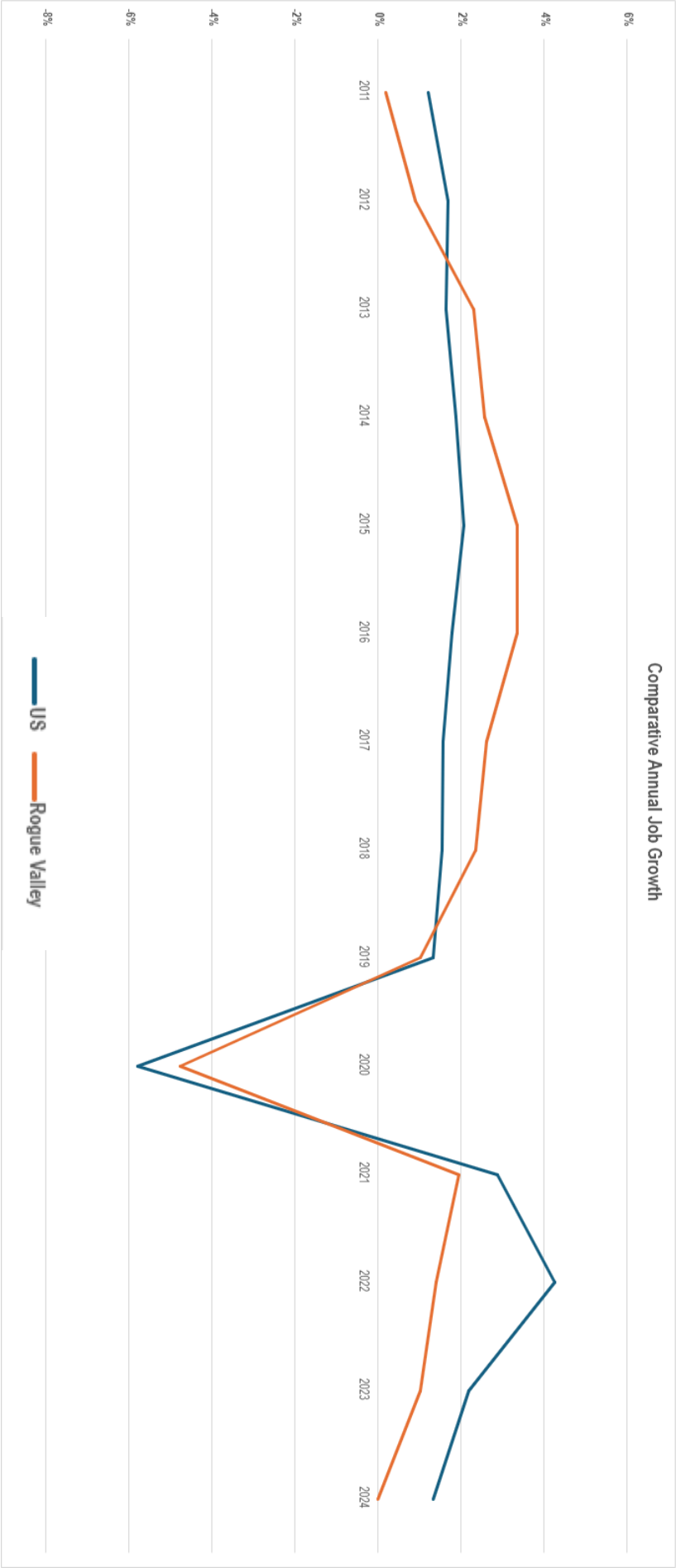
Source

Oregon Employment Department Current Employment Statistics

NET GROWTH BY SECTOR

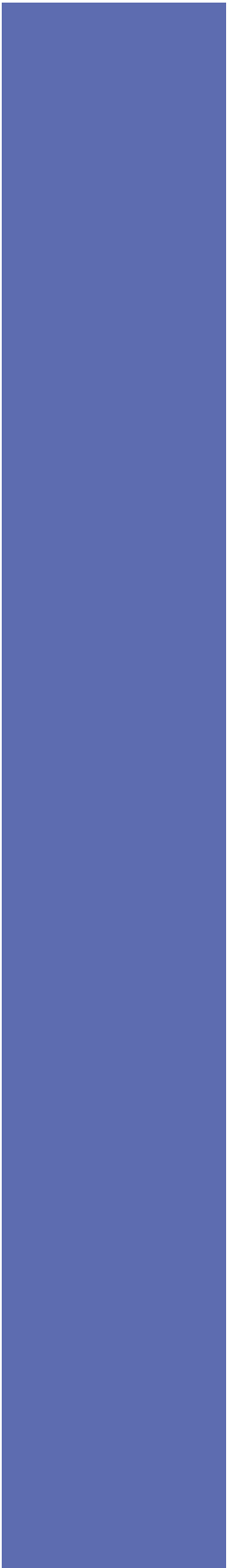


COMPARATIVE ANNUAL JOB GROWTH



Source

Federal Reserve Bank of St Louis



CEDS COMMITTEE MEMBERS & PARTNERS

AARON AUSLAND Ausland Group	DAVID ELLIOTT Boise Cascade	LISA PARKS Rogue Community College
JESSICA AYRES City of Medford	TOM FISCHER ReMax Platinum Commercial	DANA PEARCE City of Grants Pass
CARRIE BOHL SORED I	KIM FREEZE SO Innovation Hub/SORED I	TERRILL ROPER SORED I
AMY BROWNE SORED I	T J HOLMES Travel Medford	CASEY SHILLAM Southern Oregon University
TANEEA BROWNING City of Central Point	TERRY HOPKINS Grants Pass & Josephine County Chamber	ABIGAIL SKELTON SORED I
BRAD CAPENER SOESD	ANNIE JENKINS Downtown Medford Assoc.	SANDRA SLATTERY Ashland Chamber of Commerce
AARON CUBIC City of Grants Pass	AMBER JUDD Rogue Valley Int'l-Medford Airport	HEATHER STAFFORD Rogue Workforce Partnership
RYAN DEROO SORED I	JULIET LONG Rogue Community College	JAYMES TADLOCK SORED I
DAVID DOTERRER Jackson County Liaison	DANIEL MARPLE Herb Pharm	MARTA TARANTSEY Business Oregon
CHRIS DUBOSE CEDS Committee Chair/ First Interstate Bank	ELI MATTHEWS Chamber of Medford & Jackson County	STEVE VINCENT Avista Utilities

THANK YOU

To all of the individuals and partners who provided feedback during the reimagining of this strategy.

