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About the Survey

A survey conducted by Firelands Workers United found that working families in rural Western Washington want living-wage job opportunities rebuilding and restoring the infrastructure and health of our people, communities, and the lands and the waters we call home.

In fall 2021, 485 workers in Grays Harbor and Pacific counties responded to an in-depth survey about the conditions in our communities and what rural Washington needs to thrive.

Trained surveyors went door to door and attended public local events to ask respondents about housing, jobs, childcare, healthcare, taxes, and more. Respondents were primarily workers within rural Washington State's backbone industries of shellfish, timber, healthcare, childcare, hospitality, and other sectors.

Prioritizing low-income working families, low-wage workers, and immigrants, the survey reached people often underrepresented in research and polling.

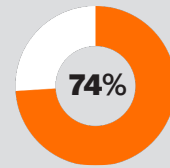
Who We Are

Firelands is a community-based organization in Grays Harbor and Pacific Counties in Washington State made up of workers in the natural resource and care sectors – the backbone of rural Washington's economy. Firelands members are loggers, cannery workers, house cleaners, childcare and healthcare providers, grocery workers, mill workers, seniors, homeowners, renters, parents and more. Firelands brings people together to conduct research, outreach, education and advocacy for a healthy and fair economy for all in rural WA.



Key Findings

HOUSING COSTS



74% of respondents are concerned about the rising costs of their rent or mortgage payments and **over half** (54%) are worried about losing their homes.

JOB CONCERNS



4 out of 5 respondents (80%) said there were not enough jobs in the region. Of the jobs available, **59%** said the salaries were too low while **over half** (56%) said their job exposed them to health risks.

HEALTH & CHILDCARE

86% of respondents are concerned about the cost of health insurance.

71% are concerned about the cost of childcare and lack of resources.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

Half of all respondents (50%) are concerned about housing risks associated with environmental disasters and **nearly 3 out of 4** (71%) are concerned with increased heat in the region.



Similarly, **62%** are concerned with the health of forests and fisheries and **67%** with the impacts of smoke and water pollution in the region.

Our Vision

Working families in rural WA are ready to dream big and work together to create the future our communities need. These common sense solutions were popular with a majority of respondents:

- **Healthy Affordable Housing:** Expand weatherization and home repair programs to include more households, local job training, and affordability measures to keep renters and homeowners housed in a market with dramatically rising rents and housing costs.
- **Protect the Heritage of Timber Country:** Improve natural resource industry working conditions and create new good local jobs to restore and manage lands and waters for generations to come.
- **Affordable Healthcare and Childcare:** Improve working conditions, expand health insurance coverage and childcare, and invest in addiction and mental health services.

WE AGREE ON SOLUTIONS



93% support Affordable and Healthy Housing for All



95% support Good Jobs for Health, Environment, and the Region



95% support Healthcare and Childcare for All



74% would take a job to Rebuild Timber Country for working families



Firelands canvassers conducting the survey with local workers in rural WA.

The Money is Here

From historic new federal funding bills to policies that increase the fairness of the state tax code by ensuring the wealthiest pay what they truly owe towards the public good, we have an unprecedented opportunity to create meaningful good jobs in rural Washington that will rebuild our crumbling housing stock and social infrastructure.

Federal funding is no longer the limiting factor for long-term investment – but federal funding often comes with restrictions like barriers to access for immigrant families that require Washington State to step up to fill the gaps so that nobody is left behind.

Government at all levels must ensure these vital public resources benefit working families in our rural communities rather than lining the pockets of the wealthiest corporations.

