

Josephine County Public Health

Imagine that you had just enough money to buy food for the week, with nothing left over to pay your utility bills or buy bus fare to get to work.

Many families experiencing hunger face these tough choices every day.

Compromises and coping strategies

The poverty rate in Josephine County, Oregon is 36.89% higher than the Oregon average. In Josephine county, Oregon, an estimated 14,578 (16.7%) of 87,476 live in poverty. [Hunger in America study](#), our neighbors told us about the choices they face due to limited resources:

Goal 1: Protect communities from acute and communicable diseases through prevention initiatives that address health inequities.

- Josephine County had one CD investigator for most of the 2022 fiscal year, which did impact the case load. We added an Epidemiologist in fall of 2022.
- JCPH works with health care providers in the area for CD investigation and some of them leave messages regarding patients treated for STD's so they can be created on the Orpheus data base. I worked with The Woman's Health Center and Valley Immediate Care to communicate the data needed when leaving a message to reduce the amount of call backs. The result is call backs have been greatly reduced to obtain important info needed to create and/or complete case info required by OHA.
- As the only CD investigator during 2022, I have taken a lead position, providing outbreak training and basic training of Orpheus, Opera and Epic programs.
- I attend Medical Advisory Board meetings twice a month to be prepared for any potential outbreaks and to be informed about health risks within the community.

Goal 2: Strengthen and expand communicable disease and environmental health emergency preparedness, and the public health system and communities' ability to respond.

- Provide Food Equity Grant info to Public Schools, Assist Josephine County partnered with K12 schools through monthly meetings to monitor STD's, Food Insecurity, and Emergency Preparedness protocols.
- I worked on the approval to implement a Food Bank in JCPH, which has been slow due the possibility of moving the office in 2023. I worked with an Emergency Preparedness volunteer to create a Food Bank directory of locations with hours and contact info in the community. The directory was posted on Social Media and send via email to partners in the area. I am currently looking at starting with non-perishable goods that can be delivered by volunteers to tent communities in need.
- Additional positions for Emergency Preparedness include: Emergency Plan writer (last update was 2008) that will facilitate an updated Emergency Plans for the county. The Assistant for Emergency Prep will provide a presence at public health, other county departments, at partner organizations, and for community members to provide education and assistance in emergency preparedness. Ready supplies for pick-up by community as needed, occasional drop-off of supplies as needed.
- Communicable Disease action plans include: Creating stickers with Public Health services and contacts, to be used on bags containing condoms, lubricants and CD info.
- Bags have been delivered to Rogue Community College, Regency Care of Rogue Valley, Heart with a Mission, Adapt, The Public Library and Women's Crisis Center.
- Designing and printing Posters with the AllCare, creative team to promote CD awareness by posting in community businesses, Social Media and the JCPH website.
- JCPH included links on the new website from the CDC and Oregon Health Authority with updated information regarding Communicable Disease, How to prepare for Extreme Cold, Heat, Fires and Smoke.

Goal 3: Protect communities from environmental health threats from climate change through public health interventions that support equitable climate adaptation.

- Environmental threats in Grants Pass are Extreme heat, Extreme Cold, Smoke and Fires.
- JCPH plans to improve communication with CBO's in the area that represent isolated communities for LatinX, LGBTQ, Migrant workers, Homeless, Tribal and Veterans. A partial list of CBO's includes: SoHealthE, Rogue Action Center, Doulas Latinas International, HIV Alliance, Illinois Valley Wellness Resources, UCAN and Rogue Community College.
- I will have a fillable application ready to send out to CBO's in the area that are sponsoring events to address Environmental threats and climate concerns that impact the community. This is new for JCPH.
- I am part of the Core Team for the CHIP/CHA (All in for Health) to gain valuable health info in the community.

Goal 4: Plan for full implementation of public health modernization and submission of local modernization plans by 2025.

- Move JCPH to a more central location that will improve accessibility with public transportation close by.
- Address Food insecurities by having a Food Bank with perishable and non-perishable foods available during hours that other Food Banks are not available.
- Research adding a van for pick-up and delivery of Food products to and from the facility and to homeless communities.
- Digitizing documents in order to modernize and streamline policies and processes, while allowing digital signatures by doctors and the department director. This goal has been started in the clinic.
- Purchase and inventory Emergency products that improve to health inequities such as Head, Feet, Hand and body warmers, Air Purifiers, Rain proof coverings, Water, Non-perishable foods, Masks for smoke, Air filters, Fans and/or air conditioners that will be distributed by through CBO partnerships in the area.
- Continue to create marketing tools for print, social media and radio that address Public Health services, Communicable Disease, Food

Banks in the area, Emergency Health Tips and Reproductive Health Services.

- Continue to update the Events and Marketing calendar each quarter to address Extreme Heat, Extreme Cold, Smoke and Fires in Josephine county.
- Build long lasting relationships with rural groups through CBO's in the area to include, Tribal, LatinX, LGBTQ, Homeless, Veterans and Migrant Workers.
- Utilize the data gained from the CHP/CHA in 2023 to address inequities in the community.