



2024 OREGON TOURISM INDUSTRY PARTNER SURVEY

SUMMARY OF RESULTS | MT. HOOD & THE GORGE

March 2025



OVERVIEW

This report summarizes findings from a 2024 survey of tourism industry partners in Oregon. The survey sought feedback from partners to provide guidance and perspective on priorities for future investments from regional destination management organizations. This report summarizes findings from respondents in Mt. Hood & The Gorge, with additional statewide results provided for context.

OBJECTIVES

The 2024 Oregon Tourism Industry Survey was designed on behalf of the Oregon Tourism Commission, dba Travel Oregon, and the state's seven official regional destination management organizations (RDMOs) to elicit feedback from individuals and organizations linked to the tourism industry.

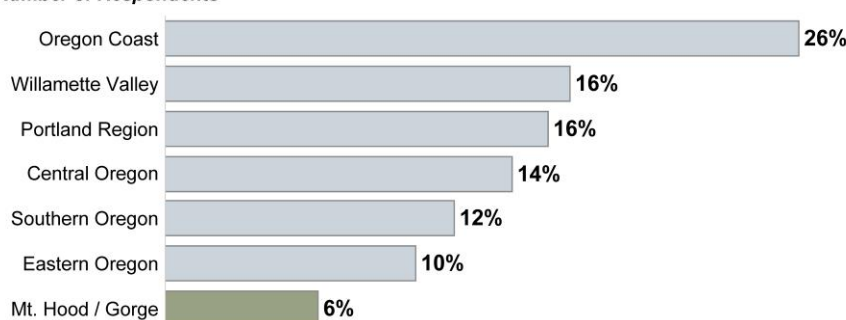
As Travel Oregon embarks on its 10-year strategic vision for tourism in the state, the results of the survey will help inform strategic direction for Travel Oregon and its regional partners to fulfill the strategic vision. The survey will also assist funding and programmatic decisions in marketing, grants, tourism-related infrastructure, visitor management, and more.

The survey built on a framework of past partner surveys conducted in 2018, 2020, and 2023. The survey was developed collaboratively by Travel Oregon, the seven RDMOs, and RRC Associates.

DATA COLLECTION

This study consisted of a digital survey that was fielded to Oregon tourism industry employees from September 12–October 14, 2024. The 2024 study is the fifth edition of the Industry Partner Survey, formerly known as the Stakeholder Survey. This year, the survey distribution methods included the Travel Oregon Industry Newsletter, partner and staff outreach, industry conferences, and social media.

The survey resulted in a total of 84 valid responses from Mt. Hood & The Gorge (up from 80 responses in 2023) and more than 1,300 responses statewide. 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 Mt. Hood & The Gorge compared to the statewide survey results.

Number of Respondents

84
Mt. Hood / Gorge
Responses

1,363
Overall Responses

Source: RRC

LIMITATIONS

The survey results should be viewed as an aggregation of relevant and thoughtful feedback from partners. The applicability of findings to real-life circumstances may depend on whether the feedback is from a broad enough (or representative) swath of partners and whether individual RDMOs believe they have engaged with enough partners to have a good gauge of the partners' priorities. An assessment of the industries represented, and the statewide response numbers, suggest a diverse and sufficient sample was collected from all regions, 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 partner 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 dashboard by going to: bit.ly/2024TOPartnersurvey

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Overview	1
Objectives	1
Data Collection.....	1
Limitations.....	2
Additional Resources.....	2
Key Findings	4
Tourism Strategies	4
Destination Development.....	4
Planning Priorities	4
Advocacy	4
Visitation and Seasonality	4
Strengths and Challenges.....	5
Resources and Programs.....	5
Respondent Profile	6
Tourism Strategies	10
Areas of Focus	17
Representation of and Communication with Underserved Communities.....	27
Industry Engagement and Communications.....	33
Mt. Hood & The Gorge Questions.....	34
Open-Ended Responses.....	36

KEY FINDINGS

TOURISM STRATEGIES

DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT

- **Satisfaction Levels:** 65% of Mt. Hood & The Gorge respondents are satisfied with the direction of tourism development, slightly higher than the statewide average of 62%.
- **Focus Areas:** Key focus areas for improving the resident and visitor experience include public infrastructure (54%), signage/wayfinding (25%), destination marketing and promotion (18%) and downtown development (18%).
- **Perceived Strengths:** Respondents highlight outdoor recreation opportunities (83%), food and beverage (39%), and farm, ranch, fishery, and agritourism business/activity (30%) as the region's strongest tourism assets.

PLANNING PRIORITIES

- **Top 3 Priorities for the Next 2–5 Years:**
 1. Grand and funding resources/opportunities (41%)
 2. Tourism-related infrastructure (36%)
 3. Enhancing perceptions for residents and workforce (31%)
- **Shift from 2023:** Marketing and promotion, which was a top priority in 2023 (41%), has dropped to 25% this year, showing a shift toward infrastructure and grants/funding.

ADVOCACY

- **Collaboration and Engagement:** Mt. Hood & The Gorge respondents feel confident collaborating with diverse groups to support tourism (4.5 out of 5).
- **Legislative Engagement:** Engagement with policymakers is low (2.8 out of 5), suggesting a need for stronger advocacy efforts.
- **Tourism Perception:** Respondents see the value tourism brings to their community (4.7 out of 5), however see room for improvement in access to data and information to better understand this value.

VISITATION AND SEASONALITY

- **Overcrowding in Summer:** 51% of Mt. Hood & The Gorge respondents say summer visitation feels very crowded, higher than the statewide response.
- **Winter Visitation Concerns:** 13% of respondents feel winter is overcrowded—higher than the statewide average.
- **Potential for Redistributing Visitors:** Visitor dispersal strategies could help balance tourism demand throughout the year.

STRENGTHS AND CHALLENGES

- **Housing and Workforce Challenges:**
 - 74% report workforce housing shortages compared to 67% statewide. Similar to affordable housing, this issue has continued to rise in risk regionally and statewide.
 - 71% cite a lack of affordable housing as a high-risk challenge compared to 74% statewide, a challenge regionally and statewide that has continued to rise in risk.
 - 69% identify wildfires as a major threat—much higher than statewide responses (46%).
- **Workforce Recruitment Issues:**
 - 55% struggle with offering regular hours or full-time employment, and 53% report an inability to provide healthcare/benefits.

RESOURCES AND PROGRAMS

- **Most Needed Resources:**
 - Resources to build tourism-related infrastructure (71%)
 - Grant and funding opportunities (66%)
 - Advocacy support for tourism-related policies (63%)
 - Training and tools for marketing and communication (55%)
- **Lowest Priority Resources:**
 - Technical assistance navigating business recovery funding and loans (8%) and support transitioning to online and expanded sales/business platforms (10%) are less of a concern.

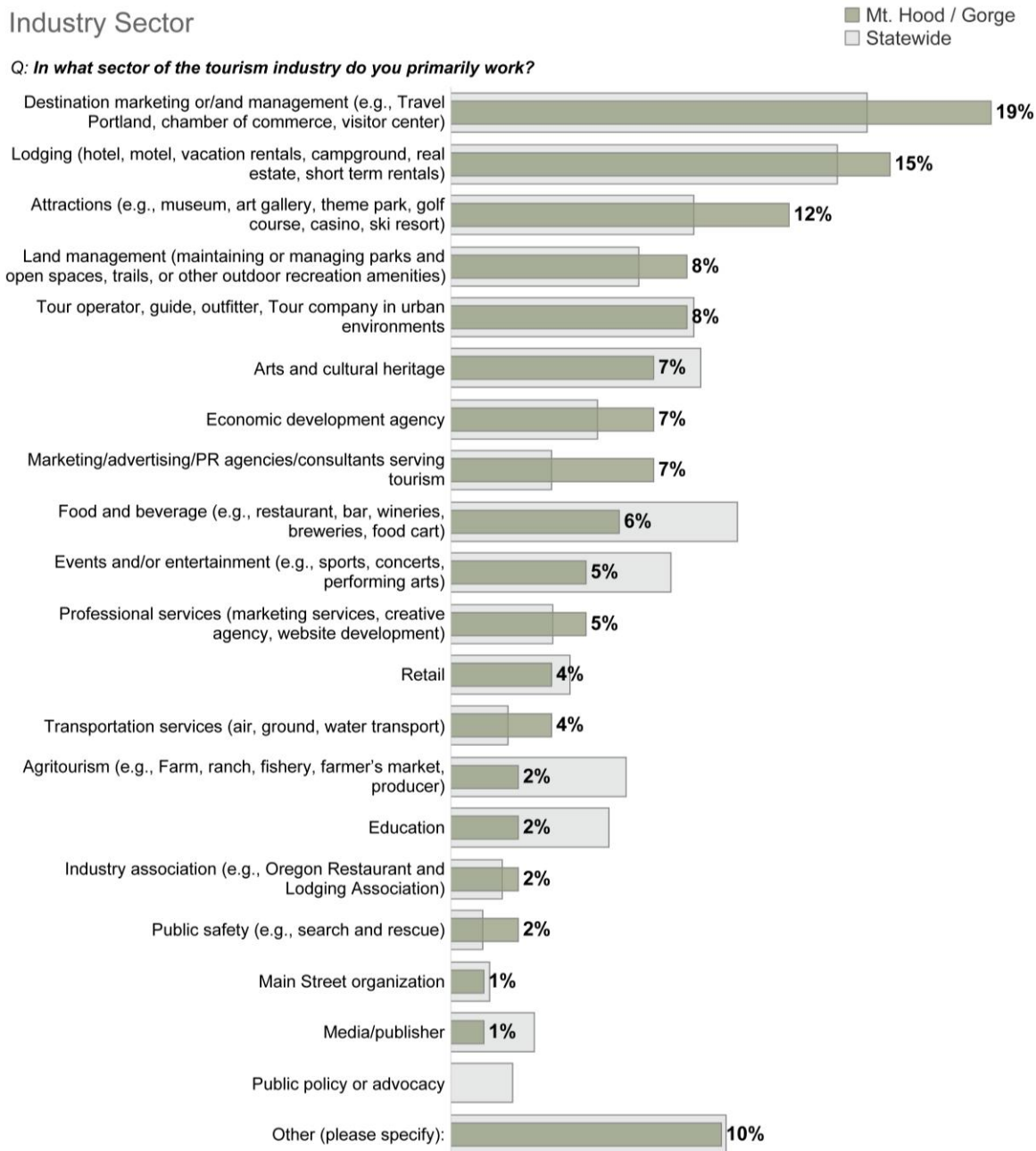
Mt. Hood & The Gorge's tourism industry faces a need for infrastructure, workforce housing shortages, some overcrowding, and wildfire risks, yet its strengths in outdoor recreation, food and beverage, and farm/ranch/fishery/agritourism provide a strong foundation for growth. Addressing funding, visitor management, and advocacy support will be essential for long-term success.

RESPONDENT PROFILE

The survey received broad participation by the tourism industry sector. Statewide, destination marketing and/or management accounted for 15% of total respondents, followed by lodging (14%) and food and beverage (10%). The top represented organizations remain similar to 2023. Like respondents statewide, respondents from Mt. Hood & The Gorge were most often employed in destination marketing and/or management (19%) followed by lodging (15%). Compared to 2023, a larger share of respondents from this region were in lodging (8% in 2023) and a smaller share in food and beverage (10% in 2023).

Industry Sector

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



Note: Percent labels represent the share of regional results, with differences of 5 percentage points (pts) or more in comparison to statewide results being shown in red or green to illustrate a negative or positive change, respectively.

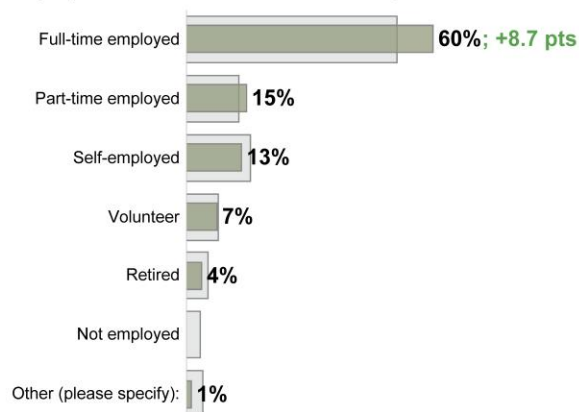
Source: RRC

The top employment statuses for the region were full-time employed (60%), part-time employed (15%), and self-employed (13%). Compared to the statewide responses, the Mt. Hood & The Gorge region had a higher proportion of full-time employed. Respondents were asked which entity type best describes their business or organization. In Mt. Hood & The Gorge, the top two response options were private or for-profit entities/organizations (46%) and non-profit entities/organizations (26%). Respondents were more likely to work in the Port district (6%) than statewide respondents.

Those who responded in the "other" category for entity type highlighted being retired, freelance, and part of a Chamber of Commerce.

Entity Type & Employment Status

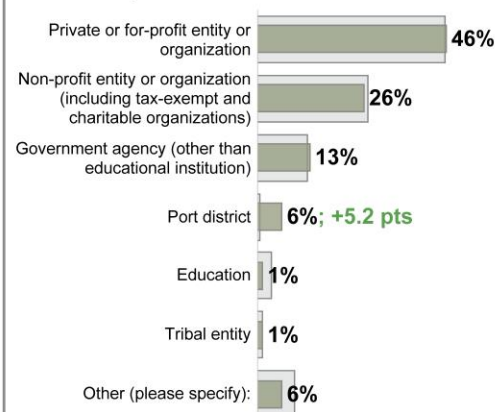
Q: Which of the following best describes your current employment status in the tourism industry?



Note: Percent labels represent the share of regional results, with differences of 5 percentage points (pts) or more in comparison to statewide results being shown in red or green to illustrate a negative or positive change, respectively.

Source: RRC

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

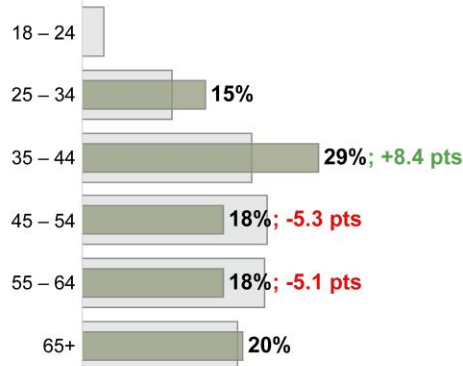


In the statewide results, the largest share of respondents were in the 45-64 range. In Mt. Hood & The Gorge, more respondents fell in the 35-44 age range than statewide respondents, while fewer were in the 45-54 and 55-64 age ranges. The share of respondents from Mt. Hood & The Gorge aged 65 and older was also slightly higher compared to the statewide results.

Mt. Hood & The Gorge respondents were more likely to identify as female (75%) and much less likely to identify as male (20%).

Age & Gender

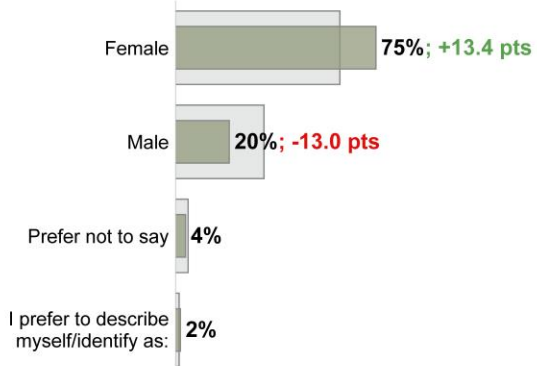
Q: What is your age?



Note: Percent labels represent the share of regional results, with differences of 5 percentage points (pts) or more in comparison to statewide results being shown in red or green to illustrate a negative or positive change, respectively.

Source: RRC

Q: What is your identified gender?

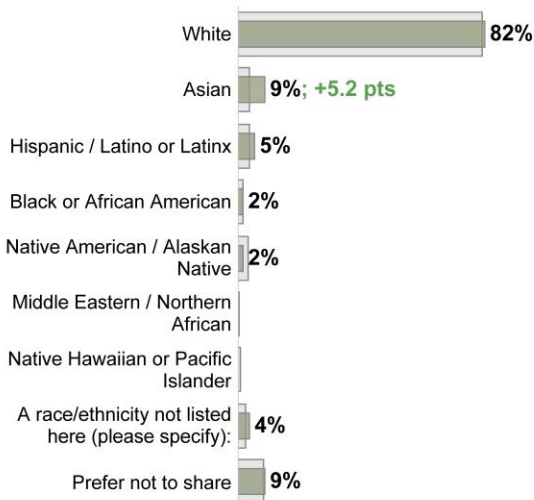


For race and ethnicity, 82% of Mt. Hood & The Gorge respondents identify as White. A greater share of Mt. Hood & The Gorge respondents identify as Asian (9%) compared to about 4% statewide.

Sixty-three percent of survey respondents statewide indicated that they had annual household incomes of \$75,000 or more. Compared to the statewide results, the Mt. Hood & The Gorge region had a higher percentage of respondents in the \$75,000-\$99,999 range.

Race & Household Income

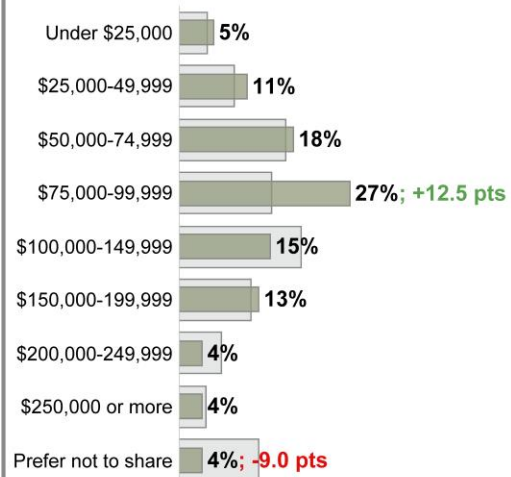
Q: Which of the following best describes you?



Note: Percent labels represent the share of regional results, with differences of 5 percentage points (pts) or more in comparison to statewide results being shown in red or green to illustrate a negative or positive change, respectively.

Source: RRC

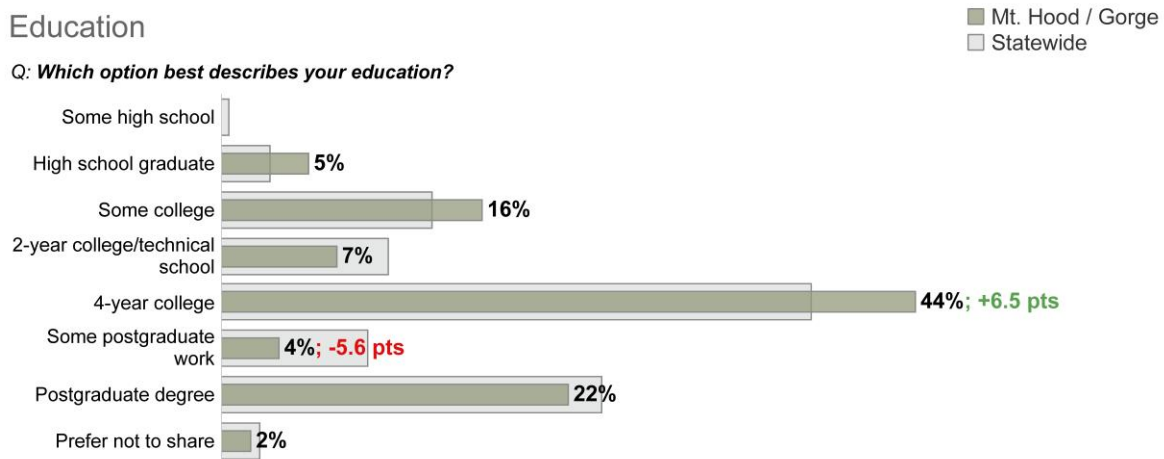
Q: Which of these categories best describes the total gross annual income of your household (before taxes)?



Mt. Hood & The Gorge respondents were somewhat different compared to the sample in terms of level of education achieved. A larger percentage of Mt. Hood & The Gorge respondents completed a 4-year degree only (44%) and some college (16%) compared to the statewide results.

Education

Q: Which option best describes your education?



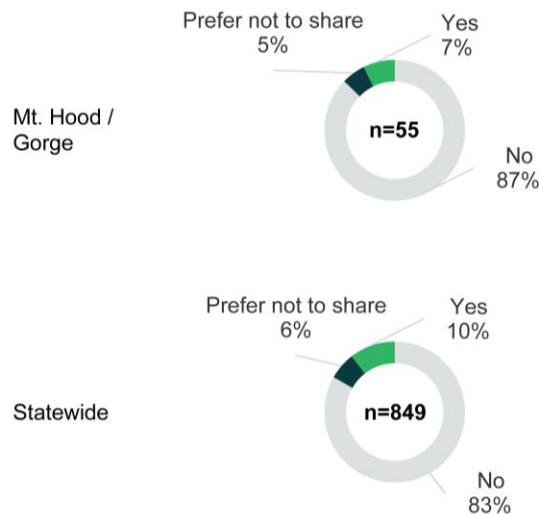
Note: Percent labels represent the share of regional results, with differences of 5 percentage points (pts) or more in comparison to statewide results being shown in red or green to illustrate a negative or positive change, respectively.

Source: RRC

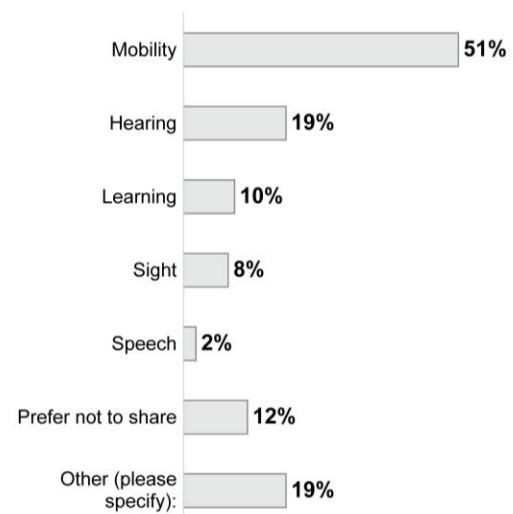
Seven percent of Mt. Hood & The Gorge respondents reported having a disability, compared to 10% of respondents statewide. Mobility was the most common disability statewide (51%). Other disabilities listed include mental health (including anxiety/depression, ADHD, and PTSD), autoimmune disease, and neurodivergence.

Presence of Disabilities

Q: Do you have a disability?



Q: Which of the following best describes these disabilities?



*Only displaying statewide sample due to insufficient sample size within regions.

Source: RRC

TOURISM STRATEGIES

As Travel Oregon continues their work on the 10-year strategic vision for tourism adopted in June 2022, these survey findings will play a crucial role in shaping strategic priorities for Travel Oregon and its regional partners. These insights will be a vital source of information in guiding Travel Oregon and RDMOs in funding and program decisions across key areas including marketing, grants, tourism-related infrastructure, and visitor management, ensuring alignment with the broader vision for sustainable tourism development in the state.

Respondents were asked to characterize their satisfaction with the general direction of tourism development in Oregon.

The following definition was provided to survey respondents:

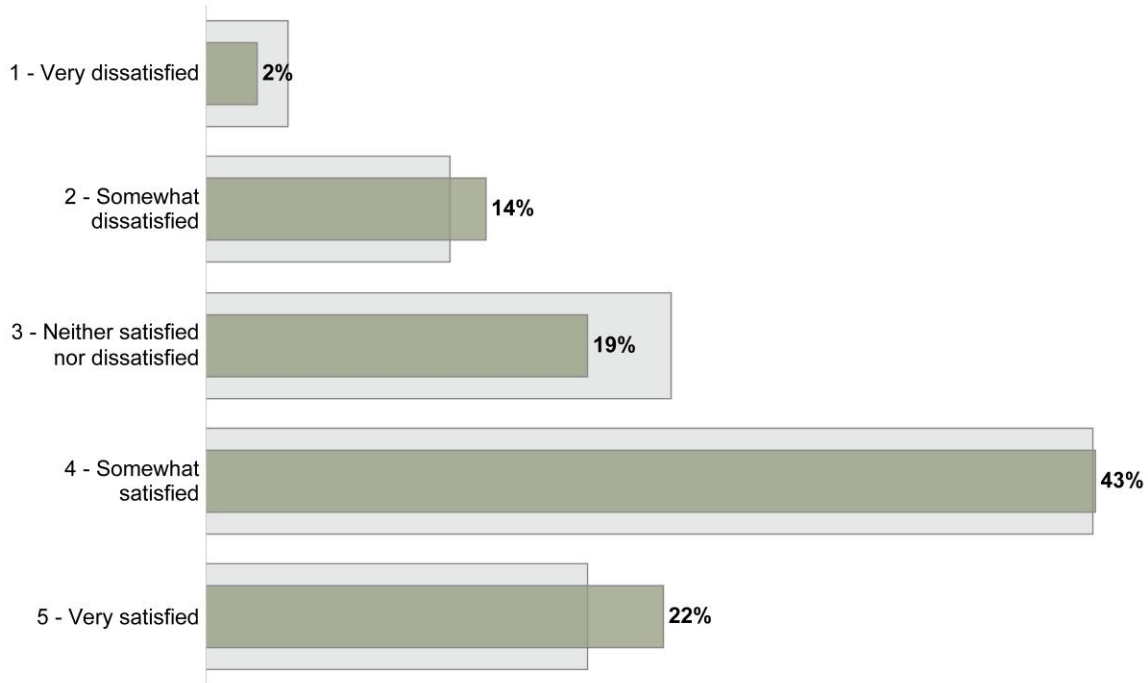
"Destination Development refers to the development of robust destinations that offer authentic, world-class experiences for all travelers, while preserving, enhancing and celebrating local assets."

Statewide, 62% of respondents were satisfied with the direction of tourism development in Oregon (selected 4 or 5 on a five-point scale), while 16% were unsatisfied (selected 1 or 2). Twenty-three percent were neutral (selected 3, neither unsatisfied nor satisfied). In Mt. Hood & The Gorge, 65% were satisfied, 16% were unsatisfied, and 19% were neither unsatisfied nor satisfied. The average among respondents in Mt. Hood & The Gorge was higher (3.7) than the average among respondents statewide (3.6). Overall, statewide satisfaction has increased since 2023 from 3.4, and just slightly up for Mt. Hood & The Gorge from 3.6 in 2023.

Satisfaction with Tourism Development in Oregon

■ Mt. Hood / Gorge
■ Statewide

Q: Please rate your satisfaction with the direction of destination development in Oregon:



Note: "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."

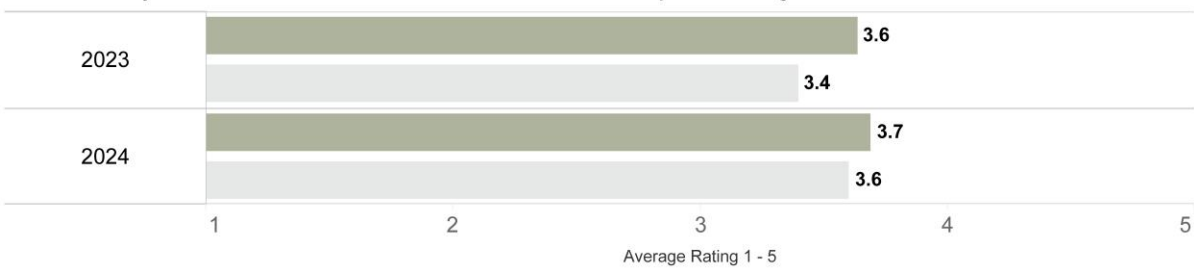
Note: Percent labels represent the share of regional results, with differences of 5 percentage points (pts) or more in comparison to statewide results being shown in red or green to illustrate a negative or positive change, respectively.

Source: RRC

Satisfaction with Tourism Development in Oregon

■ Mt. Hood / Gorge
■ Statewide

Q: Please rate your satisfaction with the direction of destination development in Oregon:



Note: "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."

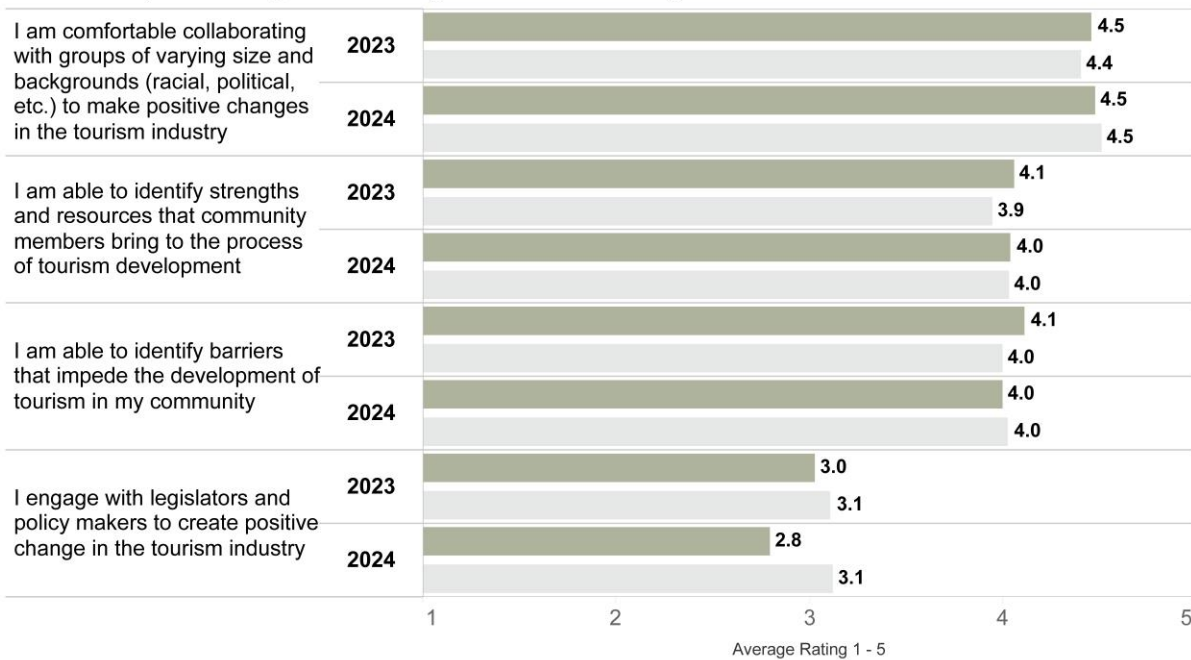
Note: Percent labels represent the share of regional results, with differences of 5 percentage points (pts) or more in comparison to statewide results being shown in red or green to illustrate a negative or positive change, respectively.

Source: RRC

Respondents were asked to rate their agreement with four statements that measured their advocacy for tourism. The statement with the greatest support among the statewide sample and respondents in Mt. Hood & The Gorge was, "I am comfortable collaborating with groups of varying size and backgrounds (racial, political, etc.) to make positive changes in the tourism industry," with an average rating of 4.5 on a five-point scale statewide and 4.4 among respondents in Mt. Hood & The Gorge. Respondents, both statewide and in Mt. Hood & The Gorge, agreed least with the statement, "I engage with legislators and policy makers to create positive change in the tourism industry," with an average rating of 3.1 statewide and 2.8 for Mt. Hood & The Gorge.

Advocacy for Tourism in Oregon

Q: Please rate your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statements:

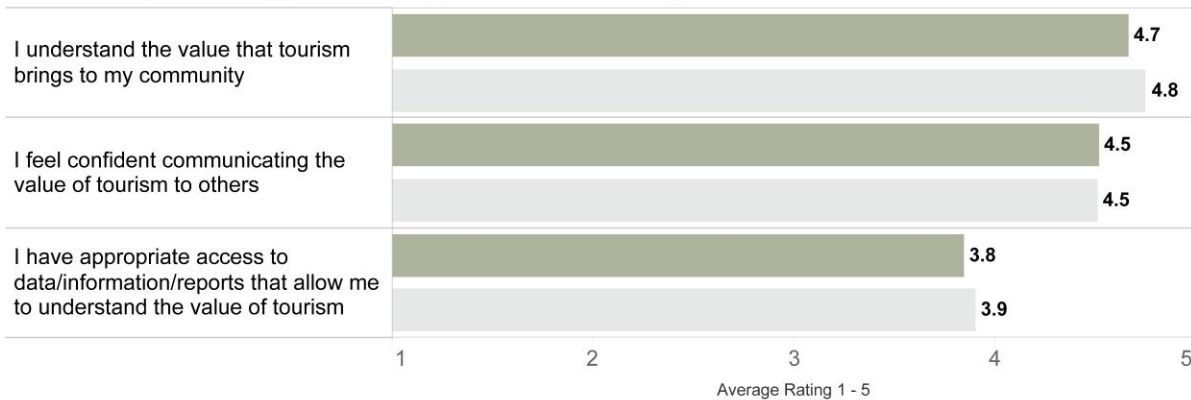


Source: RRC

Respondents were also asked to rate their level of agreement with three statements that measured perceived value of tourism. Average rating of the value of tourism differed only slightly between the statewide sample and Mt. Hood & The Gorge. Both rated all three statements highly, with "I have appropriate access to data/information/reports that allow me to understand the value of tourism" the lowest rated at 3.9 statewide and at 3.8 for Mt. Hood & The Gorge. The highest rated statement reflects an understanding that tourism benefits Oregon as a whole, at a 4.7 for the region and 4.8 for the state on a five-point scale: "I understand the value that tourism brings to my community" was rated high in both samples.

Value of Tourism in Oregon

Q: Please rate your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statements:



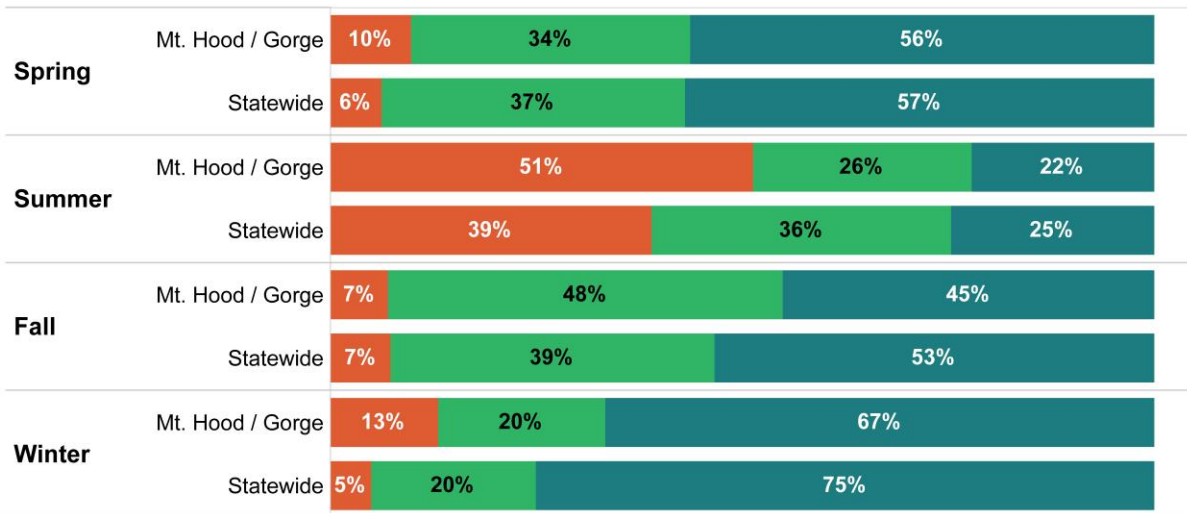
Source: RRC

Respondents were asked to characterize the number of visitors their community receives during each of the four seasons. Statewide, 6% of respondents said there were too many visitors in the spring, followed by 39% in summer, 7% in fall, and 5% in winter. Compared to the statewide sample, a higher proportion of respondents in Mt. Hood & The Gorge indicated that there are too many visitors in the summer (51%) and too many visitors in the winter (13%). Across all seasons, respondents in Mt. Hood & The Gorge were less likely to say that they could use more visitation. Compared to 2023 results, Mt. Hood & The Gorge respondents were more likely to indicate that their community was “very crowded” in all seasons with summer jumping from 29% saying very crowded in 2023 to 51% in 2024.

Visitation Levels by Season

■ We could use more visitation
■ Just the right amount
■ Very crowded

Q: During each season, please select how you would describe the level of visitation in your community as it relates to tourism:

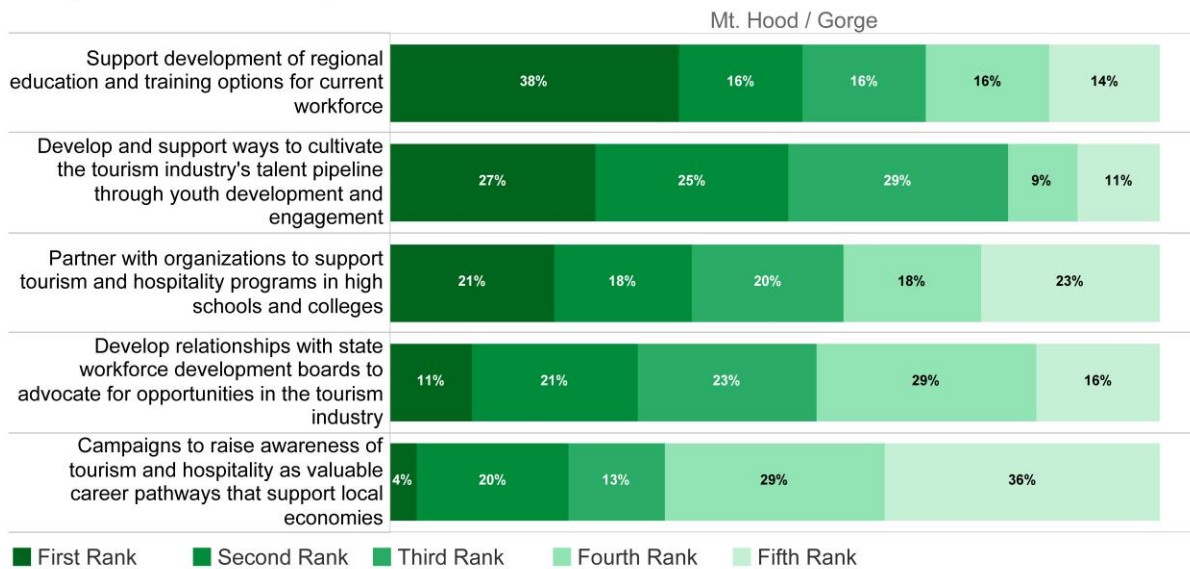


Source: RRC

Respondents were asked to rank, from highest to lowest priority, various educational and career opportunities designed to help develop, attract, and retain industry workforce. Mt. Hood & The Gorge respondents placed "Support development of regional education and training options for current workforce" as their top priority, with 38% ranking it first among the five options. The next top-ranked priority for Mt. Hood & The Gorge was "Develop and support ways to cultivate the tourism industry's talent pipeline through youth development and engagement" at 27%.

Educational and Career Opportunities (Regional)

Q: Please rank (from highest priority to lowest priority) the following educational and career opportunities designed to help develop, attract and retain industry workforce.



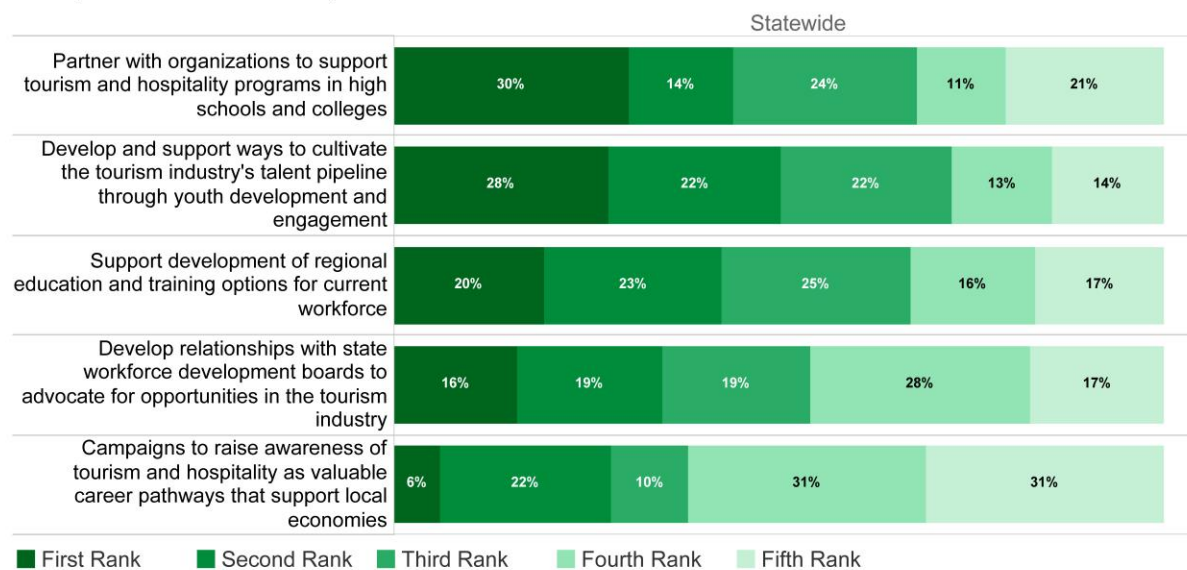
Note: Responses sorted in descending order by "First Rank".

Source: RRC

The statewide sample ranked "Partner with organizations to support tourism and hospitality programs in high schools and colleges" and "Develop and support ways to cultivate the tourism industry's talent pipeline through youth development and engagement" as their first-ranked priorities at 30% and 28%, respectively.

Educational and Career Opportunities (Statewide)

Q: Please rank (from highest priority to lowest priority) the following educational and career opportunities designed to help develop, attract and retain industry workforce.



Note: Responses sorted in descending order by "First Rank".

Source: RRC

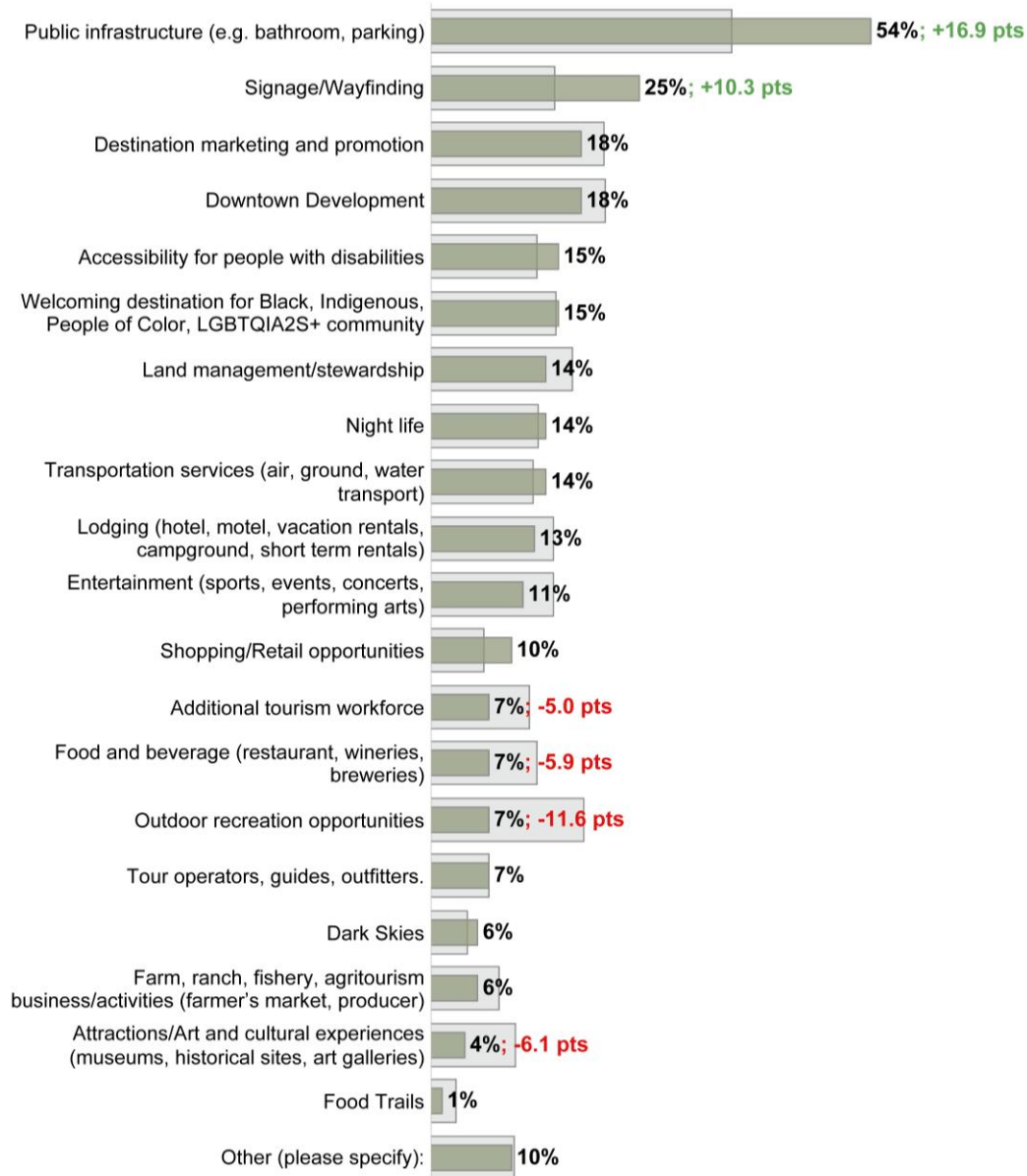
AREAS OF FOCUS

The top areas that the statewide sample said their community needs to focus on to improve the resident and visitor experience were public infrastructure (37%), destination marketing and promotion (21%), downtown development (21%), and outdoor recreation opportunities (19%). In comparison, Mt. Hood & The Gorge respondents identified some of these same priorities. Mt. Hood & The Gorge identified public infrastructure (54%), signage/wayfinding (25%), destination marketing and promotion (18%), and downtown development (18%).

Areas of Focus

■ Mt. Hood / Gorge
□ Statewide

Q: Please identify three areas that your community needs to focus on to improve the resident and visitor experience. (Select up to three)



Note: Percent labels represent the share of regional results, with differences of 5 percentage points (pts) or more in comparison to statewide results being shown in red or green to illustrate a negative or positive change, respectively.

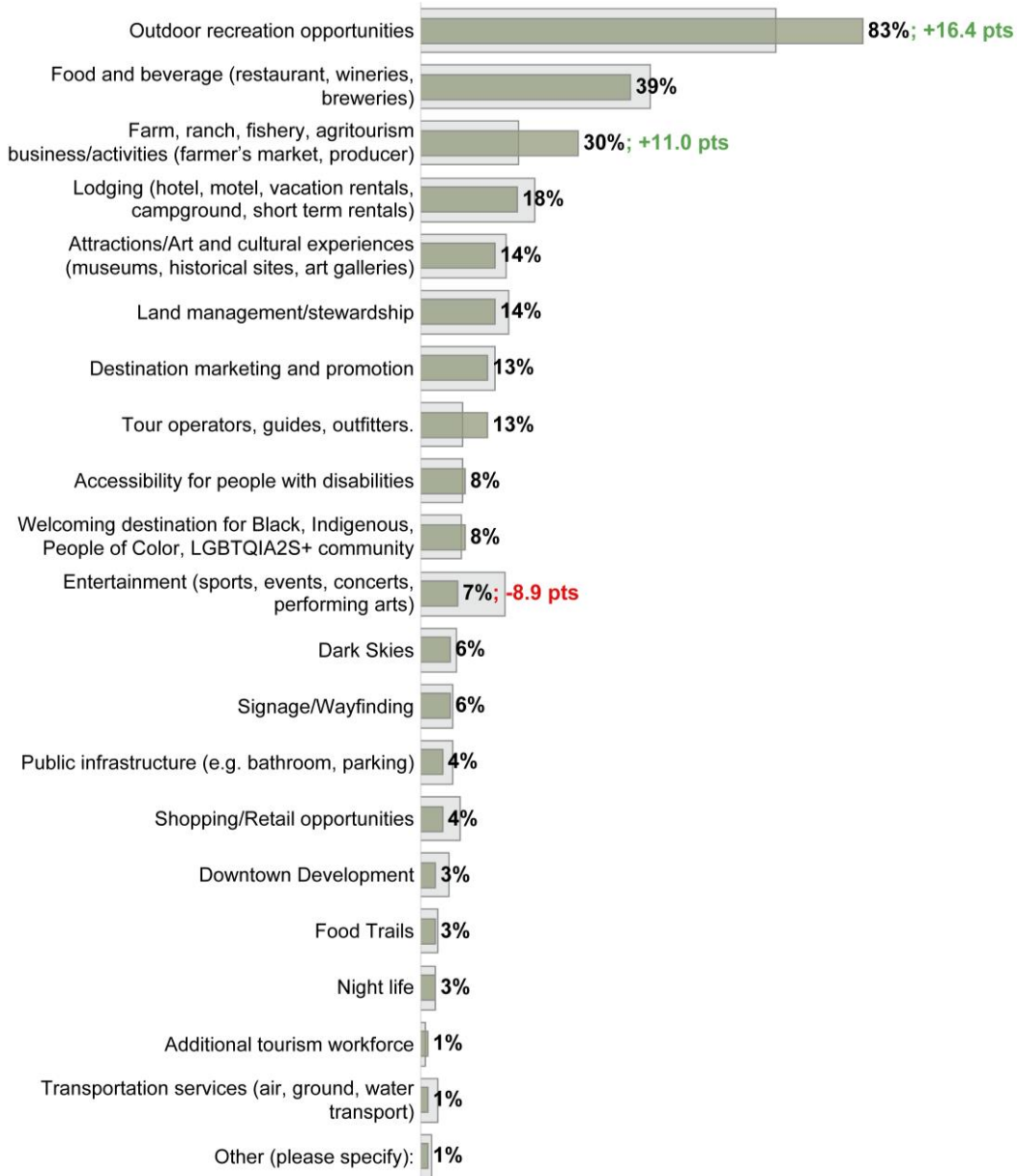
Source: RRC

Using the same set of answer options to those immediately above, the following figure portrays areas that respondents felt are strengths in their community. The top three areas that respondents from Mt. Hood & The Gorge consider as strengths in their community are outdoor recreation opportunities (83%), food and beverage (39%), and farm/ranch/fishery/agritourism business/activity (30%). In comparison to the statewide responses, respondents in the Mt. Hood & The Gorge region were more likely to identify outdoor recreation and farm/ranch/fishery/agritourism business activity as strengths.

Community Strengths

■ Mt. Hood / Gorge
■ Statewide

Q: Please identify three areas that are a strength for your community. (Select up to three)



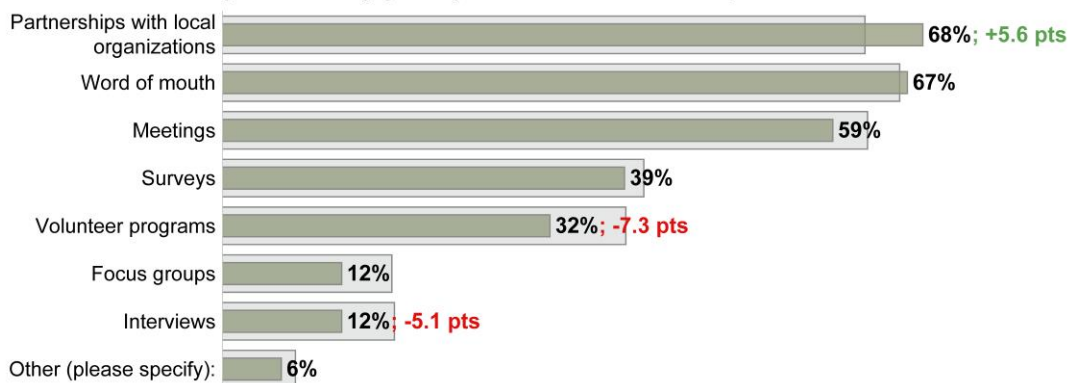
Note: Percent labels represent the share of regional results, with differences of 5 percentage points (pts) or more in comparison to statewide results being shown in red or green to illustrate a negative or positive change, respectively.

Source: RRC

When communicating and engaging with the local community, Mt. Hood & The Gorge is largely consistent with the statewide sample, partnering with local organizations (68%), using word of mouth (67%), and meetings (59%) to reach out to the community. In comparison to the statewide responses, respondents in the Mt. Hood & The Gorge region were more likely to partner with local organizations but less likely to use volunteer programs and interviews.

Local Community Engagement

Q: *What methods have you used to engage with your local communities in the past 12 months?*



Note: Percent labels represent the share of regional results, with differences of 5 percentage points (pts) or more in comparison to statewide results being shown in red or green to illustrate a negative or positive change, respectively.

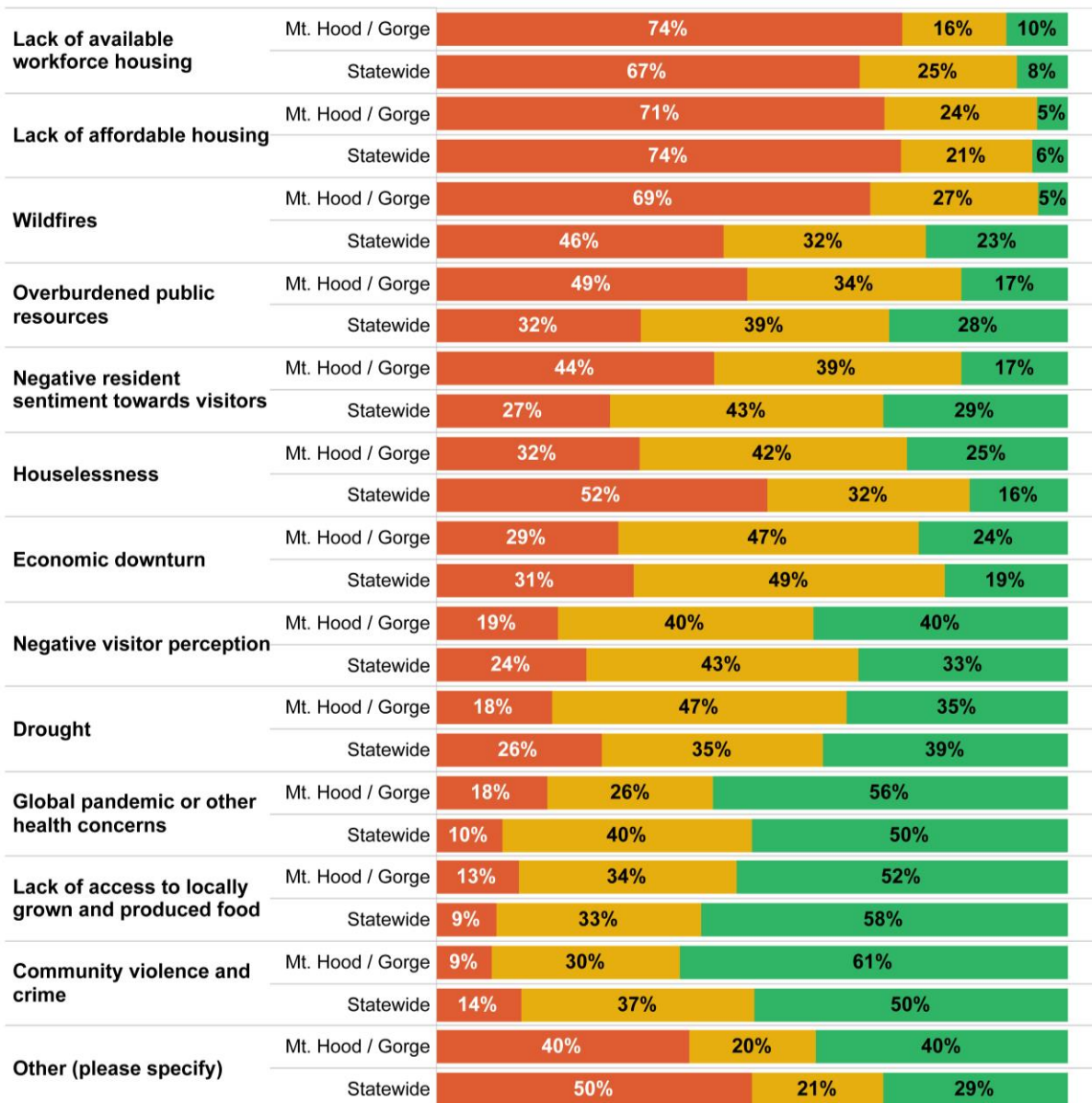
Source: RRC

The survey asked respondents to rate the challenges the community currently faces, and the level of risk associated with each challenge. The top three challenges statewide were identified by respondents as a lack of affordable housing (74%; "high risk"), a lack available workforce housing (67%), and houselessness (52%). Much of the response from Mt. Hood & The Gorge identified similar challenges. While lack of available workforce housing (74%) and lack of affordable housing (71%) were in line with statewide results. Regional respondents were much less likely to cite houselessness as an issue than statewide respondents, but more likely to say wildfires are a high risk.

Risks to Tourism in Your Community

Response
■ Low risk
■ Medium risk
■ High risk

Q: Which of the following challenges does your community currently face?



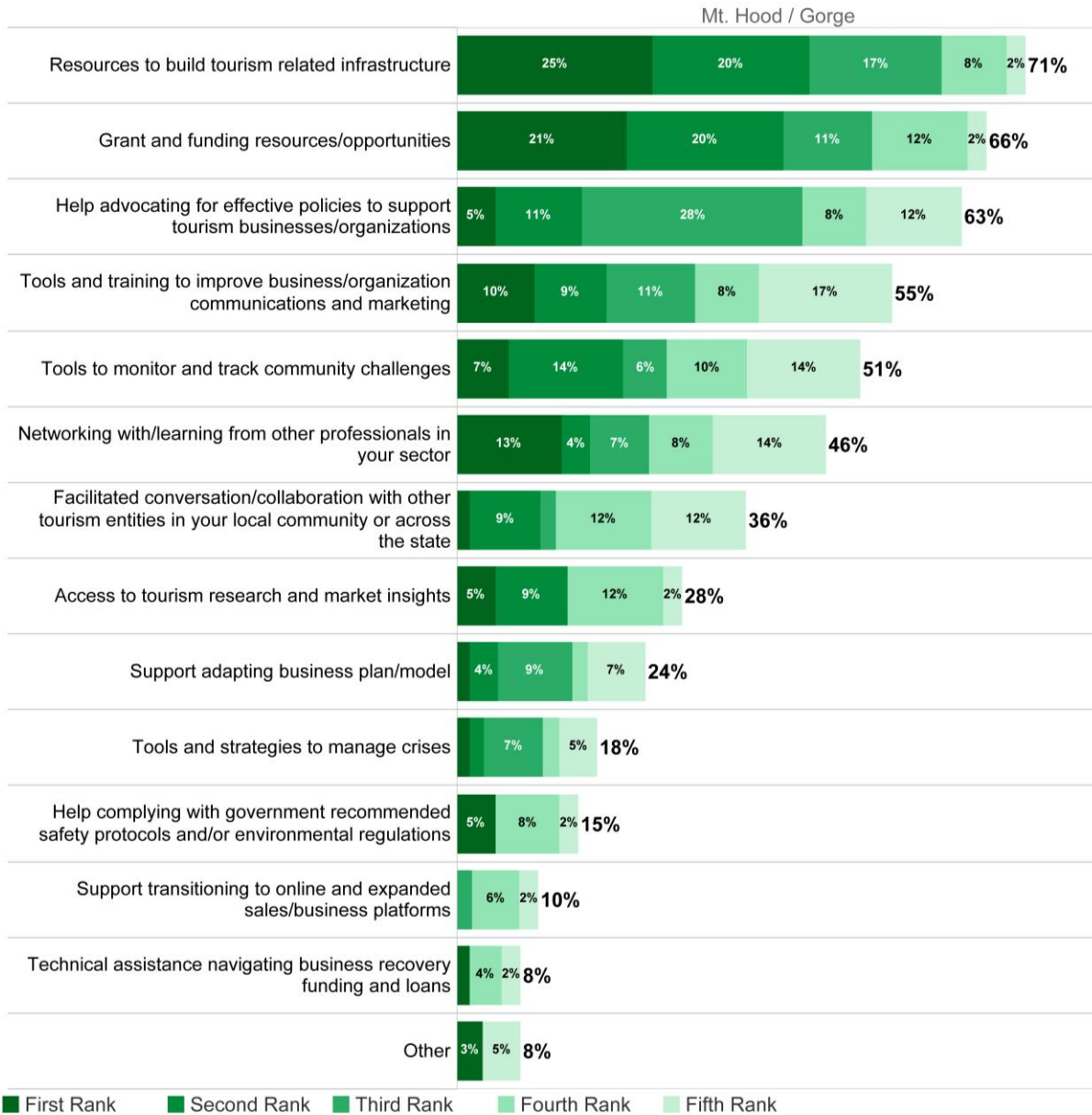
Note: Categories sorted in descending order by the percent of regional respondents selecting "High risk".

Source: RRC

The highest rated strategy in Mt. Hood & The Gorge was resources to build tourism related infrastructure and grant and funding resources/opportunities (71% and 66%, respectively, identified this among their top five resources or programs). Help advocating for effective policies to support tourism business/organization (63%) and tools and training to improve business/organization communications and marketing (55%) were among the next highest rated for Mt. Hood & The Gorge.

Resources & Programs (Regional)

Q: Which of the following resources or programs would best assist your business/organization or community in the face of the challenges identified above?



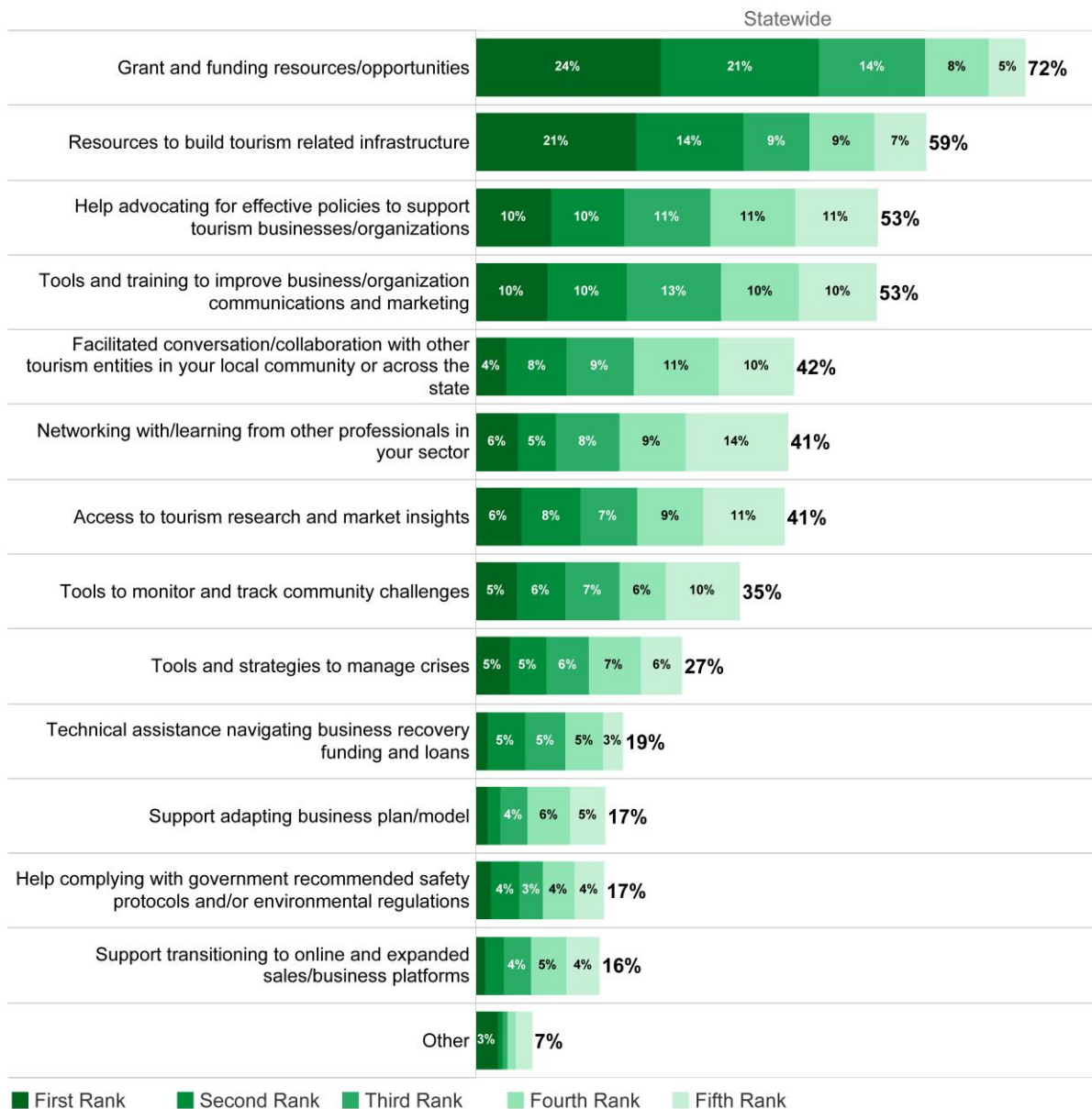
Note: Responses were recorded for the top five resources or programs respondents identified, with the sum of these five choices noted on the far right.

Source: RRC

Across the statewide sample, grant and funding resources/opportunities was the highest rated, with 72% of respondents identifying this among their top five resources or programs. Following were resources to build tourism-related infrastructure (59%), help advocating for effective policies to support tourism businesses/organizations (53%), and tools and training to improve business/organizations' communications and marketing (53%).

Resources & Programs (Statewide)

Q: Which of the following resources or programs would best assist your business/organization or community in the face of the challenges identified above?



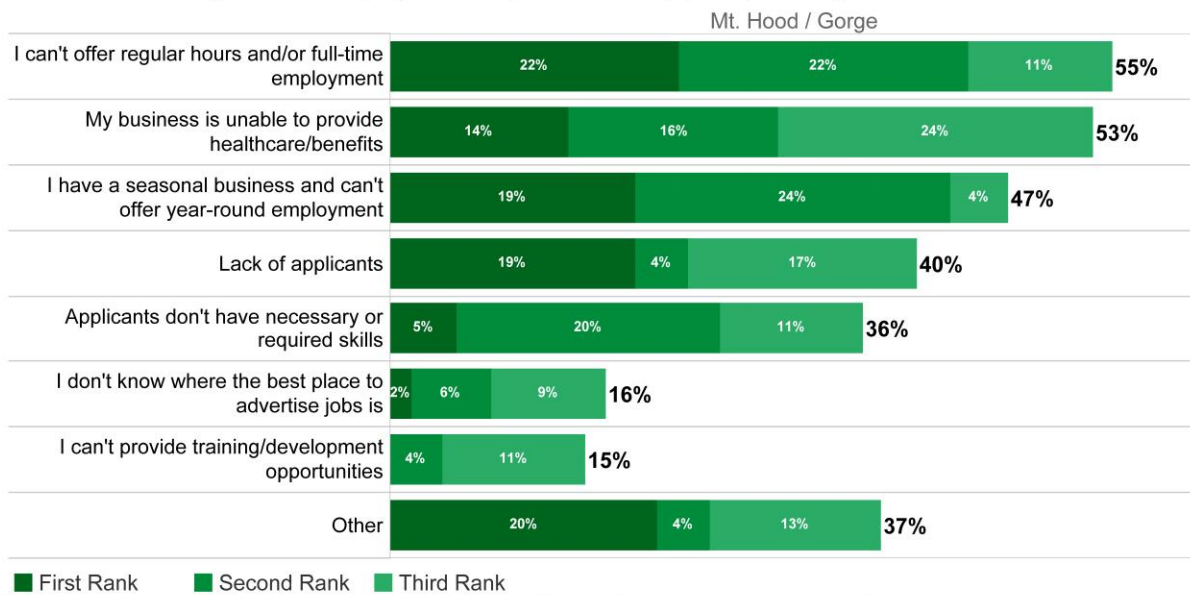
Note: Responses were recorded for the top five resources or programs respondents identified, with the sum of these five choices noted on the far right.

Source: RRC

Respondents were asked to identify the three greatest challenges they faced in attracting and/or retaining tourism workforce in the area. More than half of Mt. Hood & The Gorge respondents ranked "I can't offer regular hours and/or full-time employment" (55%) and "My business is unable to provide healthcare/benefits" (53%) among their top three challenges in the area. The lowest rated challenge by Mt. Hood & The Gorge was "I can't provide training/development opportunities" at 15%. Examples of challenges related to workforce housing mentioned in the "other" category primarily include affordable/lack of housing and lack of ability to pay competitive salaries.

Tourism Workforce Challenges (Regional)

Q: *What are the three greatest challenges you currently face in attracting (and/or) retaining tourism workforce?*



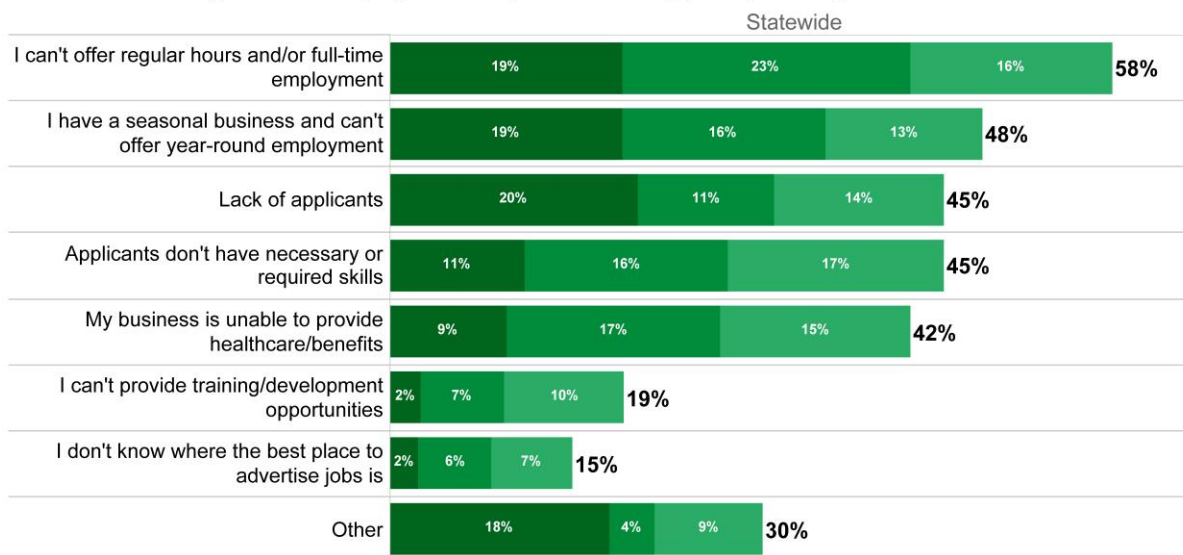
Note: Responses were recorded for the top three challenges respondents identified, with the sum of these three choices noted on the far right.

Source: RRC

The statewide sample was similar to regional findings, with the greatest share of respondents ranking "I can't offer regular hours and/or full-time employment" (58%) and "I have a seasonal business and can't offer year-round employment" (48%) among their greatest challenges. "I don't know where the best place to advertise jobs is" (15%) was seen as relatively minimal in terms of tourism workforce challenges.

Tourism Workforce Challenges (Statewide)

Q: What are the three greatest challenges you currently face in attracting (and/or) retaining tourism workforce?



■ First Rank ■ Second Rank ■ Third Rank

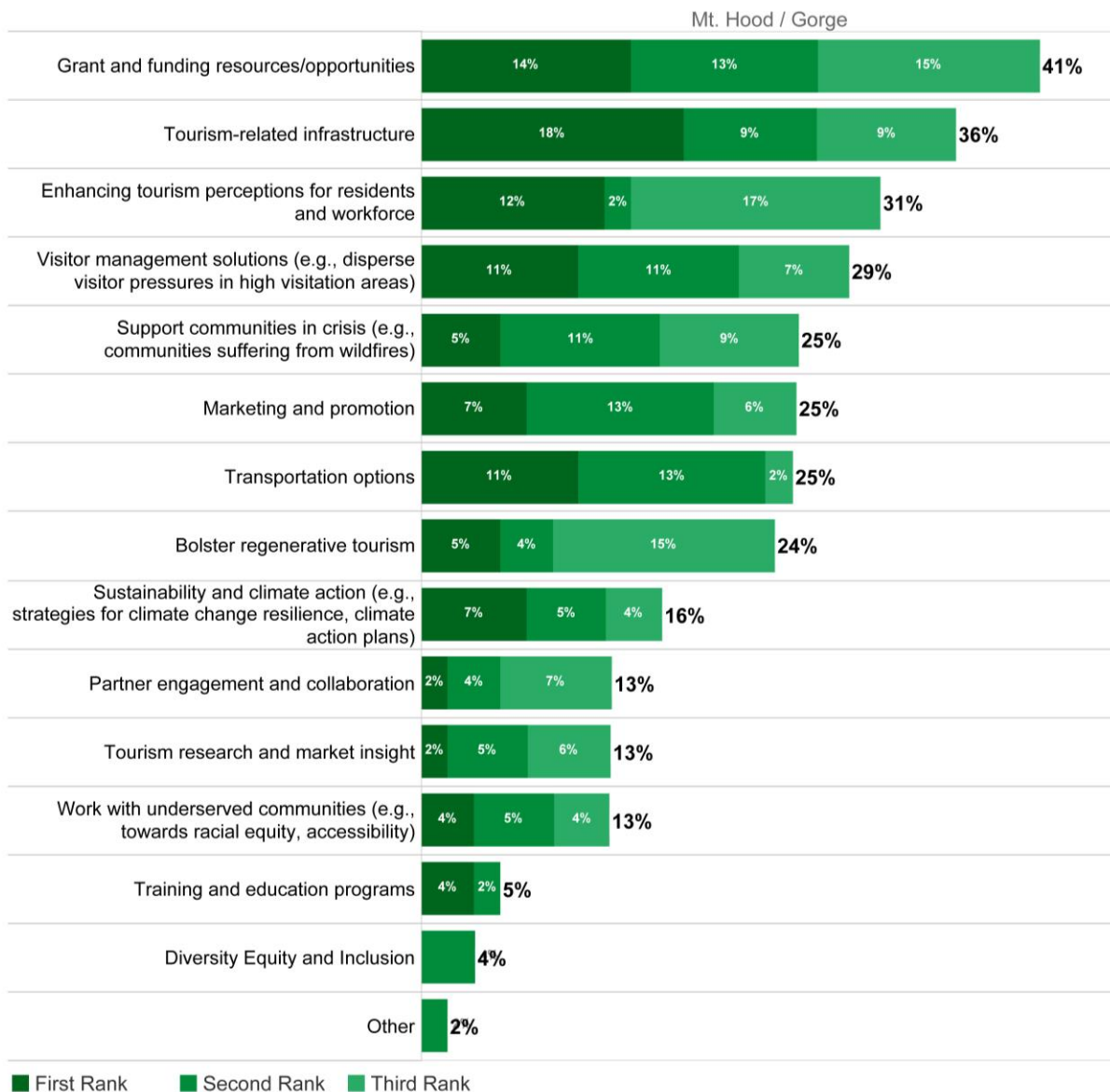
Note: Responses were recorded for the top three challenges respondents identified, with the sum of these three choices noted on the far right.

Source: RRC

As in prior iterations of the Oregon Tourism Industry Partner Survey, respondents were asked to identify the three areas that should be emphasized for tourism planning over the next 2-5 years. Mt. Hood & The Gorge respondents identified grant funding resources/opportunities as the top priority, with 41% of respondents identifying it among their top three priorities. Tourism-related infrastructure was second (36%), followed by enhancing tourism perceptions for residents and workforce (31%). Compared to 2023, marketing and promotion fell from 41% to 25%, the most major change for the region.

Long-Term Tourism Planning (Regional)

Q: Please identify the three areas that you believe should be emphasized for longer-term tourism planning over the next 2 - 5 years. (Rank top three priorities within this list)



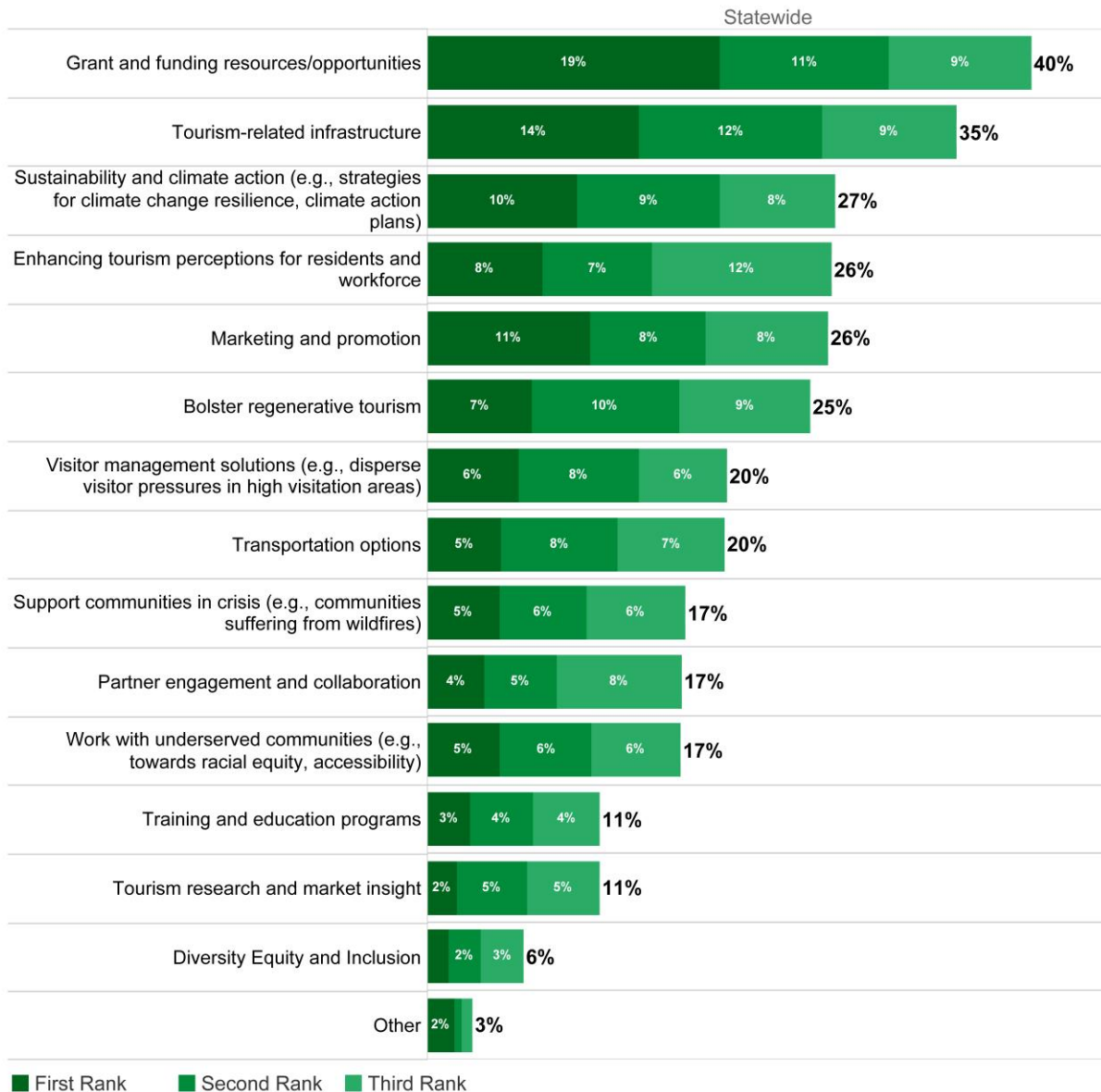
Note: Responses were recorded for the top three plans respondents identified, with the sum of these three choices noted on the far right.

Source: RRC

The top priorities identified in the statewide sample were grant and funding resources/opportunities (40%), tourism-related infrastructure (35%), and sustainability and climate action (27%). Relative to 2023, many of the same areas of focus were among the top priorities for respondents, with the exception of marketing and promotion, which was cited as a priority for 45% of the respondents in 2023 (down to 26% this year).

Long-Term Tourism Planning (Statewide)

Q: Please identify the three areas that you believe should be emphasized for longer-term tourism planning over the next 2 - 5 years. (Rank top three priorities within this list)



Note: Responses were recorded for the top three plans respondents identified, with the sum of these three choices noted on the far right.

Source: RRC

REPRESENTATION OF AND COMMUNICATION WITH UNDERSERVED COMMUNITIES

Historically and currently underserved and under-resourced communities, including Oregonians who identify as:

- Native American, members of Oregon's nine federally recognized tribes, American Indian, Alaska Natives
- Black, African, African American
- Latina, Latino, Latinx, Hispanic
- Asian
- Pacific Islander (including Compact of Free Association Citizens)
- Immigrants, Refugees, Asylum-Seekers, Deferred Status Holders, Temporary Protected Status
- Undocumented, Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA), "Dreamers", Non-Immigrant Visa Holders
- Linguistically diverse, English language learners (ELL)
- Economically Disadvantaged
- People with disabilities
- LGBTQIA2S+
- Farmworkers, Migrant Seasonal Workers

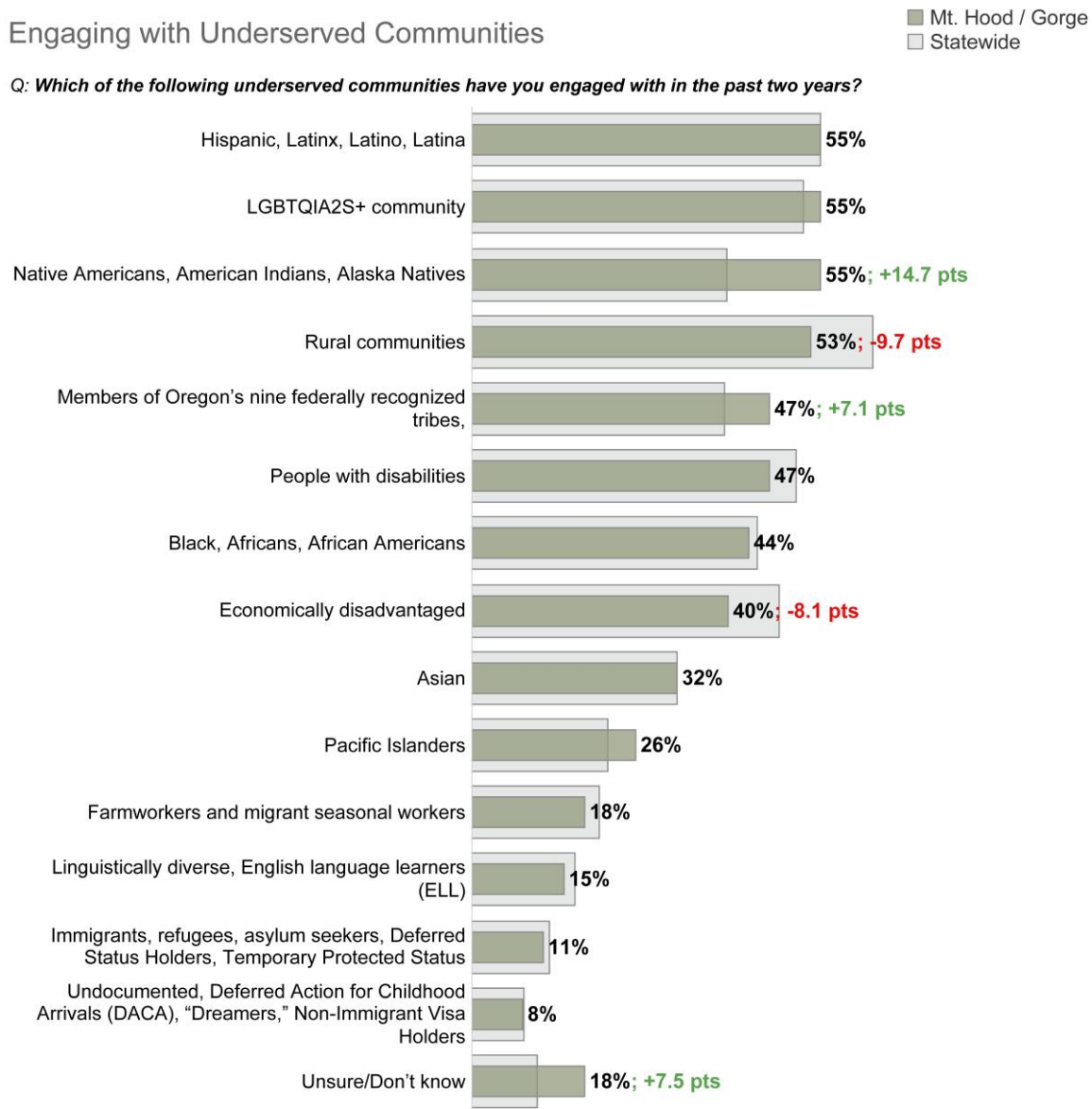
Definition provided by State of Oregon

(https://www.oregon.gov/das/Docs/DEI_Action_Plan_2021.pdf)

Of those underserved and under-resourced communities, Mt. Hood & The Gorge respondents self-reported having the most engagement with rural communities (55%); LGBTQIA2S+ (55%); Native Americans, American Indians, Alaska Natives (55%); and rural communities (53%). Conversely, the lowest self-reported underserved and under-resourced communities were undocumented, Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA), "Dreamers," non-immigrant visa holders (8%); immigrants, refugees, asylum-seekers, deferred status holders, temporary protected status (11%); and linguistically diverse, English language learners (ELL) (15%).

Engaging with Underserved Communities

Q: Which of the following underserved communities have you engaged with in the past two years?



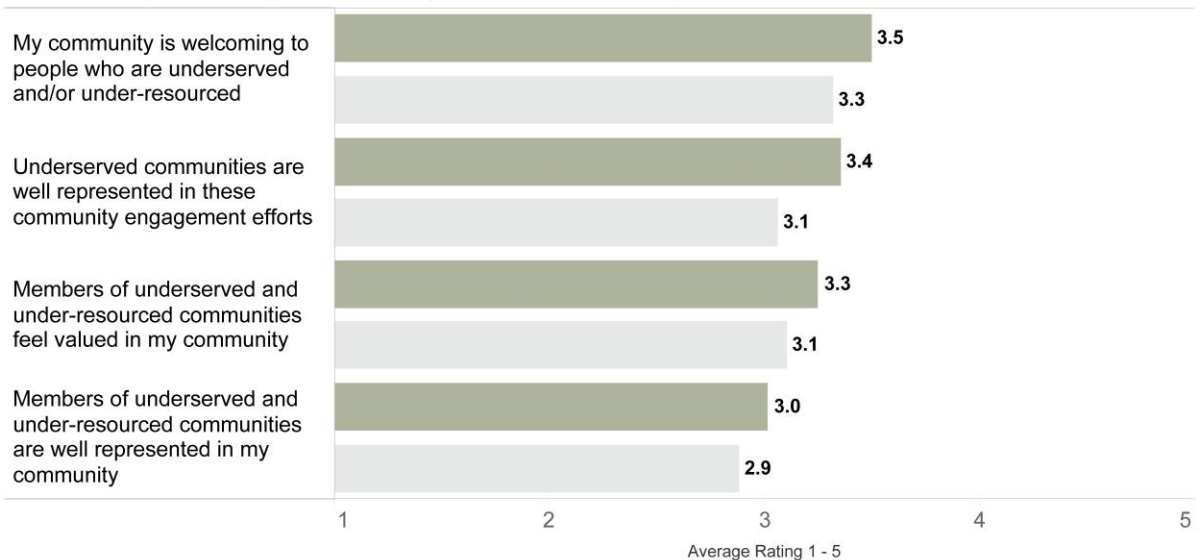
Note: Percent labels represent the share of regional results, with differences of 5 percentage points (pts) or more in comparison to statewide results being shown in red or green to illustrate a negative or positive change, respectively.

Source: RRC

Respondents were asked to rate their agreement with four statements that measured their representation of underserved communities in the area. There was little shift observed in the average ratings between Mt. Hood & The Gorge and the statewide sample. The highest rated statement for both samples was "My community is welcoming to people who are underserved and/or under-resourced," at 3.3 statewide and 3.5 for Mt. Hood & Gorge respondents on a five-point scale. The lowest rated for both samples was the statement "Members of underserved and under-resourced communities are well represented in my community," at an average rating of 3.0 and 2.9 for Mt. Hood & The Gorge and the statewide sample, respectively.

Representation of Underserved Communities

Q: Please rate your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statements:

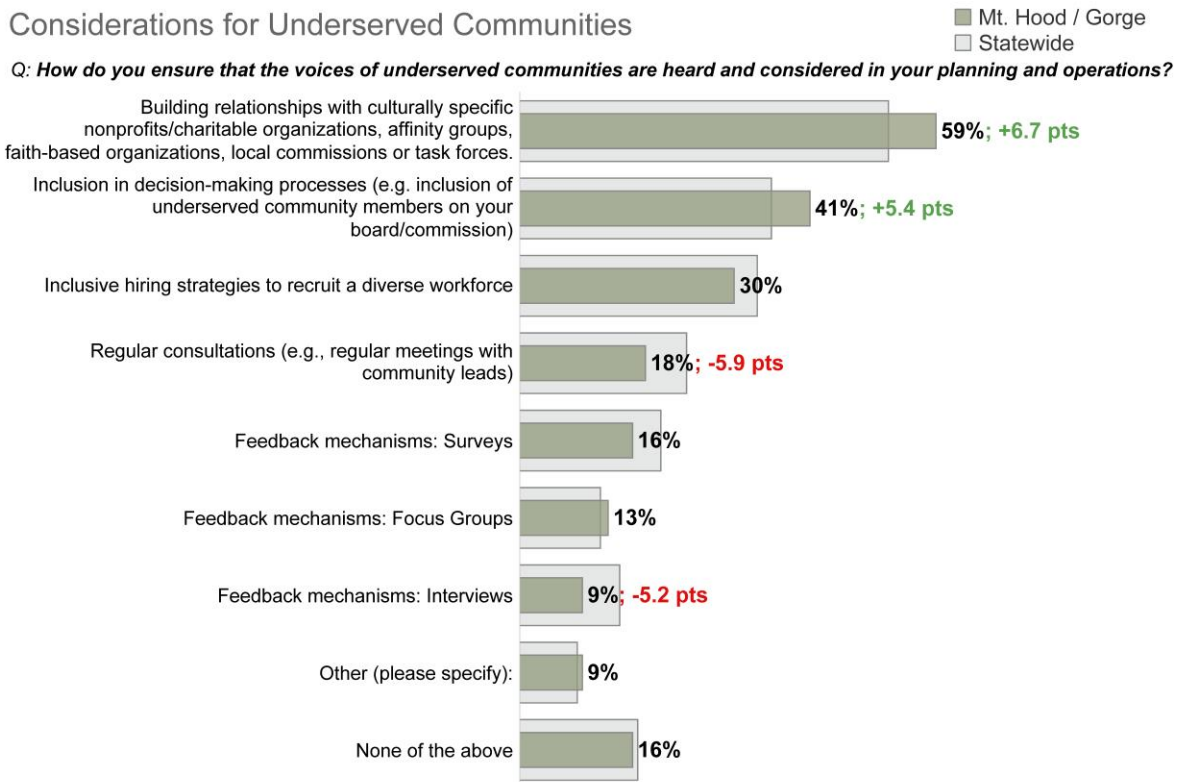


Source: RRC

When asked what considerations respondents make to ensure that the voices of underserved and under-resourced communities are heard, more than half of Mt. Hood & The Gorge respondents cited building relationships with culturally specific nonprofits/charitable organizations, affinity groups, faith-based organizations, local commissions or task forces (59%). Many of Mt. Hood & The Gorge respondents also included these communities in the decision-making process (41%) and used inclusive hiring strategies to recruit a diverse workforce (30%).

Responses from Mt. Hood & The Gorge were largely in line with the statewide sample.

Considerations for Underserved Communities



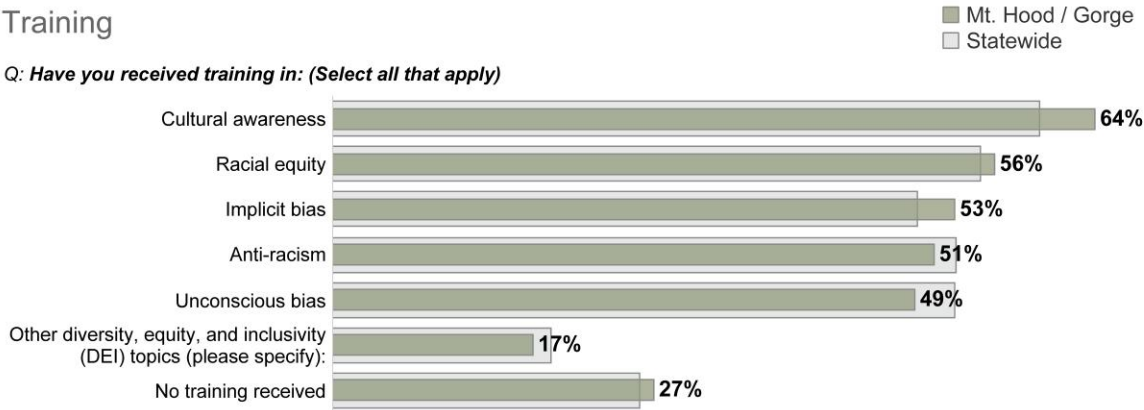
Note: Percent labels represent the share of regional results, with differences of 5 percentage points (pts) or more in comparison to statewide results being shown in red or green to illustrate a negative or positive change, respectively.

Source: RRC

A majority of Mt. Hood & The Gorge respondents reported having training in cultural awareness (64%), racial equity (56%), implicit bias (53%), and anti-racism (51%), with most of these trainings not provided by their current employer.

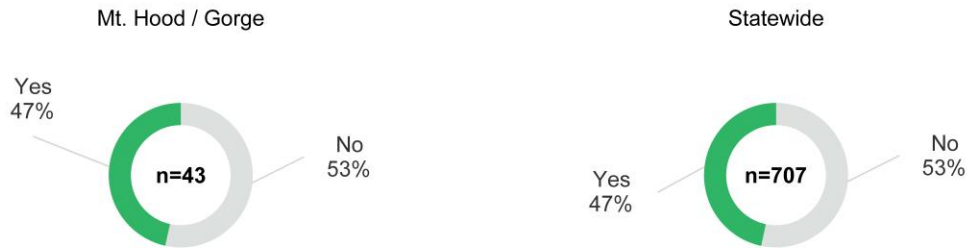
Training

Q: Have you received training in: (Select all that apply)



Note: Percent labels represent the share of regional results, with differences of 5 percentage points (pts) or more in comparison to statewide results being shown in red or green to illustrate a negative or positive change, respectively.

Q: Was this training provided by your current employer?

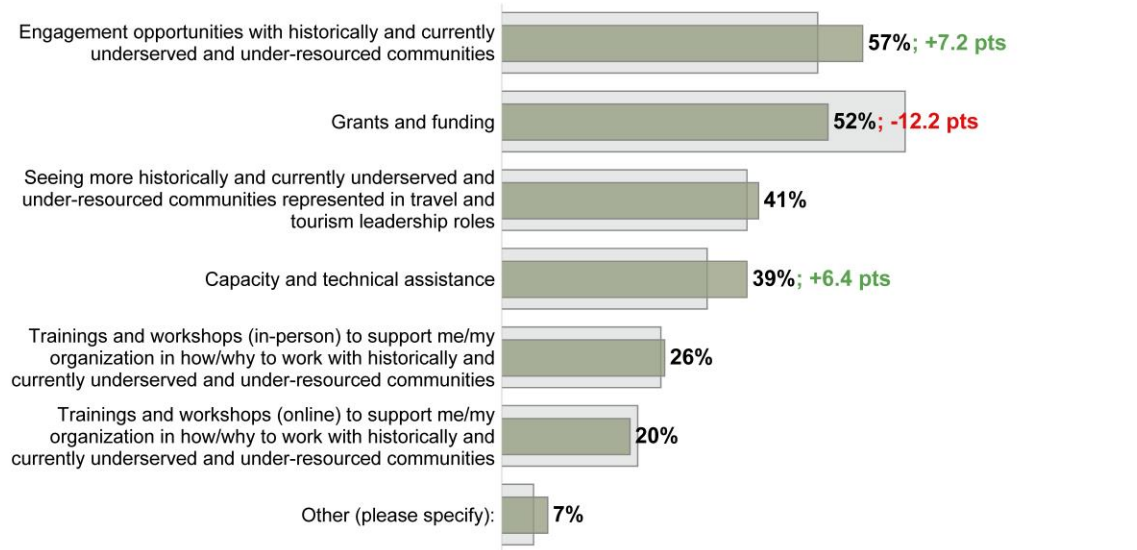


Source: RRC

When asked what type of resources would be most helpful in developing tourism-related facilities and products for underserved and under-resourced people, Mt. Hood & The Gorge respondents selected engagement opportunities with historically and currently underserved and under-resourced communities (57%) and grants and funding (52%). Notably, shares of engagement opportunities was elevated for Mt. Hood & The Gorge while grants and funding was under the percentage from the statewide sample.

Development of Tourism Resources

Q: Which of the following would be most helpful in developing tourism related facilities and products for underserved and under-resourced people in your community?



Note: Percent labels represent the share of regional results, with differences of 5 percentage points (pts) or more in comparison to statewide results being shown in red or green to illustrate a negative or positive change, respectively.

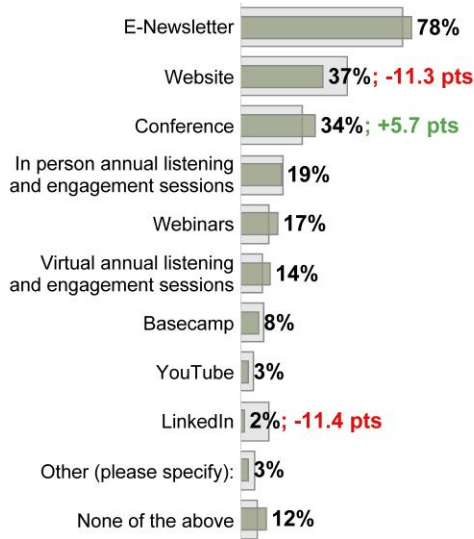
Source: RRC

INDUSTRY ENGAGEMENT AND COMMUNICATIONS

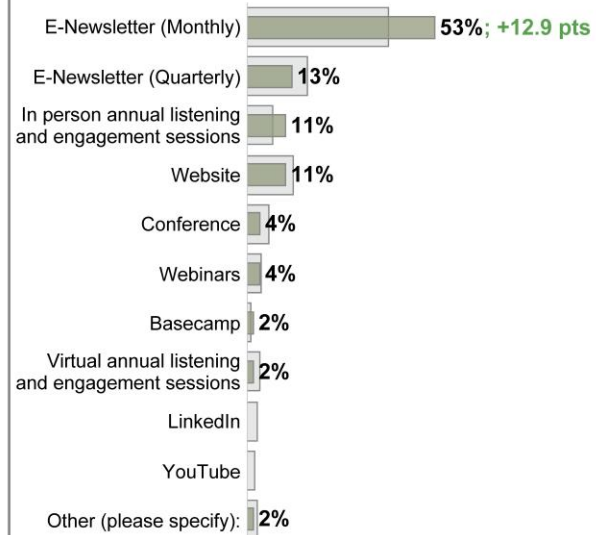
Seventy-eight percent of Mt. Hood & The Gorge respondents currently receive tourism industry-related information from Travel Oregon and RDMOs via e-newsletter, followed by their website (37%). By a large margin, e-newsletters (especially monthly) are considered the best way for respondents to receive information.

Tourism Communication Methods

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



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



Note: Percent labels represent the share of regional results, with differences of 5 percentage points (pts) or more in comparison to statewide results being shown in red or green to illustrate a negative or positive change, respectively.

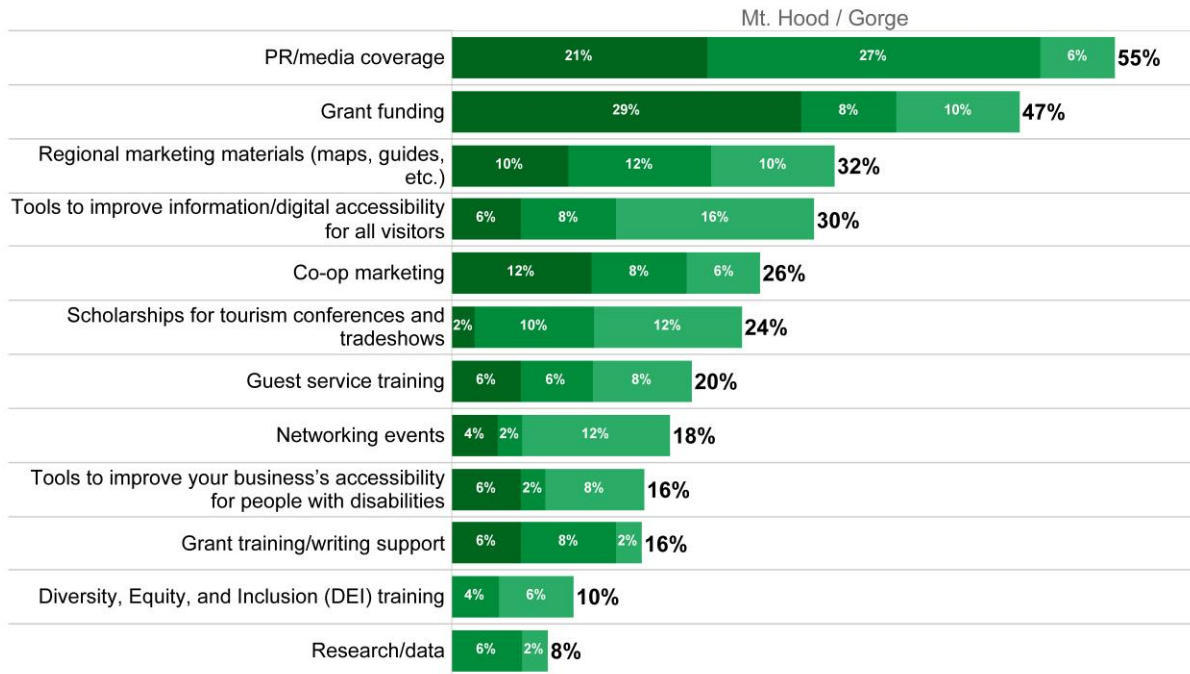
Source: RRC

MT. HOOD & THE GORGE QUESTIONS

Each Regional Destination Management Organization (RDMO) had the opportunity to ask a series of custom questions of specific interest to their partners. 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.

Mt. Hood / Gorge - Top Resources

Q: Please rank the resources that would be most beneficial to you and your business if offered for free or a low cost. (Rank top three choices within this list)



Note: Responses were recorded for the top three resources respondents identified, with the sum of these three choices noted on the far right.

Source: RRC

Mt. Hood / Gorge - Engagement with Tourism Organizations

Q: Please indicate your level of engagement with each of the following tourism organizations:

Rating Category	Avg.	n=	1 - Not aware of them	2 - Aware but not engaged	3 - Engaged	4 - Very engaged
Local DMO/Chamber of Commerce	2.8	52	6%	27%	44%	23%
Regional Destination Management Organization (recently rebranded Experience Mt. Hood and the Gorge)	2.7	52	13%	31%	33%	23%
CGTA (Columbia Gorge Tourism Alliance)	2.3	52	23%	31%	35%	12%
Other (please specify):	1.9	8	38%	38%	25%	

Source: RRC

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 Mt. Hood & The Gorge questions follow:

- *What are your greatest destination/visitor management/resident sentiment concerns for the Mt. Hood and Columbia River Gorge region?*
- *In a few words, what, if anything, needs to change for your community to feel like a destination where ALL who travel can enjoy their journey and feel welcome?*
- *Please indicate your level of engagement with each of the following tourism organizations: Other (please specify):*

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 your greatest destination/visitor management/resident sentiment concerns for the Mt. Hood and Columbia River Gorge region?

Accessibility, sustainability

Attracting visitors during the non-peak seasons especially the winter

Climate fuelled disasters that affect viability, availability and quality of experience. The other aspect is industry challenges with the loss of small tourism related retailers/services competing with giant retailers (often discount) and direct to consumers sales by manufacturers and big business (Amazon).

Compression in high use areas, low visitation in winter

Concerns about high use areas in their high seasons. Concerned about climate change impacts on visitation patterns. Concerned about the residents lack of use of public transportation and shuttle services.

Effective management of tourist traffic, parking, and security along the I-84 corridor for it not to be overused.

Getting a focus on some of the smaller tourist areas within the region to draw people away from the overcrowded areas.

I think Mt Hood Terr. folks are really great and hope they continue with all they do.

I worry about the relationships within the organization. It seems that some people do a lot of work but have no input into decisions.

Infrastructure-related. Cascade Locks only has one road through town and a two lane bridge. Every time residents are complaining about tourism, it's due to a safety incident

on I-84 that results in dangerous congestion (like, the ambulance can't get through if the 2-lane road is backed up), or a high-impact parking event. It's all relatively short impacts, typically less than 1 day, but they're big enough and concerning enough to color resident sentiment toward all other tourism.

lack of transportation

Lack of housing

Lack of housing and the rapid spread of short term rentals making it nearly impossible to find housing.

Lack of resident knowledge of community benefits from tourism.

Letting folks know there is more to the Gorge than Hood River

Multnomah County

Need more tourist infrastructure.

Not sure.

Overuse. Lack of funding or capacity to manage the trails and open spaces in the Gorge. Lack of infrastructure such as public restrooms, safe parking, or bus options.

Parking is always a large concern for locals and visitors alike, especially in summer.

Pricing people out of visiting.

short term rentals leaves lack of employee available rentals

Supporting businesses that have been greatly impacted by covid and extreme weather.

That we don't have enough year round tourism opportunities to provide year round employment.

The Mt. Hood / Columbia Gorge Region has unique challenges in addressing the Search and Rescue (SAR) costs associated with tourism in the region. Locally funded fire departments, police, and SAR teams are almost constantly responding to emergencies in the wilderness areas. More funding is needed and insurance policies should be offered/required as part of the more risky/adventurous tourism experiences in the region.

There is a lot of focus on food related businesses in Portland, but there are a lot of other small businesses that don't revolve around food and they should be spotlighted more often.

There is not enough affordable housing to house people working within the tourism industry. Also, there are too many people visiting the area causing congestion and unsafe conditions on roadways.

We advertise and bring people to the communities that have limited resources (Police, and parking in our town) and because the community was not built to have such huge influxes of people the residents suffer, causing them to not want the visitors even though most of them rely on tourism to live.

Wellness Tourism is a resource to grow our local economy year-round that is currently underutilized. The Gorge has many worldclass Studios, Massage Centers and Spas that

are great to visit year-round and would really create more business for retail, food/beverage and hotels if invested in, especially outside of the busier summer months. Day Retreats, Weekend Retreats, Girls Weekends, etc. Wellness Weekends etc. This Forbes article (<https://www.forbes.com/sites/ronaberg/2023/11/20/the-future-of-wellness-new-data-on-wellness-travel-mental-wellness/>) highlights the opportunity we are missing out on: "The comprehensive 100-page report on the wellness industry, The Global Wellness Economy Monitor Report: 2023, was recently revealed at this year's annual Global Wellness Summit in Miami. The upshot is that the global wellness economy is not only well on its way to recovery after the shock waves of the pandemic, it is surging. Not only is that a very good thing, it is exactly what we all need to hear right now. A 2023 survey released by the American Psychological Association showed that three-quarters of adults say their stress levels have increased over the past year. In the report, GWI forecasts that the consumers will continue to increase spending on wellness, and the global wellness economy will grow at an annual rate of 8.6 percent. By the end of this year, it will reach \$6.3 trillion, \$7.4 trillion in 2025, and \$8.5 trillion in 2027-, which is almost double its size in 2020. The biggest growth rates since 2020 were seen in these wellness markets: wellness tourism (36 percent annual growth); spas (22 percent); physical activity (14 percent); and mental wellness (12.5 percent). Through 2027, some of the largest gains will be seen in wellness real estate (17.4 percent annual growth), wellness tourism (16.6 percent), thermal/mineral springs (14.3 percent); and mental wellness (12.8 percent)."

Wild fire recovery. Lack of outreach to key players. Exclusion based on politics and morals.

Wildfires and overcrowding.

Wildfires; highway and other road construction

In a few words, what, if anything, needs to change for your community to feel like a destination where ALL who travel can enjoy their journey and feel welcome?

Accessible information in various languages. Accessible trail options for those with disabilities who cannot tackle some of the tougher trails in the Gorge. Greater education on the resources already in place.

Attract more diverse visitation

Better communication between local venues.

Better connections between destinations in the region, better marketing of those connections

Better informed residents on the importance of tourism, growth and diversity.

Better parking. Just wish we didn't have a major HWY go through town.

For perceptions about tourism to change so that those in the community can view it from a positive stand point.

Greater emphasis on pedestrian/wheelchair access, and greater inclusion of current and historic contributions made to region by people of non-white European backgrounds.
Improved roads and signage.
Improving the Downtown. there is so much potential, but with lack of resources, the cost to rent storefronts, let alone remodel is not attainable for most of the population here.
Increase tourism mid-week and off-season.
Less emphasis on alcohol and extreme sports and more promotion related to wellness tourism that is more accessible to more people.
More parking, as well as more accessible parking spots reserved on the street. Enforcement of loading zone parking to allow for drop off of people with disabilities to visit businesses. Increase diversity of cultural options.
More public transit
Pedestrian safety improvements on the Bridge of the Gods and the entrance to the Marine Park in Cascade Locks. Revitalized downtown with restoration/reconstruction of vacant and derelict buildings, improved parking and pedestrian crossings of Wa Na Pa Street, improved security and maintenance of public restrooms.
Promotional materials need to represent EVERYONE -- races, gender identities, ages, abilities, economic level
Regulate short term rentals. Develop safe, walkable streets. Fund public transportation.
Remodeling of the Downtown corridor; Parking availability
Unsure.
We do a great job at the local level of creating events that welcome all people, but I would like to see more from the RDMO side.
We have removed all rv parking spaces in our downtown. We are removing our only rest stop. We are removing our only waterfront park to place industry along our pristine river. We need people to fight to keep our tourism assets.
We need to create more welcoming spaces for people. There is plenty of diversity, representation from Indigenous community, and recreation opportunities. What we don't have is marketing that makes the things to do in the winter and spring specifically in our area more stand out. Instead of being like the Oregon Coast which is such a destination that people plan on coming all year round, we have year round opportunities for fun with little support of people coming to anything other than just the ski areas around Mt Hood (during the shoulder season)

Please indicate your level of engagement with each of the following tourism organizations: Other (please specify):

Cascade Locks Main Street

Flourish networking

I used to be more engaged in the Chamber pre-pandemic