

6.2 Process and Partners

6.2.1 Wildfire Smoke Subcommittee

Between April 2021 and April 2023, thirty partners from community organizations and county and city departments served on the CWPP Wildfire Smoke Subcommittee. Members represented sustainability, public health, environmental health, public information, facilities, occupational safety, diversity and equity, human services, people with disabilities, people experiencing homelessness, affordable housing, environmental quality and water services. The group met four times in 2021 to provide direction on goals, data, risk, actions and priorities for the new section of the CWPP. They also developed a community survey that was administered in the Fall of 2021, with themes from the survey explored in the next subsection. In 2022, MCEM conducted one-on-one meetings with partners, began drafting the plan and refined actions in the Mitigation Strategy. The draft section was reviewed by partners in 2023, finalized and added to the main CWPP.

Organizations that participated in this process:

- Home Forward
- Joint Office of Homeless Services
- Lewis and Clark College
- Multnomah County Communications Office
- Multnomah County Department of County Assets, Facilities
- Multnomah County Department of Human Resources
- Multnomah County Emergency Management
- Multnomah County Health Department, Aging and Disability
- Multnomah County Health Department, Public Health
- Multnomah County Health Department, Public Health, Environmental Health
- Multnomah County Office of Sustainability
- Multnomah County Risk Management
- Oregon Department of Environmental Quality
- Portland Bureau of Emergency Management
- Portland Occupational Safety and Well-Being
- Portland State University
- Portland Water Bureau

6.2.2 Surveys: Understanding Public Preparedness

Following the intense fire season in 2020, two separate public surveys were designed and implemented in 2021 to learn about the community's level of preparedness. The first survey was developed by Oregon Health Authority (OHA) and the University of Oregon (UO) and was conducted across the state. The second survey was developed by the Multnomah County CWPP Smoke Subcommittee for county residents. Both surveys were available in English and Spanish. The county survey was also available in Vietnamese, Somali, Russian, and Chinese

(Simplified and Traditional). The OHA/OU surveys intentionally focused on collecting data on race, ethnicity, language and disabilities. Although the sample size for the County surveys was smaller than anticipated (48), in many instances trends among County responses were similar to those from across the State

The table below provides an overview of each survey approach. Table 2 lists key findings, and identifies similarities, difference and takeaways among survey groups. Survey themes informed the mitigation actions defined in [Section 6.2.2](#).

2021 Survey Approaches

	Statewide survey	Countywide survey
Purpose	To learn from Oregonians <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How they responded to wildfire smoke • Their communication needs 	To learn from County residents their <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness of health risks • Level of concern • Preparedness efforts • Barriers to preparing for future events
Total responses	1,200	48
Languages (# of responses)	English (971), Spanish (229)	English (33), Spanish (3), Vietnamese (0), Chinese - Traditional (3) and Simplified (9), Somali (0) and Russian (0)
Method	Online	Online
Outreach	Separate online outreach campaigns to English-speaking and Spanish-speaking communities Spanish respondents received a \$10 gift card Equally targeted urban and rural communities	Social media, Multnomah County Emergency Management newsletter and website, County Health Department’s Community Partnerships and Capacity Building network and the Subcommittee member networks
Limitations and Considerations	Online only Intentional oversampling of rural and Hispanic/Latinx populations	Online only Small sample size Unintentional under-representation from non-English groups

Key Findings from State and County public surveys conducted in 2021

Survey Categories	Statewide Survey	Countywide Survey
Symptom awareness	Not asked	Most Know about the respiratory risks associated with wildfire smoke Chest pain and fast heartbeat were less commonly known

Survey Categories	Statewide Survey	Countywide Survey
<p>Concerns</p>	<p>Most</p> <p>Most common concern was health of vulnerable people Next common concern was own health</p>	<p>Most</p> <p>Concerned about health risks if a wildfire smoke event lasts 3 days or longer.</p>
<p>Preventative actions taken during 2020 Labor Day Fires</p>	<p>Hispanic/Latinx or Having Disability</p> <p>More likely to have felt prepared</p> <p>English-Language Respondents</p> <p>More likely to have felt unprepared</p> <p>Most</p> <p>Attributed being prepared to having</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Previous experiences with smoke • A community plan • Emergency supplies <p>Made changes to outdoor activities</p> <p>Did not take preventative actions indoors</p> <p>Lower-income</p> <p>Less likely to have avoided going outdoors</p>	<p>Most</p> <p>Stayed indoors and closed doors and windows Changed activities because of smoky air</p> <p>Half</p> <p>Used an air purifier</p> <p>English-Language Respondents</p> <p>Checked air quality online before going outside</p>
<p>Information</p>	<p>Most</p> <p>Relied on own observations or the internet for air quality information, but this was not equally true across all demographics</p> <p>Want more information about</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Air and smoke forecasts • How to stay safe indoors and outdoors • How to use PPE <p>Non-White and Hispanic/Latinx</p> <p>More likely to go to friends and family for information</p>	<p>Most</p> <p>Most commonly go to social media for information on weather related disasters</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Second most common is local and national news <p>English-Language Respondents</p> <p>Also check the Multnomah County website</p>

Survey Categories	Statewide Survey	Countywide Survey
<p>Preparedness for future smoke events</p>	<p>Not asked</p>	<p>Most</p> <p>Able to stay home if air quality was hazardous</p> <p>Able to leave home on short notice and without assistance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Themes why leaving home would be difficult: Transportation, pets, not having a place to go, employment <p>Would use a stand-alone or room-sized air cleaner</p> <p>Non-English Language Respondents</p> <p>More likely to feel “not prepared” or “little prepared”</p> <p>More likely to leave home for basic needs such as groceries, water and medication</p> <p>More likely to go to a cleaner air shelter/cooling center</p> <p>English-Language Respondents</p> <p>More likely to feel “prepared” to “very prepared”</p> <p>More likely to leave home for work</p> <p>Less likely to go to a clean air/cooling space</p>
<p>Barriers</p>	<p>Many</p> <p>Lack access to adequate household protections</p> <p>Want information about what to do during a smoke event</p> <p>Lack clean air spaces in community</p>	<p>Themes</p> <p>Lack financial resources</p> <p>Not knowing which filtration supplies to purchase</p> <p>Not knowing how to retrofit or use air filtration supplies and equipment.</p>