

Wasco County is located at the east end of Oregon's Columbia River Gorge Scenic area and spans over almost 2400 square miles. Wasco County is bordered by the Columbia River to the north, Mt. Hood on the west, and the scenic Deschutes River to the East. The Dalles is the largest city within the county, serves as the county seat and houses 60% of the county's total population.

Quick Facts

Population 26,581
% of State Population 0.6%

Economic Diversity Score (Hachman Index) 0.388 (/1.0) 17th Highest of 36 Oregon Counties

Top 3 Industries by % of total employment (Average Annual Wage)

#1 28.7%
Health Care & Social Assistance (\$52,286)

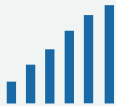
#2 20.7%
Retail Trade (\$34,629)

#3 13.5%
Accommodation and Food Services (\$24,371)

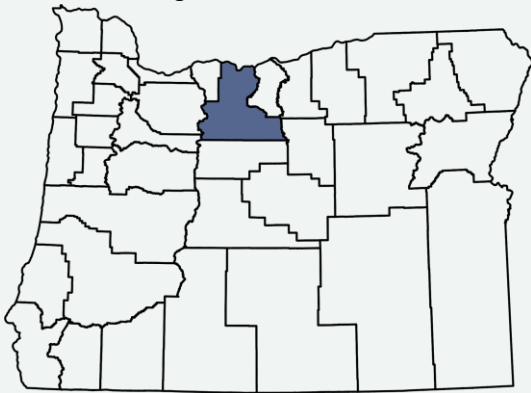
Average Annual Wages in Wasco County

\$50,389
(all industries/ownerships)

Stronger Signals of Resilience



- Wasco County employment sectors are growing in diversity and there is consistent growth in industries with higher-than-average wages.
- Average median household income is high, sitting at 84.5% of the state median income.



Weaker Signals of Resilience




- The age dependency ratio for Wasco County is 74.3, suggesting more economic pressure compared to the State's ratio of 61.8.
- In Wasco County, 33% of residents who rent and 26% of all residents are cost-burdened.
- The rental vacancy rate in Wasco County is 2.3%, lower than at the state level of 3.7%.
- Only 19.5% of people in Wasco County have earned a bachelor's degree or higher.
- 27% of Wasco County's total population are over 55 years old and currently working


	US	State	County
Median Household Income (2021 \$)	\$60,293	\$62,818	\$53,105
Median Age	37.9	39.3	40.8
% of Residents with at least High School Degree	87.6%	90.7%	86.4%
% of Renters spending 30% or more of income on housing	47%	47.5%	32.8%

City	Population
The Dalles	16,048
Outside UGBs	8,964
Dufur	608
Mosier	468
Maupin	427

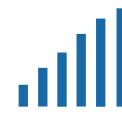
Gauging Resilience: Signal Strength Measures



Area of concern for a resilient economy. Data signals limited strength.



Area for improvement to support a resilient economy. Data signals opportunity for added resilient measures.



Area contributes to economic resilience for the community. Data signals a resilient position.

This profile measures resilience in the County using the data detailed in the **8 Questions Framework Introduction**. Some data help answer more than one question, and most questions are answered using a combination of datasets. Measuring economic resilience is challenging because many factors impact a community’s ability to recover from a shock. The elements that contribute to a more resilient community are varied, and often independently managed. It is entirely possible for a community to demonstrate economic strengths and vulnerabilities at the same time.

This framework measures the “signal strength” associated with each dataset. Within every question, the datasets with the weaker signals should be noted and further investigated. Communities should aim to have full-power resilience signals for most datasets and may want to concentrate efforts where there is limited signal strength.

Terms Used in Measuring Resilience

Term	Defined as
Age Dependency Ratio	Determined by measuring the number of dependents (young and old) in a population divided by the number of working-age people. This data point describes the level of pressure on an economy from supporting populations that are typically less active in the labor market.
Average Wages	Average of the wages earned in a particular job or industry occupation. Wages include tips, commissions, bonuses, vacation, and holiday pay, but do not include benefits.
Complete Kitchen / Complete Plumbing	Homes that have a sink with faucet, a stove or range, and a refrigerator meet the criteria for having complete kitchen facilities. Homes that have hot and cold running water, a flush toilet and a bathtub or shower meet the criteria for having complete plumbing facilities.
Cost-burdened / Severe cost-burdened Households	Households that pay more than 30% of their income for housing are considered cost-burdened. Households that pay more than 50% of their income for housing are considered severely cost-burdened.
Fastest Growing Industries (& wages)	Private industries with the highest percentage of total employment, as measured by Oregon Employment Department (OED).
Jobs to Homes Ratio	Used to examine the proportions of residents, jobs, and services in urban areas. The ratio is measured by dividing the total employment by total occupied housing units.
Median Household Income	Median of households’ income earned in the past 12 months within a geography. Income includes the income of the householder and all other individuals 15 years and over in the household (whether or not they are related to householder).
Population Growth Rate	This rate expresses the percent change in population over a given time period.
Vacancy Rate	The proportion of housing units that are not seasonal or for sale that are not occupied.

What Indicates Resilience?		
1	Does the economy have diverse and well-paid jobs?	<p>Diversified economies are more resilient.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + A distribution of jobs in higher-wage industries indicates more economic resilience - A concentration of jobs in a single industry indicates less economic resilience
2	What is the projected future of major employment industries in the region and nationally?	<p>Industries that are less subject to volatility are more resilient.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + A distribution of employment across industries that will likely remain stable indicates greater economic resilience - A concentration of employment in industries that are regulated, taxed, or that rely on natural resources introduces more risk for economic resilience
3	What is the age breakdown of residents?	<p>A mix of young, working, and older populations is indicative of a more resilient economy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Populations that are active in the labor force promote economic resilience - An aging population threatens economic resilience
4	Do people live and work in the community?	<p>In communities where people live and work, the local economy is more active and independent, and therefore more resilient.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Mix of housing types and costs indicates greater economic resilience - Limited affordable housing options and major commuter outflows indicates less economic resilience
5	How has the population grown in the last decade and what is predicted for the next 30 years?	<p>Growing populations indicate economic opportunities and resilience.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Steady and continuous growth indicates greater economic resilience - Sharp inclines and declines in populations indicate less economic resilience
6	Are residential homes able to withstand a natural hazard or weather incident?	<p>Newer homes are more likely to have been constructed to withstand natural hazards and weather incidents. Older homes and manufactured homes may be more vulnerable to damages and/or more difficult to repair.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + A sufficient supply of newer housing stock (built after 1970) indicates economic resilience - Limited newer housing stock and a decline in homebuilding over the last decade indicates less economic resilience
7	What level of education attainment and earnings are residents reaching?	<p>Residents with advanced or specialized degrees have higher earning potential. Regions that have choices for advanced education (trade schools, community colleges, four-year colleges, and universities) are better positioned to support the training of local residents.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Higher percentage of residents with advanced or specialized degrees indicates greater economic resilience - Lower percentage of residents with advanced or specialized degrees indicates less economic resilience
8	Do residents have access to health and wellness facilities?	<p>Communities with health and wellness facilities are more resilient than communities that lack these facilities. People with health insurance contribute to a more resilient economy by reserving scarce public health resources for those most in need.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Populations that are mostly insured and mostly located near health care facilities indicates greater economic resilience - Populations that have lower insurance rates and that are located farther from health care facilities indicates less economic resilience

1. Does the economy have diverse and well-paid jobs?

Resilient economies are not predominated by low-wage industries.


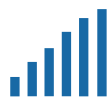
Data to Answer the Question		Results																								
Employment Data Source: QCEW + Oregon Employment Department (OED)	<p>Average Annual Wages 2021</p> <table> <tr> <td>Oregon</td> <td>\$67,880</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Wasco County</td> <td>\$50,389</td> </tr> </table> <p>Industry with Highest Employment</p> <table> <thead> <tr> <th>Industry</th> <th>Wages</th> <th>% of Total Emp.</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>1. Health Care and Social Assistance</td> <td>\$52,286</td> <td>28.7%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2. Retail Trade</td> <td>\$34,629</td> <td>20.7%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3. Accommodation and Food Services</td> <td>\$24,371</td> <td>13.5%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Oregon	\$67,880	Wasco County	\$50,389	Industry	Wages	% of Total Emp.	1. Health Care and Social Assistance	\$52,286	28.7%	2. Retail Trade	\$34,629	20.7%	3. Accommodation and Food Services	\$24,371	13.5%									
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Hachman Index Source: Oregon Employment Department (OED)	<p><i>The Hachman Index is a measure of economic diversity.</i></p> <p>Wasco County 0.388 17th highest of Oregon's Counties (2021)</p>																									
Income Earned Source: ACS (2020)	<p>Do people earn an equivalent income in Wasco County compared to other parts of our service area?</p> <p>Median Household Income % of State Median Household Income</p> <table> <thead> <tr> <th>Location</th> <th>Median Household Income</th> <th>% of State Median Household Income</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Wasco County</td> <td>\$53,105</td> <td>84.5%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Oregon</td> <td>\$62,818</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Washington</td> <td>\$73,775</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Hood River County</td> <td>\$65,679</td> <td>104.6%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Sherman County</td> <td>\$51,071</td> <td>81.3%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Klickitat County (WA)</td> <td>\$55,773</td> <td>75.6%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Skamania County (WA)</td> <td>\$65,181</td> <td>88.4%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Location	Median Household Income	% of State Median Household Income	Wasco County	\$53,105	84.5%	Oregon	\$62,818		Washington	\$73,775		Hood River County	\$65,679	104.6%	Sherman County	\$51,071	81.3%	Klickitat County (WA)	\$55,773	75.6%	Skamania County (WA)	\$65,181	88.4%	
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People with jobs in the top industry, **Health Care and Social Assistance**, are earning approximately 4% more than the County's median wage at \$52,286. People who work in the 2nd largest industry **Retail Trade**, are earning only 31% of the state's median income at \$34,629 annually. The top two industries in the county make up 28.7% and 20.7% of the total employment, respectively. A concentration of jobs in a single industry indicates less economic resilience, Wasco County is building employment diversity but there is still significant vulnerability for an industry-specific disruption.

Data Definitions & Thresholds				
Employment Data	Of the 3 fastest growing industries, how many account for 20% or more of total area employment?	3	1-2	0
Economic Diversity	The Hachman Index is a measure of economic diversity. Using indicators such as gross domestic product (GDP) or employment, the index measures the mix of industries present in a particular region relative to a (well-diversified) reference region.	0-0.33	0.34-0.66	0.67-1.0
Income Earned	Median household income in the County as a percentage of state median income.	Less than 60%	60%-80%	More than 80%

2. What is the projected future of major employment industries in the region and nationally?

Diversified economies are more resilient. Regions that have a concentration of jobs in fewer industries are less resilient.




Data to Answer the Question		Results								
<p>Employment Data</p> <p>Source: QCEW + Oregon Employment Department (OED)</p>	<p>From 2011-2021, Wasco County has seen significant growth in higher-wage jobs in Information, Management of companies and enterprises, and Transportation, warehousing & utilities. Jobs in these industry sectors have annual wages that significantly exceed the county average, and the fastest growing industry, Information, has wages that exceed the state average by 388%. In the same period, several industries including Finance and insurance, Financial activities, and Professional, scientific, and technical services have all seen significant decreases in employment numbers.</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>Fastest Growing</td> <td>Wages</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1. Information</td> <td>\$263,631</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2. Management of companies and enterprises</td> <td>\$91,092</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3. Transportation, warehousing & utilities</td> <td>\$61,414</td> </tr> </table>	Fastest Growing	Wages	1. Information	\$263,631	2. Management of companies and enterprises	\$91,092	3. Transportation, warehousing & utilities	\$61,414	
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<p>Current Events and National Trends</p> <p>Source: Various</p>	<p>In Wasco County, the employment sectors are growing in diversity and there is consistent growth in industries with high average wages such as Information and Management of companies and enterprises. Specifically, tech-based industries are growing steadily in The Dalles and greater Wasco County.</p>									



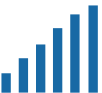
Data Definitions & Thresholds				
Employment Data	Of the 3 fastest growing industries, how many offer wages above, or equivalent to, average wages in the county?	0	1-2	3
Current Events and National Trends	Articles that discuss growing and shrinking industries in Oregon may offer insights into potential economic and employment related risk.	News and Trends suggest industries will not prosper in the future	Nothing Noteworthy	News and Trends suggest industries are growing (regionally, nationally, globally)

3.

What is the age breakdown of residents?

Communities that are resilient have a mix of younger and older populations, and a growing number of working-age residents. Higher concentrations of older or younger populations require more services from the public, particularly during an economic disruption.

Data to Answer the Question		Results
Population characteristics Source: ACS (2020)	The median age for Wasco County residents is 40.8, higher than the state (39.3) and national (37.2) averages. The age breakdown in Wasco County skews older, with 24% of the population between the ages of 40-60 and 27% over the age of 60.	
Workers over 55 stats Source: Oregon Employment Department (OED)	27% of Wasco County's total population are over 55 years old and currently working (compared to 23% at the state level).	
Age dependency ratio Source: ACS (2020)	The age dependency ratio for Wasco County is 74.3, suggesting more economic pressure compared to the State's ratio of 61.8.	

Data Definitions & Thresholds				
Population characteristics	Median Age	Over 50	40-50	Under 40
Workers over 55 stats	Percentage of population of people over 55 and employed full-time When the workforce is relying on an aging population it may be less sustainable.	More than 30%	15%-30%	Less than 15%
Age dependency ratio	The dependency ratio is the number of dependents in a population (under-18 and over-65) divided by the number of working-age (18-64) people, multiplied by 100. This data point describes the level of pressure on an economy from supporting the portions of the population least likely to be working.	More than 65.0	50.0-65.0	Less than 50.0

4.

Do people live and work in the community?

If people live close to where they work, productive time is not wasted on commuting and employment is more accessible during infrastructure disruptions. Communities that provide housing and employment options to residents of all income-levels are more resilient during a shock to the economic landscape.

Data to Answer the Question		Results
<p>Housing Data</p> <p>Source: ACS (2020)</p>	<p>The housing inventory in Wasco County includes a mix of single-family, multi-unit complexes, and mobile homes. Mobile homes make up 16.8% of the county's housing inventory.</p> <p>The Job to Homes ratio in Wasco County is 0.66 compared to the state ratio of 0.89</p>	
<p>Cost of Living vs Median Household Income</p> <p>Source: ACS (2020)</p>	<p>The rental vacancy rate in Wasco County is 2.3%, a bit lower than at the state level of 3.7%.</p> <p>In Wasco County, 33% of residents who rent and 26% of all residents are cost-burdened. In comparison, almost 48% of renters and 34% of all residents in the state are cost-burdened.</p>	
<p>Commuting Patterns</p> <p>Source: ACS (2020), On the Map (2019)</p>	<p>In Wasco County, 60% of people live and work within the county; more people drive to work than the state average (86.1% v. 81.5%), and more people walk to work (4.5% v. 3.7%) and less bicycle than state average (0.5% v. 2.1%). 7.7% work from home.</p> <p>The average commute time in Wasco County is 18 minutes.</p>	

Data Definitions & Thresholds				
Housing and Employment Data	Jobs to Homes Ratio	Less than 0.75	More than 1.5	0.75-1.5
Cost of Living	Vacancy Rate	Less than 2.25%, More than 7%	2.25%-4.49%	4.5%-7%
	Percentage of households spending more than 30% of their income on housing (known as cost-burdened)	More than 25%	20-25%	Less than 20%
Commuting Patterns	Average commuting time	More than 26 min	20 min - 26 min	Less than 20 min
	Percentage of population that commute via walking, bicycling, or public transportation	Less than 5%	5%-10%	More than 10%
	Percentage of population that live and work in the county.	Less than 50%	50-75%	More than 75%

5.

How has the population grown in the last decade and what is predicted for the next 30 years?

Populations in decline signal a weaker (less resilient) economy. People often move to seek better employment or housing opportunities. A declining population is indicative of changing development/settlement patterns and loss of potential workforce.

Data to Answer the Question		Results
Population Growth Rate Source: PSU and ACS (2020)	Wasco County accounts for 0.6% of the state’s population and has increased by 5.7% between 2010-2020. This population increase is positive but significantly lower, than the state’s population growth over the same time period (10.6%).	
Population Forecasts Source: PSU and ACS (2020)	Over the next 20 years Wasco County’s total population is forecasted to increase by 9% (2020-2040). This will be an increase of approximately 2,455 people. The population growth in Wasco County is steady however, significantly slower than the state’s population growth over the same time period (20%).	

Data Definitions & Thresholds				
Past Population Data	Percentage change in population in the past 10 years	Less than 1.5%	1.5-3%	More than 3%
Population Forecasts	Forecasts for population trends and net migration over the next 30 years relate to the economic drivers that attract and/or retain a growing population.	Declining	No significant Growth or Decline	Growing

6.

Are residential homes able to withstand a natural hazard or weather incident?

Newer homes are more likely to have been constructed to withstand natural hazards and weather incidents. Older homes and manufactured homes may be more vulnerable to damages and/or more difficult to repair. Homes without plumbing, electricity or phone services are at a greater risk during an emergency. The capacity to recover quickly from a shock is greater when people (the workforce) are not displaced.



Data to Answer the Question		Results
Housing Data Source: ACS (2020)	About 4% of the houses in Wasco County were built in 2010 or later. In the period following the last economic recession, Wasco County saw a decline in housing construction.	
	Approximately 48.6% of homes in Wasco County were built before 1970.	
	Mobile homes make up a large portion of the housing stock when compared to the state average (16.8% v. 8%).	
Utility & Services Source: ACS (2020)	In Wasco County residents use significantly less gas heating options and more Electricity when compared to the state average (approximately 12% gas, 65% electricity v. 36% gas, 46% electricity).	
	3% of housing or less lack plumbing, kitchen, or telephone services. (1.4% lack complete plumbing facilities, 3.1% lacking complete kitchen facilities, and 1.5% have no telephone service available)	



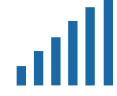
Data Definitions & Thresholds				
Housing Data	Percentage of homes built in the last decade	Less than 4%	4-15%	More than 15%
	Percentage of homes built before 1970	More than 60%	40%-60%	Less than 40%
	Percentage of housing stock that is classified as mobile homes	More than 10%	5-10%	Less than 5%
Utility & Services	Percentage of homes without complete plumbing	More than 2%	1-2%	Less than 1%
	Percentage of homes without complete kitchens	More than 3%	1-3%	Less than 1%

7.

What level of educational attainment and earnings are residents reaching?

People who attain higher education and/or have specialized skills are more likely to be employed and earn higher wages and less likely to primarily depend on public services. Regions that have educational opportunities can provide essential resources and training for residents preparing to join the workforce. In addition, if economic conditions change and the local employment sectors shift, educational opportunities can be an asset for the community by offering community members new or additional training.


Data to Answer the Question		Results
<p>Local resources for training and education</p> <p>Source: Wasco County, CGCC</p>	<p>Closest Physical Higher Education Location: <u>Columbia Gorge Community College – The Dalles Campus</u> <u>(Online courses available)</u></p> <p>Columbia Gorge Community College is a public technical college that offers six Associate degrees, seven Associate of Applied Science degrees, and 14 certificates. The college is the only institution of higher education in Wasco County and serves approximately 4339 regional students.</p> <p>CGCC offers a bridge to four-year universities across Oregon. Bend/Corvallis (OSU), Portland (PSU), and Eugene (U of O) are the closest four-year university options.</p> <p><i>*Online education options have increased regional access to education*</i></p>	
<p>Educational attainment of populations</p> <p>Source: ACS (2020)</p>	<p>Approximately 86% of people in Wasco County have attained a minimum of a high-school degree, and 19.5% of people have earned a bachelor’s degree or higher. In Wasco County, a smaller proportion of residents have attained higher-education than the state averages (33%).</p> <p>People with only a high-school degree in Wasco County have higher median earnings that are 104% of the state median for those with only a high school degree.</p>	



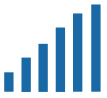
Data Definitions & Thresholds				
Educational attainment and earnings	Percentage of population (25 years+) with Bachelor's Degree or higher	Less than 25%	25%-35%	More than 35%
	Median earnings of high school graduates (or equivalency) in the county as a percentage of median earnings of high school graduates in state	Less than 75%	75%-105%	More than 105%

8.

Do residents have access to health and wellness facilities?

A resilient economy can consistently provide residents with basic needs, including shelter, safety, and food. Hospitals, clinics, and grocery stores are vital for preparing for, responding to, and recovering from a major disruption. High levels of baseline community health are important for resilience because communities with healthy residents are better able to absorb the impacts of, and recover from, disasters. Health insurance coverage is a positive indicator of community resilience.

Data to Answer the Question		Results
Insurance Coverage Source: ACS (2020)	Just over 7.8% of Wasco County residents are uninsured. This is a slightly higher rate than the State (6.7%) but still low enough to be a positive indicator for moderate economic resilience.	

Data Definitions & Thresholds				
Insurance Coverage	Percentage of uninsured (non-incarcerated) population	More than 11%	7-11%	Less than 7%