



2023 OREGON TOURISM INDUSTRY STAKEHOLDER SURVEY

SUMMARY OF RESULTS | EASTERN OREGON

March 2023



This report summarizes findings from a 2023 survey of tourism industry stakeholders in Oregon. The survey sought feedback from stakeholders to provide guidance and perspective on priorities for future investments from Regional Destination Management Organizations. This report summarizes findings from respondents in Eastern Oregon with additional statewide results provided for context.

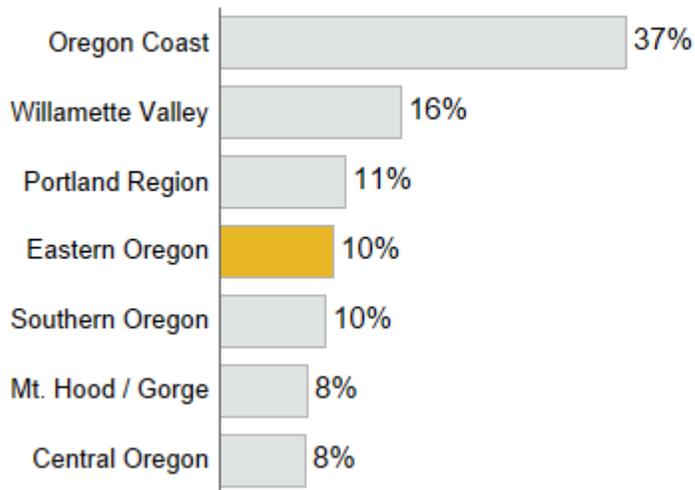
OBJECTIVES

The 2023 Oregon Tourism Stakeholder Survey was designed to gather feedback from Oregon’s tourism industry professionals, employees, and stakeholders to provide feedback and direction for Travel Oregon and Regional Destination Management Organizations (RDMOs) in setting strategic directions and making funding and programmatic decision in marketing, grants, tourist-related infrastructure, visitor management, and more. The survey built on a framework of past stakeholder surveys conducted in 2018 and 2020. The survey was developed collaboratively by Travel Oregon, the seven RDMOs, and Driftline Consulting.

DATA COLLECTION

The survey was conducted online and distributed in both English and Spanish between February 9-March 7, 2023, via direct email communications, a press release, industry newsletters and industry partners' distribution channels to an open URL hosted on Travel Oregon's industry website. The survey resulted in a total of 105 valid responses from Eastern Oregon and 1,018 responses overall. Sample sizes for individual questions vary. Results presented in this report are segmented by the region in which the respondent indicated that they live or work, and figures show results from Eastern Oregon compared to the statewide survey results (referred to as the “overall” in figures).

Number of Respondents



105

Eastern Oregon
Responses

1,018

Overall Responses

LIMITATIONS

The survey results should be viewed as an aggregation of relevant and thoughtful feedback from stakeholders. The applicability of findings to real life circumstances may depend on whether the feedback is from a broad enough (or representative) swath of stakeholders and whether individual RDMOs believe they have engaged with enough stakeholders to have a good gauge of the stakeholders’ priorities. An assessment of the industries represented, and the overall response numbers suggest that for all regions, a diverse and appropriately sized cross-section of stakeholders responded, adding confidence to the applicability of results. Because the survey was not conducted from a random sample, statistical tests have not been performed on the data.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

In addition to this report, results from the survey are accessible via an interactive online dashboard that enables further exploration of the data. Users of the online dashboard can segment questions by key variables to gain additional insight into segments of the Oregon tourism stakeholder population that were not addressed in this report.

The survey also resulted in an extensive number of open-ended responses. All open-ended responses may be accessed in the online dashboard.

Access the online dashboards by going to: bit.ly/2023Stakeholder

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KEY FINDINGS

TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

- Forty-one percent of respondents in Eastern Oregon said they were satisfied with the direction of tourism development in Oregon (selected 4 or 5 on a five-point scale), while 18% were unsatisfied (selected 1 or 2) and 41% were neutral.
- Most respondents in Eastern Oregon agreed or strongly agreed with statements related to what Oregon should do to promote tourism, including promote responsible visitor behavior (85% agreed or strongly agreed), encourage tourism development in their community (82%), advertise tourism/attract more visitors (76%), and consider tourism as a primary priority for economic development (74%).
- Respondents in Eastern Oregon were most in agreement that they are comfortable collaborating with groups of varying size and backgrounds to make positive changes in the tourism industry (88% agreed or strongly agreed), and they are least in agreement that they are able to lobby legislators and policy makers to create positive change within the industry (33%).

STRENGTHS AND AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

- The top three areas that respondents from Eastern Oregon considered strengths in their community were outdoor recreation opportunities (74%), agritourism (31%), and attractions/art and cultural experiences (30%).
- The top areas that Eastern Oregon respondents said their community needs to focus on to improve residents' and visitors' experiences were food and beverage (31%), signage/wayfinding (31%), lodging (29%) and destination marketing and promotion (29%).

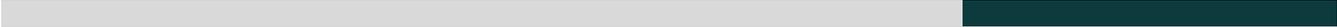
ADDRESSING RISKS TO TOURISM

- The top challenges that respondents in the Eastern Oregon region identified as high risks to tourism were lack of affordable housing (66%), economic downturn (34%), drought (31%), and wildfires (31%).
- The top two strategies that respondents in Eastern Oregon selected to best assist their business/organization or community if faced with the challenges listed in the previous question were grant and funding resources/opportunities (72%) and resources to build tourism related infrastructure (68%).

WORKFORCE

- To develop, attract and retain the local workforce to the tourism industry, over half of respondents in the Eastern Oregon (58%) selected the strategy, "Hospitality & tourism career programs in local high schools and colleges", followed by "State Workforce Development funding to grow career opportunities in the industry" (49%).

TOURISM PRIORITIES AND FOCUS AREAS

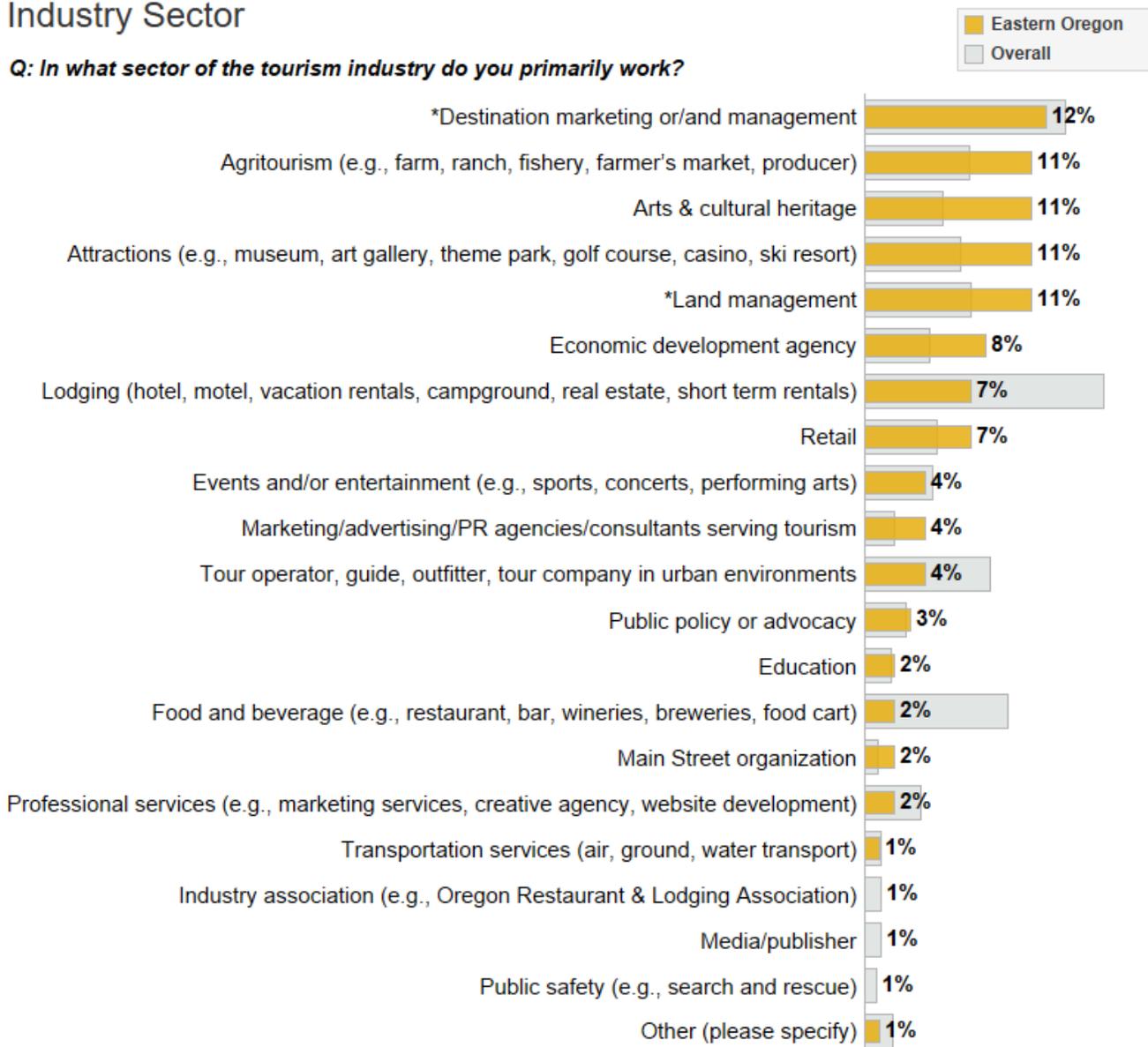
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- Respondents were asked to identify the three areas that should be emphasized for tourism planning over the next 2-5 years. Fifty-five percent of Eastern Oregon respondents selected grant and funding resources/opportunities among their top-three priorities, followed by 52% who selected tourism-related infrastructure and 41% who selected marketing and promotion.

RESPONDENT PROFILE

The survey received broad participation by tourism industry sector. Overall, the lodging sector accounted for 15% of total respondents, followed by destination marketing/management (13%), food and beverage (9%), and “Tour operator, guide, outfitter, tour company in urban environments” (8%). “Other” write-in responses, comprising 14% of the overall responses, were diverse and reflect the broad reach of the survey. Members from the Travel Oregon and Driftline Consulting teams collaborated to re-code the “Other” responses to fit into the provided response options, where applicable. Relative to the statewide overall results, respondents from Eastern Oregon were more likely to be employed in agritourism, arts and cultural heritage, attractions and land management. Eastern Oregon had a smaller share of respondents employed in the destination marketing and/or management and lodging sectors relative to the overall.

Industry Sector

Q: In what sector of the tourism industry do you primarily work?



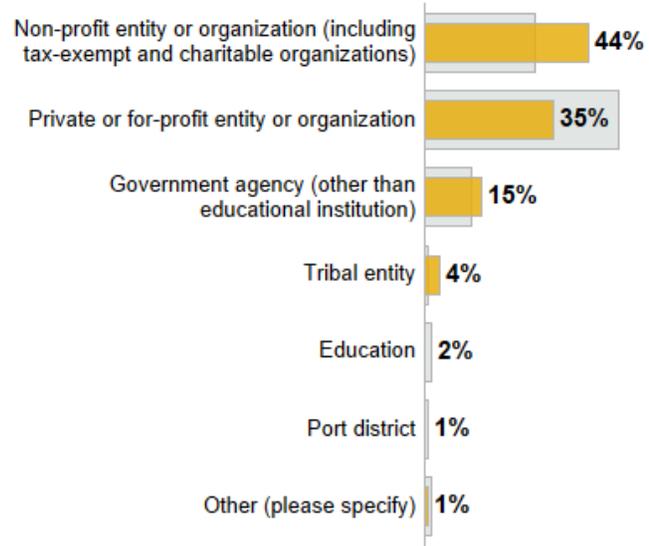
*Answer option abbreviated in reporting.

Respondents were asked which entity type best describes their business or organization. In Eastern Oregon, the top two response options were non-profit entities/organizations (44%) and private or for-profit entities/organizations (35%). In the overall sample, these were flipped where most respondents said they were at a private or for-profit entity/organization (52%), followed by those at a non-profit entity/organization (30%). The representation of those at a government agency was about the same for respondents in Eastern Oregon (15%) compared to the overall sample (13%).

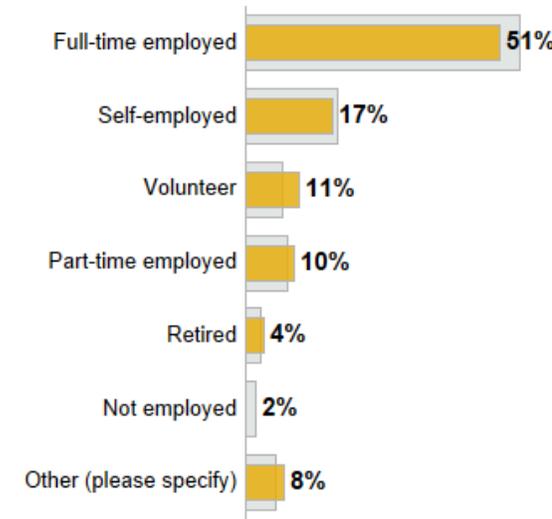
The top employment statuses for the region were full-time employed (51%), self-employed (17%), and volunteer (11%). Compared to the overall responses, the Eastern Oregon region had a lower proportion of full-time employed individuals and a higher proportion of volunteers. However, the proportion of people who were self- and part-time employed were relatively similar across the region and overall responses.

Entity Type, & Employment Status

Q: Which entity type best describes your business/organization?



Q: Which of the following best describes your current employment status in the tourism industry? (Select one)

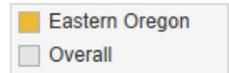


*For both questions, where applicable, "Other" write-in responses were recoded to appropriate categories.

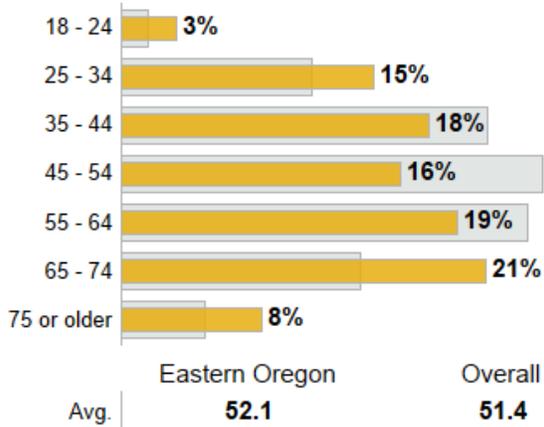
In Eastern Oregon, there were more respondents in the 18-34 and 65 and older ranges compared to the overall sample. The average age of respondents in Eastern Oregon (52.1 years) was slightly older than the average age from the overall sample (51.4 years).

Statewide, 56% of respondents identify as female and 37% identify as male. Eastern Oregon respondents skewed slightly more female at 61%.

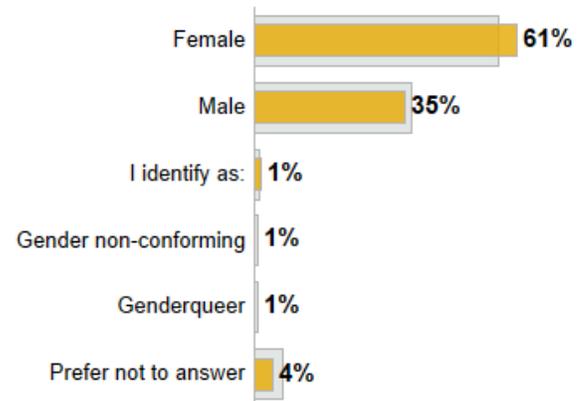
Age & Gender



Q: Respondent Age



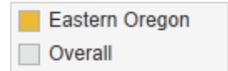
Q: To which gender identity do you most identify? Please check all that apply.



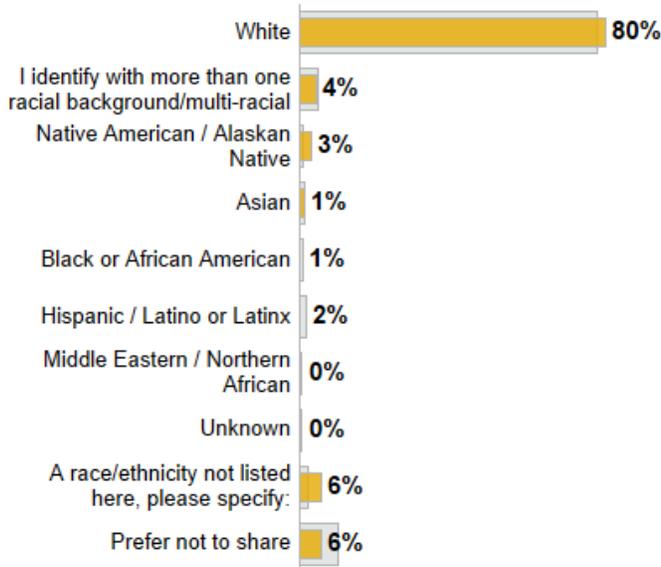
Statewide, just over three quarters of respondents (78%) describe themselves as white, and 5% identified as multi-racial. Results from Eastern Oregon closely resembled the statewide overall.

Forty-four percent of survey respondents overall indicated that they had annual household incomes of \$75,000 or more. In the Eastern Oregon region, the most common response options were \$100,000-149,999 (26%) and \$50,000-74,999 (21%), which were both higher than the overall sample. Respondents from the Eastern Oregon region had a lower percentage of respondents in the \$75,000-99,999 range (13% vs 16%) and a lower percentage in the under \$150,000-199,999 range (6% vs 10%).

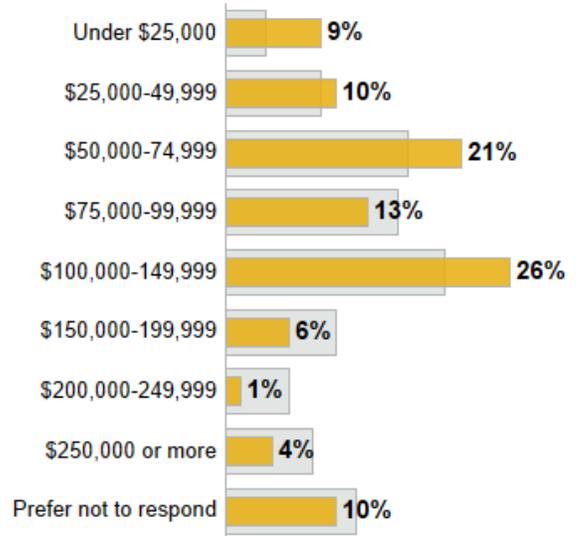
Race & Household Income



Q: Which of the following best describes you? (Please select one answer)



Q: Which of these categories best describes the total gross annual income of your household (before taxes)?

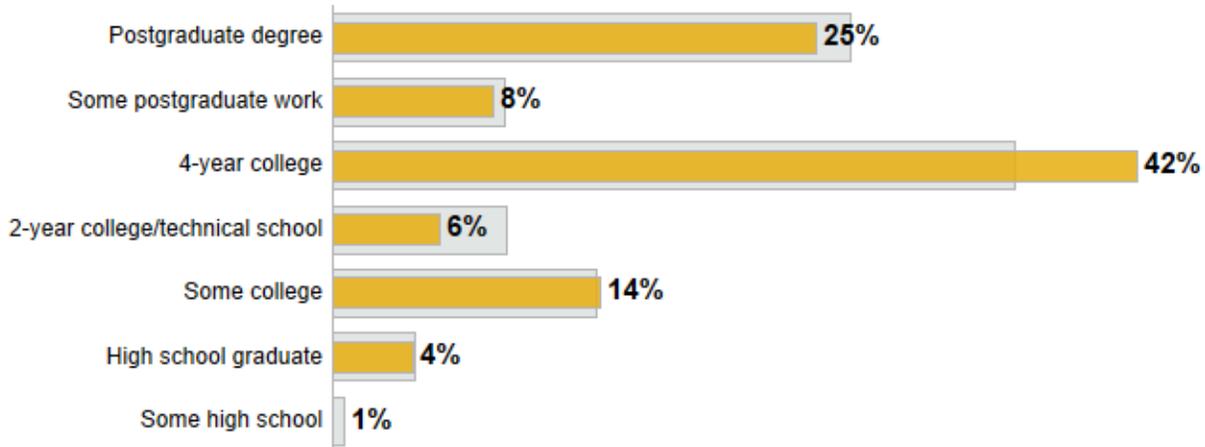


Eastern Oregon had a higher percentage of respondents who completed a 4-year college degree (42%) and a lower percentage who completed a postgraduate degree (25%) compared to the overall respondents (36% and 27%, respectively).

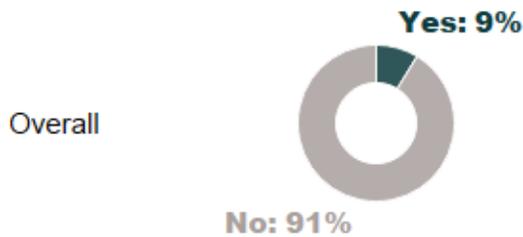
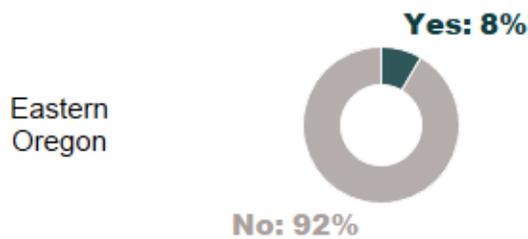
Eight percent of Eastern Oregon respondents reported having a disability, compared to 9% of the overall.

Education & Presence of Disabilities

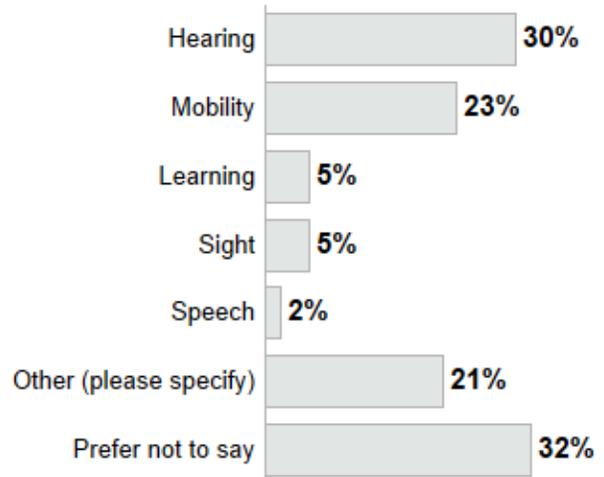
Q: Which option best describes your education?



Q: Do you have a disability? ■ Yes ■ No



Q: [If yes] What are these disabilities? (Select all that apply)



*Overall only due to insufficient sample size within regions.

TRAVEL OREGON'S 2023 – 2025 STRATEGIES

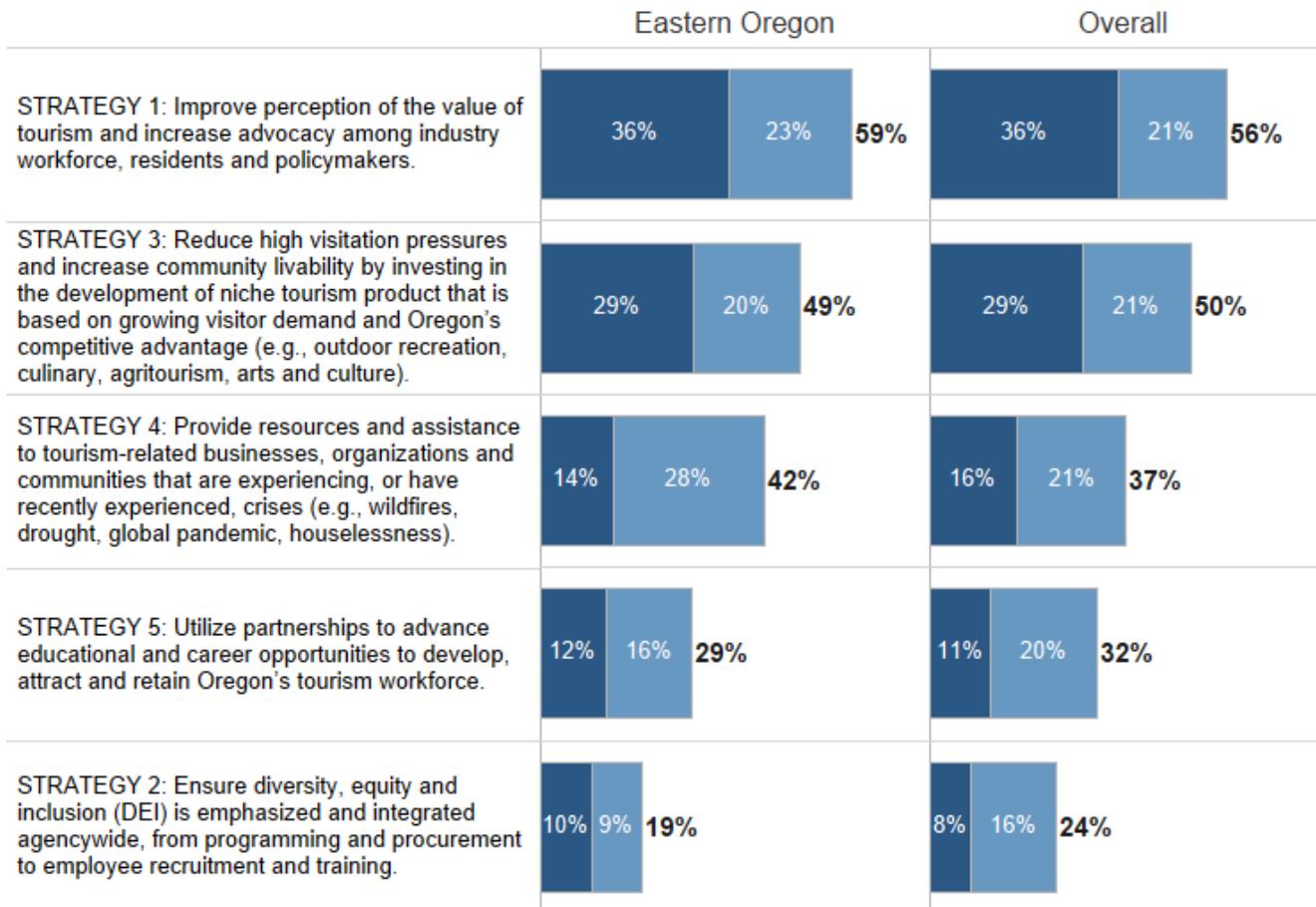
Travel Oregon has embarked on its 10-year strategic vision for tourism in the state, focusing on a destination stewardship approach that aims to maximize the economic potential of Oregon's economy while protecting the environment and promoting cultural diversity. A series of questions were identified to inform various strategies for the next biennium (2023 – 2025) to meet these goals.

Respondents were asked to rank five strategies in terms of how they would prioritize them for their community. Strategy 1, improving the perception of the value of tourism and increasing advocacy among industry workforce, residents and policymakers was ranked highest, with 36% of Eastern Oregon respondents identifying it as their top priority and 59% identifying it among their top-two highest priorities. Strategy 3, reducing high visitation pressures and increasing community livability by investing in the development of a niche tourism product that is based on growing visitor demand and Oregon's competitive advantage, was identified as the second most-favored strategy, with 29% of Eastern Oregon respondents identifying it as their top priority and 49% identifying it among their top-two highest priorities. Overall, these were also the top-two strategies identified among respondents, with Strategy 1 rated as the first or second priority among 56% of respondents, and Strategy 3 rated as the first or second priority among 50% of respondents.

Strategies

Q: Please read the following 5 strategies that are being prioritized by Travel Oregon, and rank them based on priority for your community, from 1=highest priority to 5=lowest priority.

Top 2 Priorities Displayed ■ First Rank ■ Second Rank

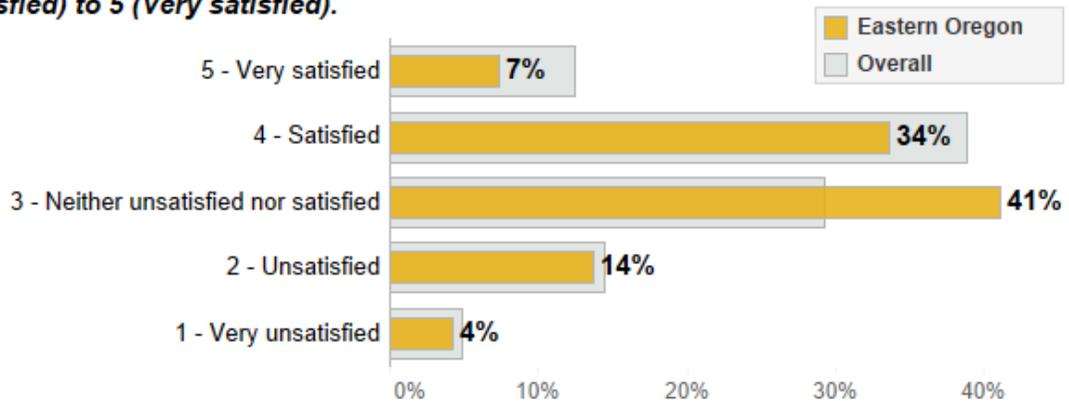


Respondents were also asked to characterize their satisfaction with the general direction of tourism development in Oregon. Note that “tourism development” refers to overall tourism development in Oregon. The following definition was provided to survey respondents: “Tourism development refers to the development of robust destinations that offer authentic, world-class experiences for all travelers, while preserving, enhancing and celebrating local assets.”

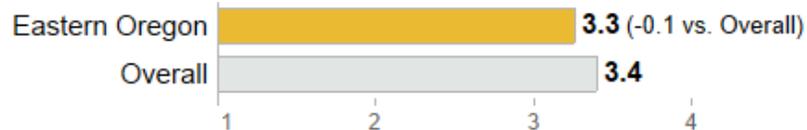
Overall, 52% of respondents were satisfied with the direction of tourism development in Oregon (selected 4 or 5 on a five-point scale), while 19% were unsatisfied (selected 1 or 2). Twenty-nine percent were neutral (selected 3, neither unsatisfied nor satisfied). In Eastern Oregon, there was a higher proportion of respondents who were neutral (41%) and a lower proportion of respondents who were satisfied (41%). The average rating was slightly lower (3.3) in Eastern Oregon compared to the overall average (3.4).

Satisfaction with Tourism Development in Oregon

Q: Please rate your satisfaction with the direction of destination development in Oregon, from 1 (Very unsatisfied) to 5 (Very satisfied).



Average Rating 1 - 5

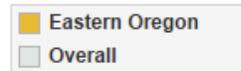


Note that “Destination Development” refers to overall tourism development in Oregon. The following definition was provided to survey respondents: “Destination Development refers to the development of robust destinations that offer authentic, world-class experiences for all travelers, while preserving, enhancing and celebrating local assets.”

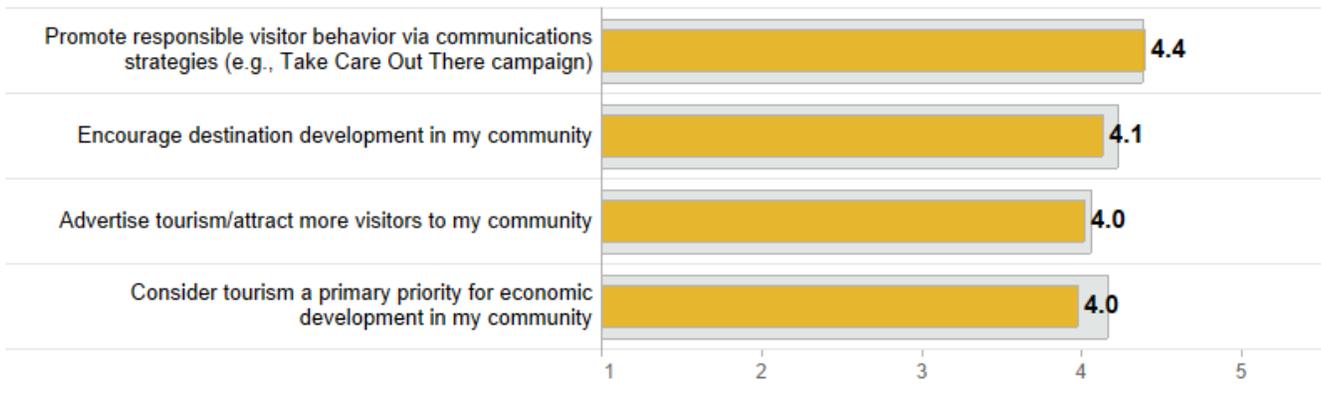
Both overall and in Eastern Oregon, most respondents agreed or strongly agreed with each statement related to their support for tourism development. The statement with the greatest support among the overall sample was, "I believe Oregon should promote responsible visitor behavior via communications strategies" with an average rating of 4.4 on a five-point scale. The ratings among respondents in Eastern Oregon were similar to the ratings overall.

Respondents were also asked to provide their level of agreement with four statements that measured their advocacy for tourism. Both overall and in Eastern Oregon, respondents were most in agreement that they are comfortable collaborating with groups of varying size and backgrounds to make positive changes in the tourism industry and least in agreement that they are able to lobby legislators and policy makers to create positive change within the industry. The patterns of support for the statements were similar between respondents overall and in Eastern Oregon.

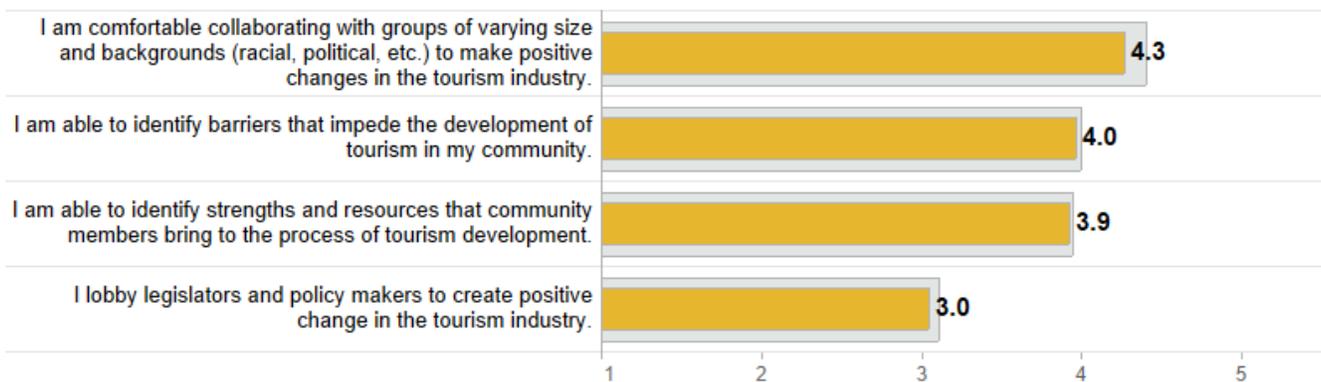
Tourism Development in Oregon



Q: Please rate your level of agreement with the statements below, from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). I believe Oregon should...



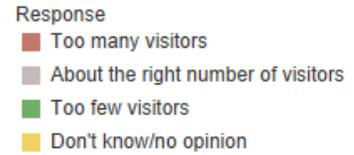
Q: Please rate your level of agreement with the statements below, from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree).



Respondents were asked to characterize the number of visitors their community receives during each of the four seasons. Overall, 3% of respondents said there were too many visitors in the spring, followed by 24% in summer, 5% in fall and 3% in the winter. In Eastern Oregon, respondents were less likely to respond that visitation levels were too high in the summer, but more likely to say they were too high in the spring and fall seasons.

Visitation Levels by Season

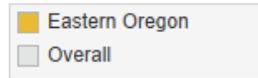
Q: With respect to the number of visitors that your community receives each season, would you say there are:



The following figure portrays areas that respondents felt are strengths in their community and areas they felt their community needs to focus on to improve residents' and/or visitors' experiences. The top three areas that respondents from Eastern Oregon considered as strengths in their community were outdoor recreation opportunities (74%), agritourism (31%), and attractions/art and cultural experiences (30%). In comparison to the overall responses, respondents in the Eastern Oregon region were more likely to identify agritourism, attractions/art and cultural experiences and events and/or entertainment as strengths and less likely to identify food and beverage and lodging as strengths.

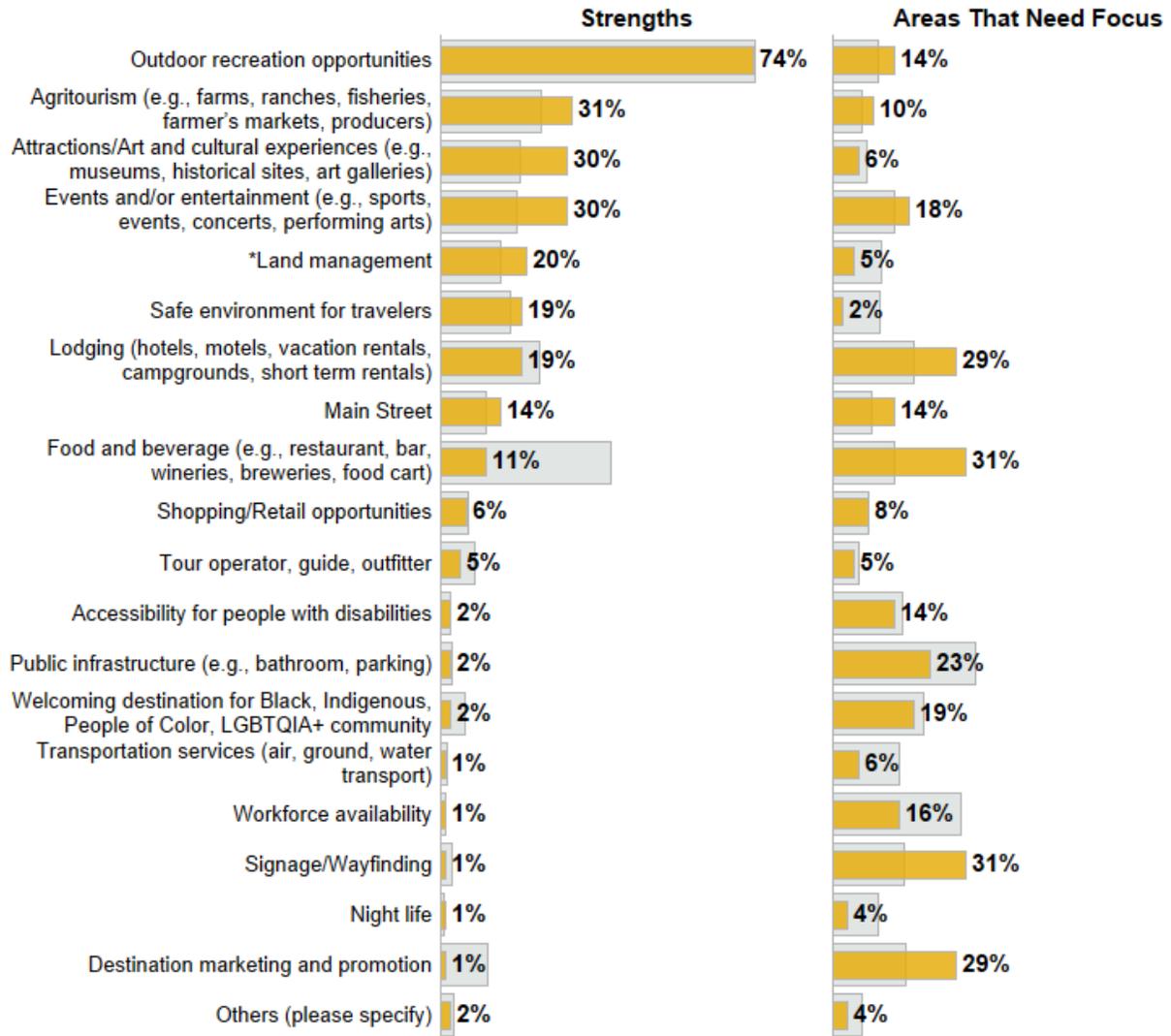
The top areas that Eastern Oregon respondents said their community needs to focus on to improve residents' and visitors' experiences were food and beverage (31%), signage/wayfinding (31%), lodging (29%) and destination marketing and promotion (29%). It's worth noting that when looking at the results for the overall survey population, the top three areas were different, with public infrastructure being the top priority (34%), followed by workforce availability (30%), and then being a welcoming destination for Black, Indigenous, People of Color, LGBTQIA+ community (21%).

Strengths & Areas to Improve



Q: Please identify up to three areas that you consider strengths in your community &

Q: Please identify up to three areas that your community needs to focus on to improve residents' and visitors' experiences:



*Answer option has been abbreviated

The survey asked respondents to rate the extent to which various challenges pose a risk to tourism in their communities. The top challenges that respondents in the Eastern Oregon region identified as high risks were lack of affordable housing (66%), economic downturn (34%), drought (31%), and wildfires (31%). A higher percentage of respondents in Eastern Oregon rated drought as a high risk compared to respondents overall (18%).

Risks to Tourism in Your Community

Q: Please rate the extent to which each challenge poses a risk to tourism in your community:

Response
■ High risk
■ Medium risk
■ Low risk

Challenge	Region	High risk	Medium risk	Low risk
Lack of affordable housing	Eastern Oregon	66%	24%	10%
	Overall	65%	24%	10%
Economic downturn	Eastern Oregon	34%	37%	29%
	Overall	33%	50%	17%
Drought	Eastern Oregon	31%	37%	31%
	Overall	18%	29%	54%
Wildfires	Eastern Oregon	31%	49%	19%
	Overall	33%	35%	32%
Increasing negative resident sentiment towards visitors	Eastern Oregon	27%	39%	35%
	Overall	25%	42%	33%
Houselessness	Eastern Oregon	24%	28%	48%
	Overall	42%	33%	25%
Overburdened public resources	Eastern Oregon	18%	34%	48%
	Overall	33%	35%	32%
Increasing negative visitor perception	Eastern Oregon	17%	43%	40%
	Overall	22%	40%	39%
Global pandemic or other health concerns	Eastern Oregon	11%	30%	59%
	Overall	15%	36%	49%
Community violence and crime	Eastern Oregon	13%	0%	84%
	Overall	13%	30%	57%
Flooding	Eastern Oregon	0%	25%	72%
	Overall	7%	27%	66%
Other	Eastern Oregon	42%	17%	42%
	Overall	45%	19%	35%

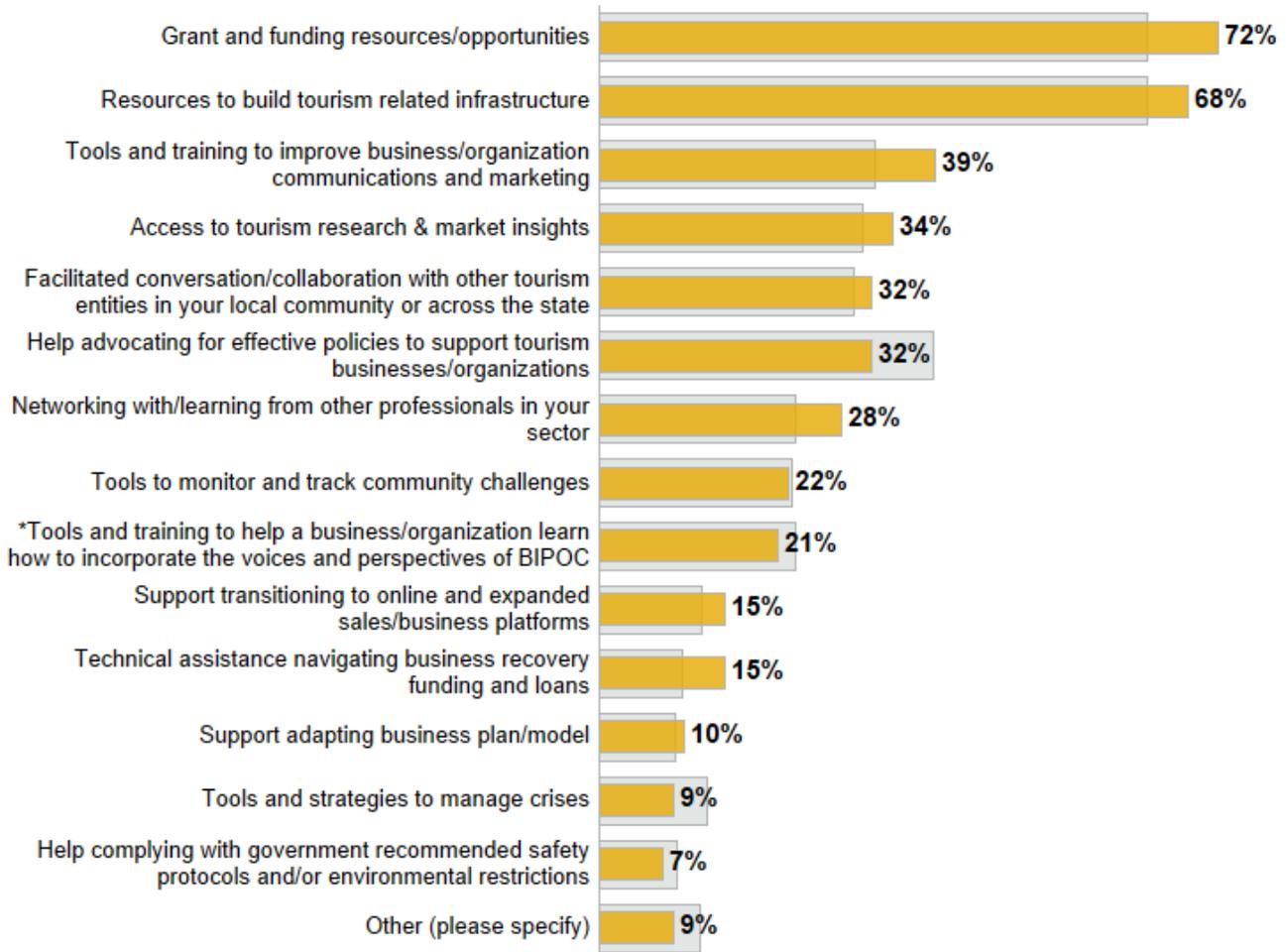
*Categories sorted in descending order by the percent of Eastern Oregon respondents selecting "High risk."

The survey asked respondents to identify the resources or programs that would best assist their business/organization or their community if faced with the challenges listed in the previous question. Two strategies emerged as likely to be particularly effective among respondents overall and those in Eastern Oregon: grant and funding resources/strategies (64% overall and 72% in Eastern Oregon) and resources to build tourism related infrastructure (64% overall and 68% in Eastern Oregon). Respondents in Eastern Oregon were more likely to select wanting tools and training to improve business/organization communications and marketing (39%) compared to the overall sample (32%).

Resources & Programs (1 of 2)



Q: Please select up to five resources or programs that would best assist your business/organization or community if faced with the challenges listed in the previous question.



Respondents were then asked to specifically rank the programs or resources that they selected from the previous question from highest to lowest priority. Again, grant and funding resources/opportunities and resources to build tourism-related infrastructure emerged as clear top priorities among overall and Eastern Oregon respondents.

Resources & Programs (2 of 2)

Q: Please rank the top resources or programs that would best assist your business/organization or community if faced with the challenges previously listed (1=the top resource or program).

Top 2 Priorities Displayed ■ First Rank ■ Second Rank

	Eastern Oregon		Overall			
Grant and funding resources/opportunities	42%	21%	62%	30%	20%	50%
Resources to build tourism related infrastructure	22%	21%	43%	25%	20%	44%
Tools and training to improve business/organization communications and marketing	10%		17%	9%		13%
Access to tourism research & market insights	8%		14%	7%		13%
Facilitated conversation/collaboration with other tourism entities in your local community or across the state	8%		12%			9%
Networking with/learning from other professionals in your sector			10%			6%
Help advocating for effective policies to support tourism businesses/organizations	6%		9%	8%	11%	18%
Technical assistance navigating business recovery funding and loans	6%		8%			4%
Tools to monitor and track community challenges			8%			10%
Tools and training to help a business/organization learn how to incorporate the voices and perspectives of BIPOC communities	6%		6%			9%
Help complying with government recommended safety protocols and/or environmental restrictions			4%			4%
Support adapting business plan/model			4%			3%
Support transitioning to online and expanded sales/business platforms			1%			3%
Tools and strategies to manage crises						4%
Other			3%	8%		11%

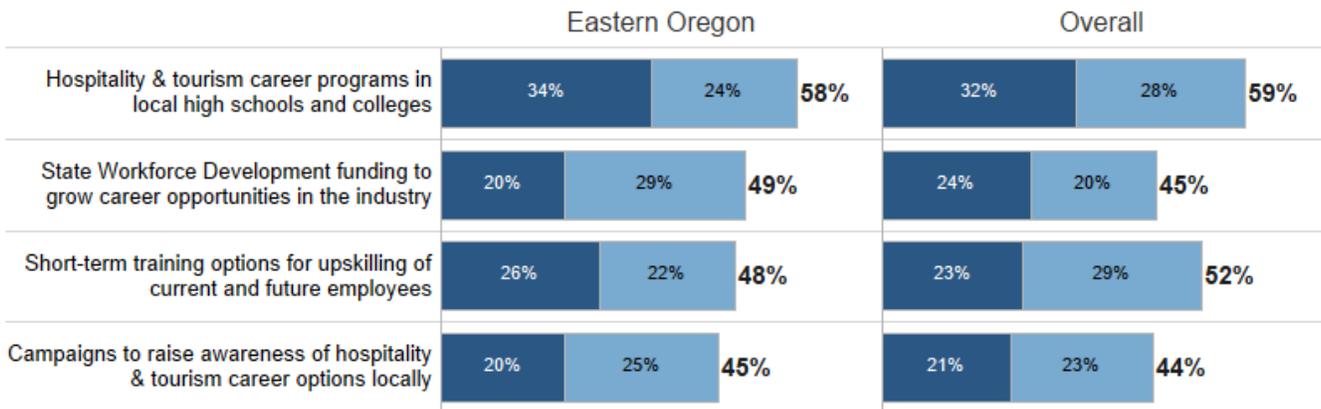
In order to rebuild the local workforce, the survey asked respondents to rank educational and career opportunities from highest to lowest priority in order to develop, attract and retain the local workforce to the industry. The following figure shows the share of respondents that rated each category among their top-two highest priorities. Overall, "Hospitality & tourism career programs in local high schools and colleges" was the most popular strategy (59% overall and 58% in Eastern Oregon). After that, the next highest priority among respondents in Eastern Oregon was, "State Workforce Development funding to grow career opportunities in the industry" (49%), which received a higher percentage of those who rated it as first or second priority than those in the overall sample (45%).

Developing the Local Workforce

Q: As we seek to rebuild the local workforce, please rank (from 1=highest priority to 4=lowest priority) the following educational and career opportunities to develop, attract and retain the local workforce to our industry.

Top 2 Priorities Displayed

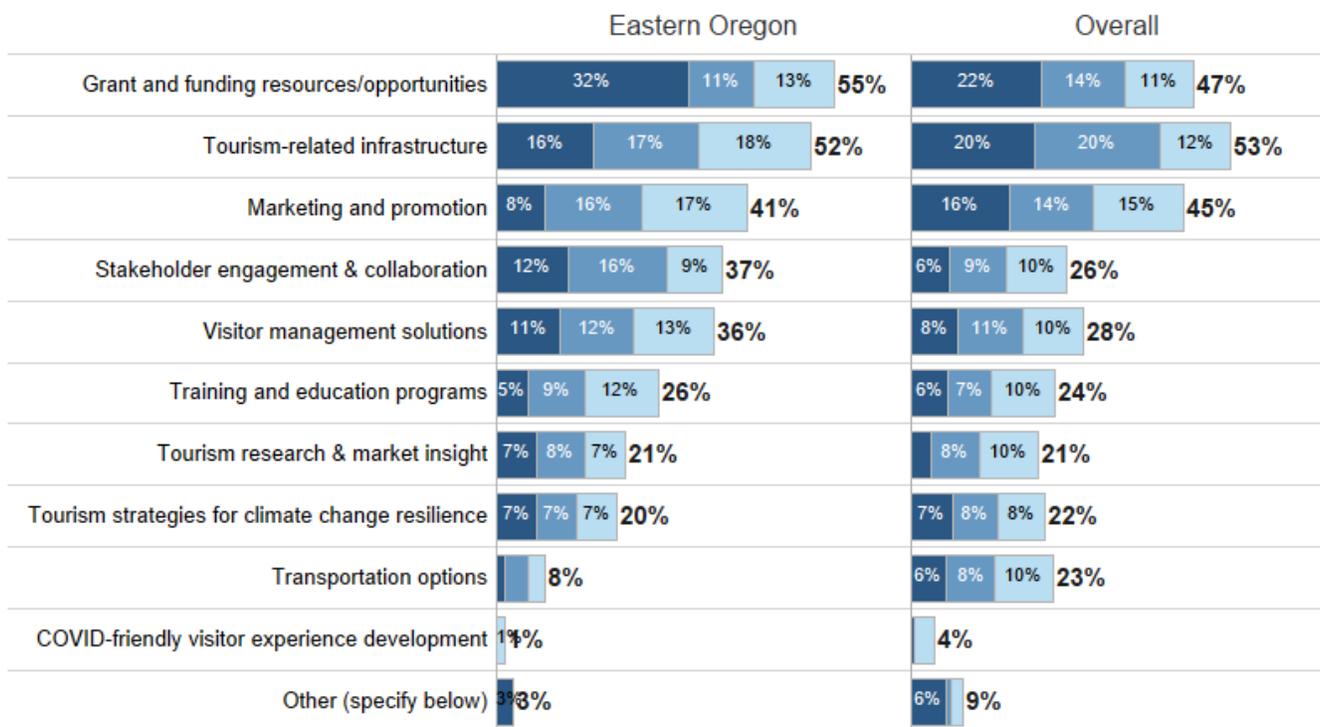
■ First Rank ■ Second Rank



As in prior iterations of the Oregon Tourism Industry Stakeholder Survey, respondents were asked to identify the three areas that should be emphasized for tourism planning over the next 2-5 years. Overall, tourism-related infrastructure emerged as the top priority with 20% of respondents identifying it as their top priority and 53% identifying it among their three highest priorities. Grant and funding resources/opportunities was the second most-identified priority (47% among their top three), followed by marketing and promotion (45% among their top three). Relative to 2020, these are the same top focus areas; however, the rank order changed with marketing falling from first to third priority. Eastern Oregon respondents, however, were more likely to favor grant and funding resources/opportunities with 55% identifying it among their top-three priorities. Although not a favored priority, Eastern Oregon respondents were also more likely to identify visitor management solutions as a priority (36% vs. 28% among respondents overall).

Tourism Priorities & Focus Areas

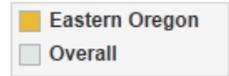
Q: Please identify the three areas that you believe should be emphasized for tourism planning over the next 2 to 5 years in Oregon: ■ First Rank ■ Second Rank ■ Third Rank



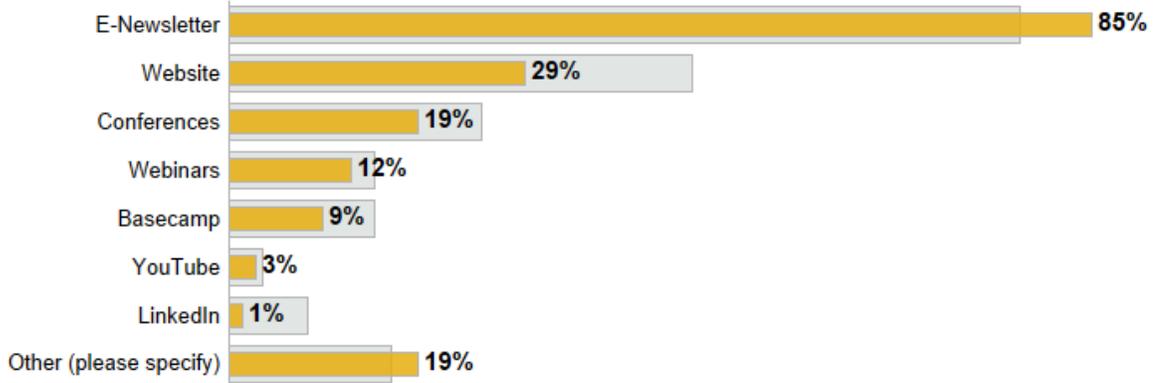
INDUSTRY ENGAGEMENT AND COMMUNICATIONS

Eighty-five percent of Eastern Oregon respondents currently receive tourism industry-related information from Travel Oregon and RDMOs via e-newsletter, followed by website (29%). By a large margin, e-newsletters are considered the best way for respondents to receive information.

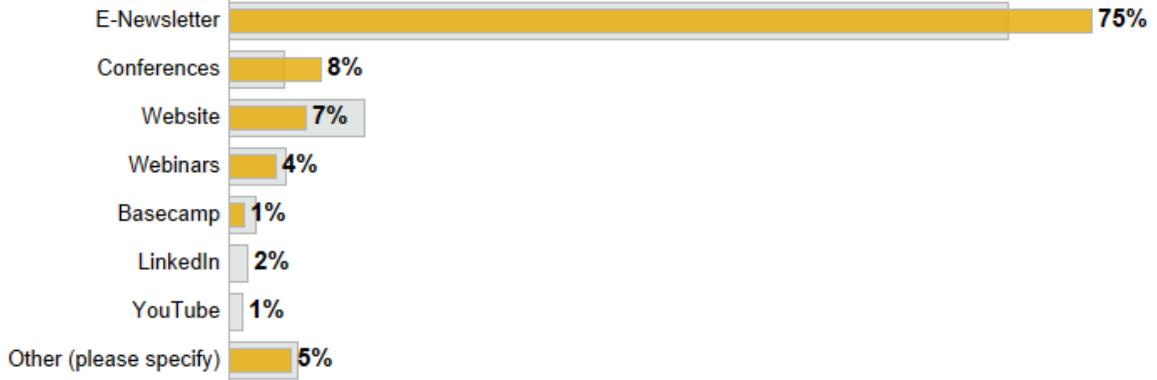
Communications



Q: How do you currently receive tourism industry-related information from Travel Oregon and your Regional Destination Management Organization? (Select all that apply)



Q: What is the best way for you to receive tourism industry-related information from Travel Oregon and your Regional Destination Management Organization?

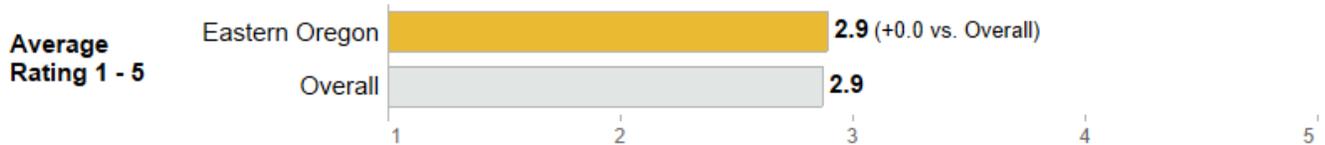
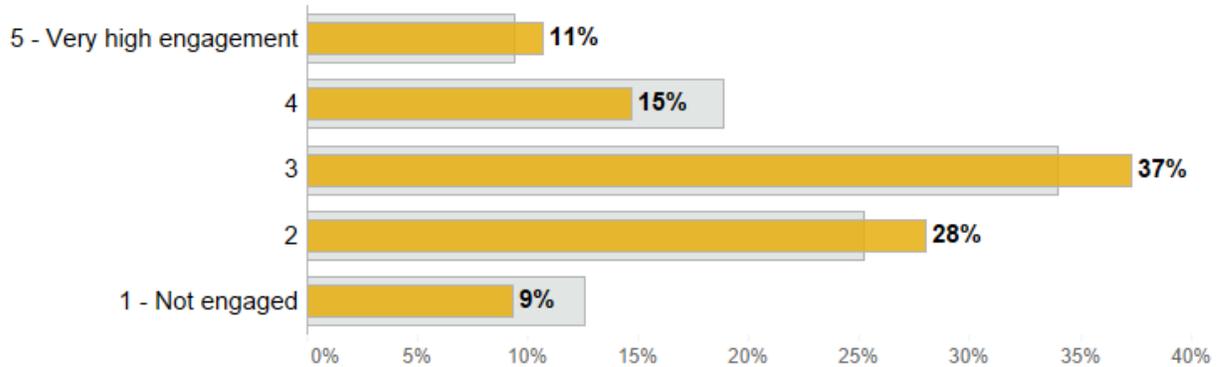


Respondents were asked to rate their engagement with Travel Oregon, from 1 (not engaged) to 5 (very high engagement). Twenty-six percent of respondents in Eastern Oregon rated this question a 4 or 5, compared to 28% in the overall sample. The average rating was the same overall and among respondents in Eastern Oregon at 2.9.

Engagement with Travel Oregon

■ Eastern Oregon
 ■ Overall

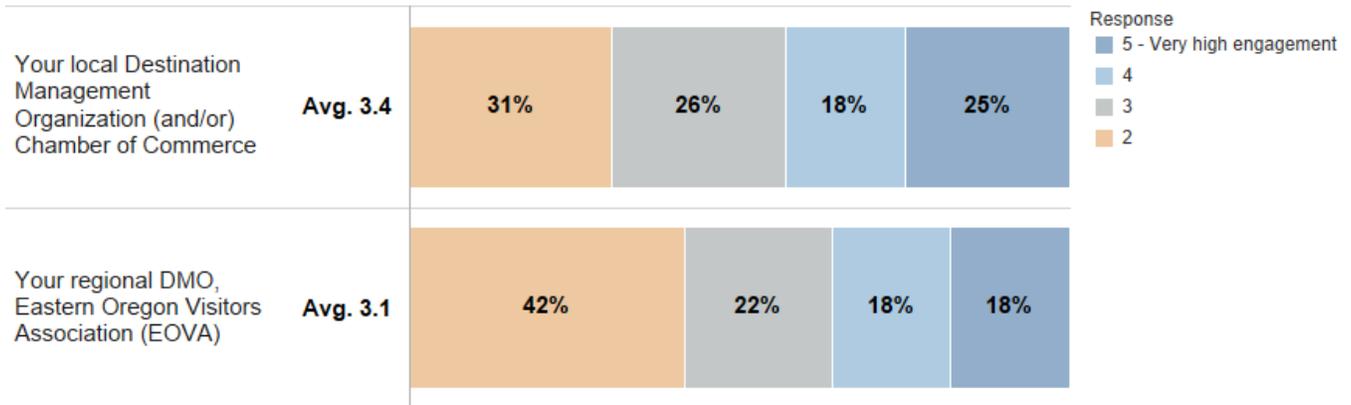
Q: Please indicate your level of engagement with Travel Oregon, from 1 (Not engaged) to 5 (Very high engagement).



EASTERN OREGON QUESTIONS

Each region had the opportunity to ask a series of custom questions of specific interest to their stakeholders, challenges, and opportunities. The findings from these custom questions are presented below. Responses to regional questions that were open-ended are presented in the open-ended response appendix.

Q: Growing and leveraging our partnerships throughout the region is a key priority of the regional Destination Management Organization (DMO). With that in mind, what is your current level of engagement with:



*Categories sorted in descending order by the average rating
Source: 2023 Oregon Tourism Stakeholder Survey

Q: To what extent are you aware of and engaged in the opportunities and resources Travel Oregon has available to the industry?



*Categories sorted in descending order by the average rating
Source: 2023 Oregon Tourism Stakeholder Survey

OPEN-ENDED RESPONSES

The survey resulted in an extensive number of open-ended responses. In addition to open-ended questions asked of all respondents, each region was given the opportunity to ask customized questions to respondents from their region. Responses to the following Eastern Oregon questions follow:

- *What are some of the unique needs or challenges that tourism in Eastern Oregon faces that may be impacting the visitor experience?*

- *Where can Eastern Oregon Visitors Association offer more support in the work you are engaged in? What does that support look like? (In-region engagements, advocacy, marketing support etc.)*

Note that responses are presented in the respondents' own words with no editing, spelling, or punctuation changes. The opinions expressed are the respondents' own and do not reflect the opinions of Travel Oregon. All other open-ended responses are viewable in a spreadsheet format or in an online dashboard format with accompanying word clouds and bar charts.

What are some of the unique needs or challenges that tourism in Eastern Oregon faces that may be impacting the visitor experience?
A lack of investment in all aspects of Travel and Tourism. Housing for workforce. Child care for workforce. Wayfinding. Many of our businesses are enjoying shorter weeks, shorter days, shorter hours a bit too much!!!
A lack of tourist attractions, restaurants, and lodging.
access to resources and skilled labor (i.e. the cost of a project may be more expensive in EO because the skilled labor is coming from outside the area)
Based on how Eastern Oregon is lumped together in a massive swath of land versus how the other 4 regions are served (I realize that this is probably due to population density), I think EO would be better served divided up like the rest of the state to showcase the unique and special qualities of the EO regions.
Community buy in and collaboration and support for local government is much needed in our area. It's hard to move forward without support and engagement from the community.
-distance from airports -need for better hotels & eateries -need for more cohesive system of things to do / places to stay--- ease of putting together a "vacation package" -potential local negative sentiment towards tourism -lack of education on what facilities are available in out of the way locations -lack of education on vastness of EO
Distance to attractions, lack of high quality food/restaurants, lack of green space for bathroom breaks and dog and children exercise. Lack of community buy-in to local events that may attract tourism.
Distance, lack of understanding and cooperation with local government/cities
Driving distance/lack of transportation options
drought risk, off the rails liberalism infecting our region.
EV charging stations
Extreme overuse to some areas that would like to see an immediate reduction in visitation and no use in other areas that would like to receive more visitors. Eastern Oregon is a huge, diverse region and the entire region should not all be marketed the same way.
FUEL PRICES, INFLATION, GROWING POPULATION WHO CAN WORK BUT CHOOSE NOT TOO.
Getting people to stay more than a day. Tourists need to know that you can spend a week or longer and not do everything.
Here in Harney County, there is increased recreational demand on federal lands. Both the local BLM and USFS offices have staffing shortages. It is difficult to balance managing

current recreational use and maintaining current sites and services with the demand for recreational development.
Housing
Housing and lodging availability
Housing to support workforce so businesses can stay open, lack of marketing materials for small businesses.
I don't know how unique our challenges are. Many of them seem like they are shared with other regions and communities.
Ignorance Racism Money for upkeep
Information. Letting people know what we have to offer.
Is helping share the message locally on how this can help the local economy. Everybody is focused on how they are going to put food on their plate and can't focus on how to grow economically. Malheur county has 74% public land, the amazing Owyhee Canyonlands, and has not focused on how to create a recreation economic engine from this. There are nearly 1Million people across the border creating a opportunity for the county.
It is such a big area, people don't know where to start.
Lack of appeal to stop here for those driving through, or a lack of events to draw folks in.
Lack of available accommodations, lack of volunteers or organizations that could provide hands on help for the 3 day event.
Lack of consistent transportation to area
Lack of eating establishments
Lack of funding and education in smaller communities. There needs to be a sense of support and belong to a cohesive tourism group that will provide consist ant training and advocacy.
Lack of good restaurants/lodging options/shopping
Lack of infrastructure for visitors. We are so remote that we don't have the same resources other communities can pull from.
Lack of resources, workforce and marketing
Lack of sophistication in marketing expertise, resulting in dated, bro-forward vibes. Lack of transportation options. Stereotypes about rural communities. Lack of diversity.
Lack of staff, aging population, lack of affordable housing, poor local government leadership.
Lack of workforce and workforce housing that will allow us to fully serve existing volume of visitors. The ever-increasing emphasis on equity and inclusion is having the opposite affect of what is intended. It is only making people more divided, suspicious of each other and looking for reasons to be mad at the "other," whomever that may be. Instead of people coming together with more understanding and knowledge of other points of view, our culture is getting further and further polarized.
Lacl of housing for locals means there are not enough workers to do the tourism related jobs.
limited marketing program; unreliable internet availability; public transportation; minimal collection of data
Lingering pandemic woes. Local resistance to change
Locals not understanding the positive impact tourism can make on a community. Stagnant organizations that are tasked with overseeing tourism
Lodging

More restaurants
Mostly rural communities, so lodging for medium to large events is difficult. Residents are also not necessarily used to hosting medium to large events where people would travel to our town, so there is angst on hosting such an event.
Motels and Marketing
Negative Community Reception Lack if shared identity/direction from leadership. Breadth of community infrastructure/basic needs, due to sustained economic and population decline.
Overtourism in wild areas results in a negative experience for wildlife, locals and visitors.
promotion
Quality visitor amenities especially lodging. A more robust presence in Statewide messaging
Real/perceived threats to visitor safety, lack of cell service, lack of food options (ex: no restaurants open on Mondays), lack of workforce, housing costs/scarcity, availability of information online.
Reducing the 99% white male middle-aged activity and visitation. Use of guns hunting or just shooting. Use of motorized recreation especially ATV/OHV high speed, noisy activity.
Rules that prohibit Hipcamp and other alternate lodging
signage
Staffing, restaurants open with regular hours, getting word out on vacation opportunities in area.
The business atmosphere is not very collaborative in La Grande. The efforts that are being made are not super well planned/coordinated, and the current website for EOVA is a mess.
The lasting Covid impact on small business, closed store fronts, lack of employees or skilled employees.
The perception that it is so far away from Western Oregon. Funding that is intended for out-of-state marketing, when travelling from NE Oregon to SE Oregon is further distances than some out-of-state travelers. Out-of-date Google business profile information
toilets, infrastructure, attractions don't work together, ie., ski areas, Pendleton Round-Up, etc.
Transportation - long distance from airports Lodging - not enough nice hotels Food - Restaurants have staffing issues
travel distance, price of fuel
Unfortunately, Travel Oregon's constant pushing of its "7 Wonders of Oregon" campaign is dramatically damaging these parts of Oregon. Smith Rock State Park is overrun and so heavily used it's hard to watch, Joseph and the Wallowa Mountains are inundated with tourists to the point local businesses can't keep up, so tourists get upset when they must wait 1.5 hours for dinner, or the hospital doesn't have the staff to treat emergencies because there is so little affordable housing, and Crater Lake and the Columbia Gorge are both experiencing severe overuse. WE NEED TO REFOCUS THE ATTENTION AWAY FROM THESE FRAGILE AREAS. Is Travel Oregon aware of the impacts its 7 Wonders campaign is having? It seems not, and the intention is to continue promoting until the areas are completely devastated. And that's NOT good! Please do some research into the negative impact you're having on local people.
We have a great deal of attractions here in Eastern Oregon, but few are aware of them.

We have a lack of infrastructure and a severe housing shortage. Increasingly, long-term rentals are turning into short-term rentals and absentee landowners are buying property. We have way too many houses sitting empty for most of the year. If you move here for a job, finding housing is near impossible, especially if you aren't making a lot of money.
weather, advertisement
Wildfire smoke, weather extremes,
Workforce has to be number one. For rural towns its hard to keep hours of operation extended when workforce is inexperienced, love or new.
Workforce housing and funding for recreation maintenance on US Forest Service lands.
Workforce shortage. Very few people available for volunteering and/or seasonal employment. Relates to our declining population in the county and a lack of affordable housing; also a lack of infrastructure business es for tourism such as coffeshops, cafes, etc.

Where can Eastern Oregon Visitors Association offer more support in the work you are engaged in? What does that support look like? (In-region engagements, advocacy, marketing support etc.)
A clear explanation of tourism networks. Who, what, where, do we contact for more info . Possibly in the form of a infograph.
Advocacy and marketing support
-Advocacy towards USFS -Connection with guides / hotels -Marketing
Boots on the ground in our area, have representation from those that LIVE and WORK in the Eastern Region and not across the country. Keep local opinions in the picture.
Communication and collaboration has greatly improved with the Outdoor Rec Stakeholder Meetings, keep it up!
Continue to demonstrate economic value of the tourism industry. Continue to work with local DMOs and partners to define and impliment destination development strategies
Don't know
employee recruiting, can not handle much more business without employees
EOVA has been very helpful. I appreciate a continued focus on responsible recreation messaging. Many areas are experiencing over-visitation. Highlighting lesser-known and lesser visited sites would be helpful from an outdoor recreation management perspective.
EOVA is doing great work, but I feel they need support from the state to help balance the influx of tourists to this part of the state.
EOVA should be engaging our local government officials (cities and counties) so they better understand the impact of tourism in our state and region. Advocating for local assets and creating more local awareness may help drive future successes.
Funding
Funding support.
General support, marketing, and providing economic impact data of events.
Grant Opportunities
help with education and marketing

Help finding funds to support operations to find staff to keep the Center open. Support for local volunteer recruitment.
Hospitality training and customer service standards for retailers
I just need to be more aware of what EOVA is doing. When are the meetings? Who's on first? I don't know who to get ahold of for assistance.
I'm not sure. I think they make a good effort to partner and collaborate. Perhaps they could receive more funding resources dedicated to supporting their participation in working on the housing crisis with other partners.
I'm retired, unless I'm asked I don't participate
in region engagements
In region engagements
Information, support, education regarding non-traditional (actually, traditional but outdated) types of recreation on public lands: hiking, tent camping, food gathering, quiet and stillness.
In-region engagements and communication. I didn't know EOVA was here until a meeting that Catie and I were both in.
In-region engagements and marketing support. I also feel like they are under promoting their assets and strengths of Eastern Oregon I.e focusing on the smaller communities that can't support large influx of tourists rather than the larger Eastern Oregon communities like Pendleton.
In-region engagements, advocacy for mutually beneficial industries and marketing
In-region engagements, advocacy, and marketing. A newsletter would be helpful
In-region engagements, advocacy, marketing support
In-region engagements, advocacy, marketing support, and financial means to help the few local groups and chambers of commerce get to the local community and prove that there is an economic engine we can tap into (Outdoor Recreation). More financial means creates more job/people sharing the information and building a community effort to get progress started
In-region engagements, I love getting to meet everyone!
In-state marketing and advertising.
Make all areas viable and visible.
marketing and promoting
marketing support
marketing support- not training or education but actual media placement and production
marketing support, I am not sure at this point but I do know we need help
Marketing support
Marketing support especially where locals are concerned. We tend to forget how fun the places we live can be.
Marketing support of local assets
Marketing support, more engagement with local stakeholders (which may require in-person visitation and workshops)
Marketing support; marketing relationships between businesses.
more marketing; more engagement with local businesses to help them understand tourism is a legit economy booster, not only related to outdoor tourism, but stress cultural heritage as well throughout our county.

More visits to the area and action taken. Many people feel that EOVA is a figurehead focused on branding and has not brought much actual benefit to the local citizens.
Our focus and EOVA's focus are not the same.
Provide a conduit to competent marketing/graphic design services and the funding to engage them.
Publicizing our events and the resort; including us in FAM tours and helping us host successful FAM tours.
Reach out to large tourism locations and ask how they can partner.
Support from all local non profits to figure out how to create affordable housing for locals so we can provide quality tourism
They meet when it is slowing down for travel and tourism which is non-profit fundraising season. EOVA region is so huge there is simply no way we can all come together. So figuring that out would help a lot.
We are mainly about land management here in Wallowa County. As noted previously, encouraging respectful, low impact tourism is important. We also think centering Indigenous voices is critical. Visitors need to know the history of this place - from indigenous people.
You're doing okay now.