



The 2021 Klamath County Community Health Assessment reflects a point in time in Klamath County. The Assessment is done every three years and this is a synopsis of the fourth edition of the project.

According to the CDC, “A community health assessment ... identifies key health needs and issues through systematic, comprehensive data collection and analysis.

“...A community health assessment gives organizations comprehensive information about the community’s current health status, needs, and issues. In turn, this information can help with developing a community health improvement plan by justifying how and where resources should be allocated to best meet community needs.”

Among the areas being evaluated for inclusion in the improvement plan, based upon findings from the four key pieces of research included here are:

Environmental Health

Clean air • Drought • Wildfire

Factors of Health

Access to care • Healthcare cost/affordability • Food insecurity/hunger • Housing availability & cost • Maternal & child health • Oral health • Physical activity • Quality of life: Physical health • Quality of life: Mental health • Quality of life: Overall health • Social isolation • Trauma/chronic stress

Behavioral Health

Chronic illness • Drug, alcohol use • Physical activity • Suicide prevention • Trauma/chronic stress

The Healthy Klamath Coalition will review further survey results on these topics and narrow the improvement plan focus to a few, actionable issues.

Klamath County quick facts

Home to The Klamath Tribes	Since time immemorial
People (April 2020, US Census).....	69,413
American Indian and Alaska Native alone	5.0%
Asian alone	1.1%
Black or African American alone	0.9%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Native alone	0.2%
White alone	88.4%
Two or more races	4.3%
Persons of Hispanic or Latino Origin	13.8%
Persons 18 and under (2019).....	21.5%
Persons 19 to 64 years (2019).....	56.8%
Persons 65 and older (2019).....	21.7%
Square miles.....	5,941
People per square mile.....	12
Incorporated cities or towns.....	5 (Bonanza, Chiloquin, Klamath Falls, Malin, Merrill)
Housing units (July 2019).....	33,876
Building permits issued 2020	152
Households	27,886
Persons per household	2.36
Living in same house one year ago, percent of persons age 1 and older.....	81.3%
Language other than English spoken at home, percent of persons age 5 and older.....	8.6%
Languages spoken in local schools.....	17
Households with a computer	89.9%
Households with a broadband Internet subscription.....	80.1%
High school graduate or higher, percent of persons age 25 and older	88.1%
Bachelor’s degree or higher, percent of persons age 25 and older.....	20.0%
With a disability, under age 65	14.0%
Persons without health insurance, under age 65.....	10.7%
Persons in poverty.....	19.7%
Veterans.....	10.0%

Participants at COVID-19 vaccine clinics were asked to complete either a paper survey onsite or visit the online survey to provide answers to 26 assessment questions. The survey was also available to the community through emails sent to lists curated by Healthy Klamath Coalition agencies, various media articles, and distribution to people being served by community health workers.

A total of 1,058 people participated, up from 500 for the 2018 assessment. Due to the age qualifications for early vaccine opportunities, the survey has an older demographic than previous assessments. Work with Klamath Tribal Health & Family Services also saw a larger population of Indigenous people participate in 2021.



12% reported being in “fair” or “poor” health; 2021’s County Health Rankings & Roadmaps recorded the number at 21%.



More than 9% found public transportation difficult to use, with 80% reporting not using public transportation.



About 30% reported food insecurity.



10% had shelter concerns.



12.5% had no health services.



Barriers to receiving health services included cost (15%), distance and/or weather (10%), and could not get an appointment (9%).



Medical check-up (11.6%) and dental exam (10.7%) were the main services people were unable to use.



About 11% reported missing or skipping a health services appointment in the last 30 days.

















Just under half of the respondents (about 45%) reported having mental health issues that affected daily activities in the last 30 days. The 2021 County Rankings & Roadmaps reported Klamath County residents experienced 5.4 poor mental health days each month.



More than half (55%) reported physical pain affected daily activities. The 2021 County Rankings reported residents had 5 poor physical health days each month.

While the majority of respondents indicated that none of the options provided were preventing them from having better health, five areas received more than 10% in response. Results included:

-  None of the above (46.64%)
-  Lack of physical activity (24.34%)
-  Chronic illness (15.09%)
-  Cost (13.05%)
-  Mental health issue (11.00%)
-  Social isolation (10.71%)
-  Lack of healthy foods (7.11%)
-  Other (6.43%)
-  Tobacco use (5.26%)
-  Geographic isolation (4.58%)
-  Access to healthcare (3.89%)
-  Alcohol use (2.34%)
-  Addiction or drug use (0.58%)
-  Abuse or violence (0.49%)

Previously, this assessment was done through listening sessions. COVID-19 required approaching the 2021 work with other ideas. Advertising was purchased on Facebook soliciting responses from Klamath County residents to what they saw as community strengths and assets, areas of concern, and local quality of life. These same prompts were used at Third Thursday community events on Main Street, Klamath Falls.

Responses were plentiful and provide an insight into Klamath County during the summer of 2021.

Strengths and assets

Citizens	Recreation/leisure
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small population, low crime, no traffic • The Klamath, Modoc and Yahooskin peoples, families, farmers, students outdoors people • Solutions to problems, sense of community, coming together • Caring, helpful, generous • Communication, finance, promoting change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wildlife, views, waterways, trails/paths • Snowflake Festival, Potato Festival, community events • History, architecture, restaurants, sports • Fishing, boating, hunting, camping • Biking, hiking, skiing, photography

Institutions/agencies	Natural resources
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Third Thursday, Saturday Market, pools • Oregon Tech, Kingsley Field, Klamath Community College • Churches, libraries, museums, Ragland Theater • Small businesses • Klamath Basin Behavioral Health, support resources, drug and alcohol treatment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crater Lake, Lava Beds, mountains, waterways, forests, land, parks • Clean air, clean water, clear-dark skies, geothermal wells, space, beauty • Wildlife, birds • Farming • Small towns



Credit: Magee Graeme - Big State Wildfire

The Bootleg Fire, named after the nearby Bootleg Spring, was a large wildfire that started near Beatty on July 6, 2021. Before being fully contained on August 15, it had burned 413,765 acres. It is the third-largest fire in the history of Oregon since 1900.

Concerns

Access to services	Alcohol use	Change	Community resiliency
COVID-19	Drug use	Economy	Government
Intensions of others	Internet access	Mental health	Wildfire

Quality of life

Poor

Getting better

Rich



Depends on where you live

Depends on where you focus

Depends on your nationality

The Local Public Health System Assessment (LPHSA) focuses on all of the community sectors' organizations and entities that contribute to the public's health. The LPHSA answers the questions:

- What are the components, activities, competencies, and capacities of our local public health system?
- How are the 10 essential services being provided to our community?

There were 52 respondents for the 2018 assessment, which included 46 questions. The community health assessment steering committee agreed to shorten the survey to 17 questions in 2021. Only 18 respondents participated.

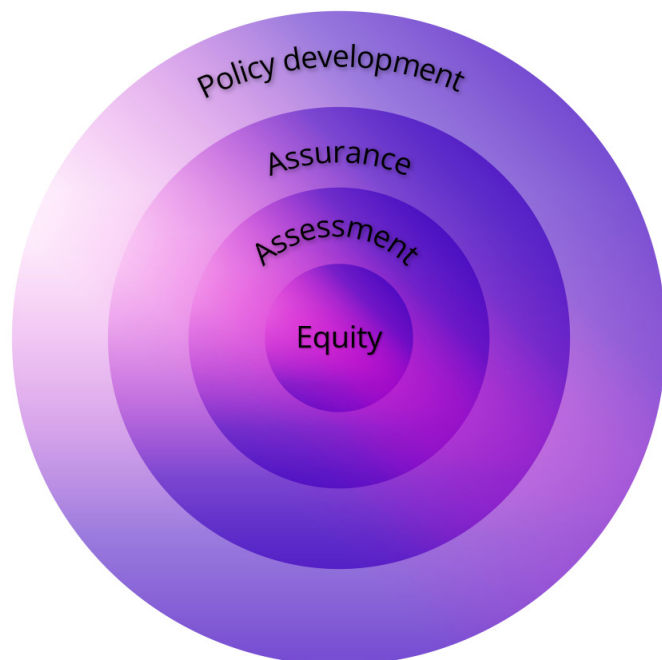
Participation was potentially influenced by the lack of person-to-person connection caused by COVID-19. Healthy Klamath Coalition meetings were held remotely and the importance of participation may not have carried the same urgency as the previous assessment cycle.

Moving into the creation of the community health improvement plan, there is an opportunity to help the entire community understand how different agencies and organizations can contribute to the public health essential services.

The assessment indicated that there are opportunities to help the entire community in regard to the social determinants of health and equitable access to information, resources and healthcare in culturally-relevant and linguistically-appropriate ways.

Community sectors

- Agriculture
- Business
- Community & volunteer groups
- Cultural organizations
- Education
- Environment
- Government
- Health
- Human services
- Housing & development
- Parents & youth
- Religion
- Service & fraternal organizations
- Sports & recreation



Equity is the core of the Public Health system and its services

10 Essential Public Health Services

The 10 Essential Public Health Services provide a framework for public health to protect and promote the health of all people in all communities. To achieve optimal health for all, these services promote policies, systems, and services that enable good health and seek to remove obstacles and systemic and structural barriers, such as poverty, racism, gender discrimination, and other forms of oppression, that have resulted in health inequities. Everyone should have a fair and just opportunity to achieve good health and well-being.

1. **Assess and monitor population health**
2. **Investigate, diagnose, and address health hazards and root causes**
3. **Communicate effectively to inform and educate**
4. **Strengthen, support, and mobilize communities and partnerships**
5. **Create, champion, and implement policies, plans, and laws**
6. **Utilize legal and regulatory actions**
7. **Enable equitable access**
8. **Build a diverse and skilled workforce**
9. **Improve and innovate through evaluation, research, and quality improvement**
10. **Build and maintain a strong organizational infrastructure for public health**

This assessment was drafted by the core group of representatives from Cascade Health Alliance, Klamath County Public Health, Klamath Health Partnership, Klamath Tribal Health & Family Services, and Sky Lakes Medical Center. The draft was shared with the Healthy Klamath Coalition overall membership to provide feedback.

The Forces of Change Assessment focuses on identifying forces such as legislation, technology, and other impending changes that affect the context in which the community and its public health system operate. This answers the questions:

- What is occurring or might occur that affects the health of our community or the local public health system?
- What specific threats or opportunities are generated by these occurrences?

<p>Force Drought</p>	<p>Threats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wildfire • Animal species threatened • Domestic wells going dry • Limited opportunities • Racial tension and potential for violence 	<p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brings community together • Time to look further into sustainable industry and practices
<p>Force Wildfire</p>	<p>Threats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor air quality • Destruction of natural resources and wildlife • Destruction of homes • Displacement of people 	<p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community education about related topics • New focus on natural resources • Land stewardship • Community support for victims and increased unity
<p>Force COVID-19</p>	<p>Threats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuing waves of infection • Disruption of economy • Disruption of education • Misinformation and disinformation • Mental exhaustion 	<p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community education about related topics • New focus on community connections • New ways of working, learning and interacting
<p>Force Economy</p>	<p>Threats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss of businesses, industries • Job losses 	<p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Entrepreneurial niches • New economic development recruitment

<p style="text-align: center;">Force</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Local leadership retirements</p> <p>(Paul Stewart at Sky Lakes Medical Center, Stan Gilbert at Klamath Basin Behavioral Health, Paul Hillyer at Klamath Falls City Schools)</p>	<p>Threats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss of longtime champions • Lull between exchange of duties • Loss of community/institutional knowledge 	<p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New visions • New directions • New methods
<p style="text-align: center;">Force</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Adverse Childhood Events (ACEs)</p>	<p>Threats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long-term health consequences, both physical and mental • Increased risk of suicide • Increased use of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs • Difficulty building trusting and healthy relationships 	<p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community education to be trauma-informed and resiliency-focused • Families healing from generational trauma together • Youth-serving organizations collaboration and partnership
<p style="text-align: center;">Force</p> <p style="text-align: center;">City of Klamath Falls Equity Taskforce</p>	<p>Threats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disbanded before initiatives were complete • Educational needs of community • Community buy-in for projects (Acknowledging the anti-Indigenous racism has made the water conflicts worse; renaming Kit Carson Park; funding and hosting celebrations to honor Klamath Falls' diversity; provide anti-racism training and Indigenous history education for all City of Klamath Falls employees; hiring a full-time equity liaison for the City of Klamath Falls) • Economic and programmatic sustainability 	<p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The social determinants of health are addressed for under-represented minorities
<p style="text-align: center;">Force</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Oregon legislative bills forwarding equity</p>	<p>Threats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large economic commitment in a volatile economy • Economic and programmatic sustainability • Informing those who are eligible 	<p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The social determinants of health are addressed for under-represented minorities