



CONTACT:

Gracie Solis
Marketing & Communications Supervisor
Phone (541) 816-1567
gsolis@accesshelps.org

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

ACCESS Releases Findings from Community Needs Assessment

Medford, January 9, 2023: ACCESS, Jackson County's Community Action Agency, has completed a community needs assessment to measure the causes and conditions of poverty in Jackson County. At the top of the list — the high cost of housing.

In the spring of 2022, ACCESS contracted with Southern Oregon Research Center (SOURCE) to complete a thorough qualitative and quantitative study of local communities. Their research, which included surveys, focus groups, and data analysis, resulted in a 145-page report.

The SOURCE team discovered county-wide concerns as well as specific struggles facing our senior population, members of the Latino community, and those living in rural areas. The lack of affordable housing and the burden of housing-related expenses surfaced as critical issues.

More than half of those who are renting are considered cost-burdened, paying between 30 percent and 49 percent of their household income for housing costs. Thirty-three percent of homeowners with a mortgage are also cost-burdened. Jackson County ranks higher than state and national averages for those who are cost-burdened or severely cost-burdened (those with 50 percent or more of their household income dedicated to housing costs). According to the US Census Bureau, Jackson County's poverty rate is also higher than state and national averages with more than 29,600 residents falling below the poverty line.

"ACCESS provides programming designed to meet the needs of the community, including rent and utility relief, home-ownership support, nutritional support, Veterans services, and more," explained ACCESS Executive Director Carrie Borgen. "This assessment gives us a better understanding of unmet needs so we can strategically work to address them."

KEY FINDINGS

- High-cost housing market is a critical issue
- Finding employment is a concern and entry-level wages do not support housing costs
- Support is needed for utility payments, rent, and move in costs
- Elevated gas prices limit travel, decreasing access to healthcare and affordable food
- In-person, individualized case management is needed
- Cultural understanding of the Latino community is needed
- Rural areas struggle with internet and cell phone services
- Public transportation in rural areas is also a concern
- Childcare and language translation for those seeking employment is lacking

- Medford and Ashland would benefit from substance use disorder treatment and detoxification clinics
- Differences in rural and urban communities require special consideration

“People and families are struggling,” Borgen said. “If we truly want to lessen the impacts of poverty and uplift Jackson County, it will take ACCESS, federal, state and regional authorities, and all social service providers working together for change.”

Anyone seeking support is encouraged to connect with ACCESS at www.accesshelps.org or (541) 779-6691.

###

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, more than 76,000 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.

ACCESS provides equal employment opportunities (EEO) to all employees and applicants for employment without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, or genetics. In addition to federal law requirements, ACCESS complies with applicable state and local laws governing nondiscrimination in employment in every location in which the company has facilities.

ACCESS is an equal opportunity provider. ACCESS is a non-profit 501 (c)(3) organization, Federal ID No. 93-0665396.

All donations are tax deductible per tax code. No goods or services are provided in consideration of donations.

USDA Nondiscrimination Statement

SNAP and FDIPIR State or local agencies, and their subrecipients, must post the following Nondiscrimination Statement:

In accordance with federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex (including gender identity and sexual orientation), disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity.

Program information may be made available in languages other than English. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication to obtain program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotope, American Sign Language), should contact the responsible state or local agency that administers the program or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339.

To file a program discrimination complaint, a Complainant should complete a Form AD-3027, USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form which can be obtained online at: <https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/USDA-OASCR%20P-Complaint-Form-0508-0002-508-11-28-17Fax2Mail.pdf>, from any USDA office, by calling (866) 632-9992, or by writing a letter addressed to USDA. The letter must contain the complainant's name, address, telephone number, and a written description of the alleged discriminatory action in sufficient detail to inform the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (ASCR) about the nature and date of an alleged civil rights violation. The completed AD-3027 form or letter must be submitted to USDA by:

1. **mail:**
U.S. Department of Agriculture

Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; or

2. **fax:**
(833) 256-1665 or (202) 690-7442; or
3. **email:**
Program.Intake@usda.gov

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.