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Press Release
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

ACCESS RELEASES KEY FINDINGS FROM 2025 COMMUNITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Medford, October 2nd – As the Community Action Agency for Jackson County, ACCESS conducts a Community Needs Assessment (CNA) every three years to better understand community challenges and guide program planning, strategic priorities, and partnerships. The CNA is a tool for identifying current needs related to housing, health, education, transportation, and economic opportunity.

In the Summer of 2025, ACCESS partnered with Pacific Research & Evaluation (PRE) to collect and analyze data using a mixed-methods approach. Their research, which included surveys, data analysis, and community-based focus groups conducted across Jackson County, resulted in a 111-page report, providing a comprehensive understanding of the experiences, needs, and priorities of low-income communities throughout the county.

The PRE team discovered countywide concerns as well as specific struggles facing our senior communities, people of color, and those living in more rural locations. Many expressed concerns about the lack of affordable rental housing and reliable transportation.

KEY FINDINGS:

- A lack of affordable rental housing is cited as a “big concern”.
- Transportation barriers limit access to essential services such as employment, healthcare, and food.
- Food Insecurity affects over one-third of low-income households.
- Healthcare access gaps persist across service types such as mental health care, dental care and preventative ongoing care.
- Benefit cliffs and system navigation create additional barriers for ALICE families and individuals.

In addition to the qualitative and quantitative data collected through the CNA, PRE utilized data from publicly available data sources such as the 2024 Point-in Time Count of the homeless populations and the 2023 United for ALICE (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed) Oregon County Report to provide a high-level overview of the population and social and economic conditions in Jackson County. The United for ALICE Oregon County Report provides estimates of working households earning above the Federal Poverty Level, but still struggle to afford basic needs like housing, childcare, food, transportation, and healthcare. The report found that nearly half of households in Jackson County (43%) fall below the ALICE

threshold, including 13% living below the Federal Poverty Line and 30% who earn above poverty but still cannot afford basic necessities.

The complete 2025 Community Needs Assessment can be found at:

<http://www.accesshelps.org/community-needs-assessment/>

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ABOUT ACCESS

ACCESS provides food, warmth, shelter, and other essential services to Jackson County's low-income children, families, seniors, veterans, and people with disabilities. As the Community Action Agency of Jackson County, Oregon, ACCESS has been helping residents break the cycle of poverty since 1976. Last year, tens of thousands of people received assistance from ACCESS's broad continuum of services, including obtaining safe, affordable housing, rental assistance, utility assistance, weatherization, free loaned durable medical equipment, and healthy food.

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