

Baker County

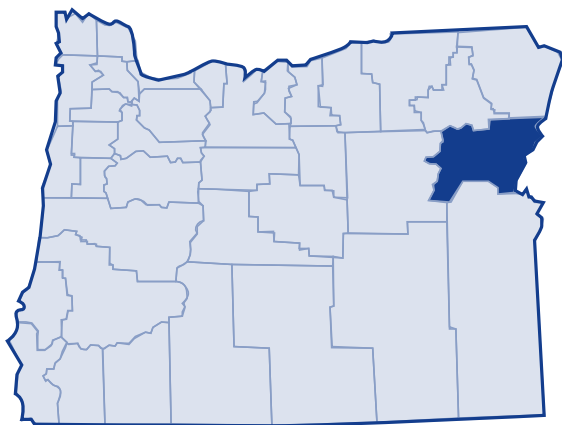
Major findings

Incomes in Baker County in 1999 were lower than the state and national average. By 2003, the rate of unemployment had reached 9.5 percent. As a result, fewer individuals and families in the county could be self-sufficient. Those paying 30 percent or more of their income for rental costs increased from 39.6 percent in 1989 to 48.8 percent in 1999. And, the number of poor persons living in Baker County grew 10 percent.

Between 1979 and 1999, the number of Baker County families headed by single women in poverty increased 121.1 percent. Additionally, children 5 and younger experienced the highest rates of poverty in the county.

According to the basic family budget, only one of the four identified Baker County family types (two adults with one child) could afford the basic family budget if both parents worked full-time at Baker County median family income.

In 2003, 26.7 percent of Baker County residents received services from the Department of Human Services.¹



Low-income needs

Community Connection of Northeast Oregon (CCNO) prioritized the needs of the low-income population in Baker County as follows.²

- **Energy Assistance**—Assist households in paying winter heating bills and help clients facing shut-off notices.
- **Emergency Assistance**—Rental assistance for at-risk households.
- **Weatherization/Housing Repair**—Eliminate general heat waste in client's homes, completing priority weatherization measures such as insulating, repairing or replacing doors/windows, etc. Continue rehabilitation projects by completing structural, electrical and plumbing repairs to improve and preserve the area's housing stock.
- **Tenant Based Assistance**—Six months assistance with rent while clients move towards self-sufficiency.
- **Food Bank**—Maintain current delivery systems with local food banks and access to resources.
- **Transportation**—Transport senior citizens, people with disabilities, low-income and the public to medical appointments, shopping, mealsites, recreation and field trips.
- **Health Clinics**—Increase client's ability to access health clinics within senior centers.
- **Tax and Legal Assistance**—Continue to refer clients to Legal Aid, and Oregon Law Centers at our senior centers. Trained volunteers to assist clients in preparing their income taxes.
- **Telephone Reassurance**—Call clients to ensure their safety and to make sure they have taken their medication if needed.

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Growth

According to the 2000 Census, Baker County's population grew by 9.3 percent, from 1989 to 1999. The US Census Bureau determined the poverty status of 16,382 county residents and found that 14.7 percent (2,407 people) lived below the poverty threshold in 1999. Although the overall percent of the county population living in poverty remained 14.7 percent from 1989 to 1999, the number of people living in poverty increased by 10 percent.

20-year trend

In the 20 years after 1979, the poverty rate in Baker County increased from 12.8 percent of the population to 14.7 percent. The number of persons in poverty rose from 2,039 people to 2,407 people. Baker County's poverty rates rose above the state and national poverty rates throughout this period.

Poverty and age

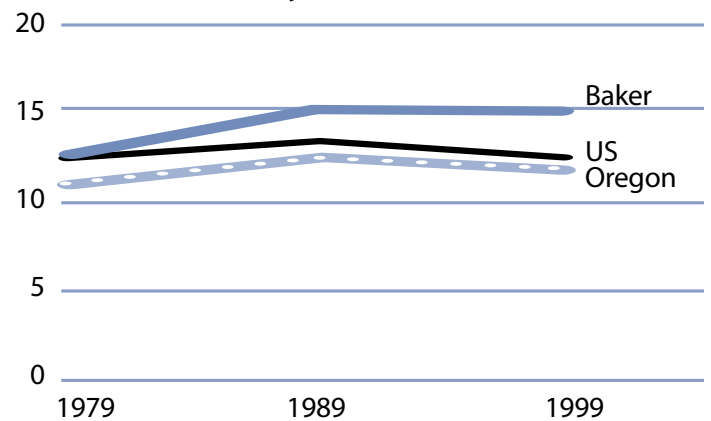
In the 2000 Census, among all age categories examined, children 5 years of age and younger experienced the highest rate of poverty at 19.5 percent. Children 18 years old and younger experienced poverty at a slightly lower rate (19.3 percent). People 65 years and over experienced the lowest poverty rate—12.4 percent. Over the 20-year period from 1979 to 1999, the rate of poverty decreased in only one age category—65 years and older.

Poverty in selected communities
Number of persons below poverty level
(poverty rate)

	1989	1999	Percent Change (rate difference)
Baker County	2,189 (14.7%)	2,407 (14.7%)	10.0% (0.0%)
Oregon Statewide	344,867 (12.4%)	388,740 (11.6%)	12.7% (-0.8%)
United States	31,742,864 (13.1%)	33,899,812 (12.4%)	6.8% (-0.7%)

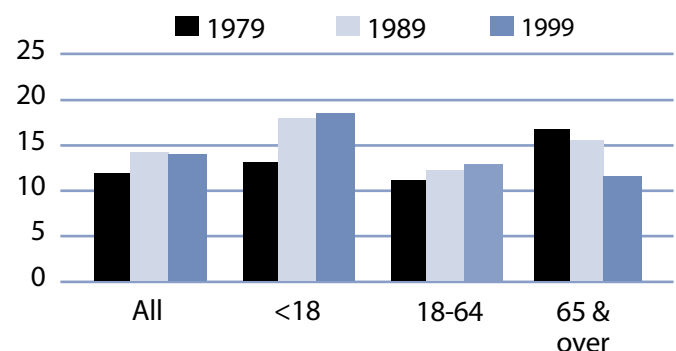
Source: US Census. County numbers have been rounded and, therefore, may not add exactly to totals.

Poverty rates 1979-1999



Source: US Census.

Rate of poverty by age



Source: US Census.

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Poverty and Baker County families

In 1999, 473 Baker County families lived in poverty. Of the 473 families in poverty, 55.6 percent (263 families) had a worker. Eighteen percent (85 families) had a full-time year-round worker.

In 1999, the poverty rate was higher for families with children. Families with at least one child under 18 years of age experienced poverty at a rate of 16.6 percent. Families with a child 5 years or younger experienced poverty at the higher rate of 20.7 percent. The rate for families with children headed by single mothers was 43.8 percent and the rate was even higher with younger children (less than 5 years) at 51.7 percent.

The poverty rate for married couple families with children under 18 was lower at 9.7 percent. Over the 20-year period from 1979 to 1999, the number of female-heads of households with children (no husband present) who lived in poverty increased from 27.3 percent to 43.8 percent.

Poverty and race ethnicity

Among racial/ethnic groups,² White residents comprised the majority of people in poverty at 92.4 percent. The poverty rate among White was 14.1 percent. Most minorities experienced disproportionately higher rates of poverty. White, Black and Asian were the only categories with poverty rates below 20 percent.

Baker County families in poverty

Number Below Poverty Level (poverty rate)				% Change
	1979	1989	1999	1979-99 (rate difference)
All Families	447 (9.6%)	497 (11.2%)	473 (10.1%)	5.8% (0.5%)
With Children under 18	273 (11.9%)	339 (16.2%)	337 (16.6%)	23.4% (4.7%)
Female-headed with Children under 18	76 (27.3%)	186 (63.5%)	168 (43.8%)	121.1% (16.5%)

Source: US Census. County numbers have been rounded and, therefore, may not add exactly to totals.

Baker County poverty and race/ethnicity

Race/Ethnicity	% Total 1999 Population (population)	% Poverty 1999 Population (poverty population)	Poverty Rate by Race 1999	Poverty Rate by Race 1989
White	96.0% (15,719)	92.4% (2,223)	14.1%	14.3%
Black	0.3% (41)	0.1% (3)	7.3%	0.0%
American Indian	0.7% (120)	2.0% (48)	40.0%	46.8%
Asian/Pacific Islander	0.5%/0.1% (76/9)	0.5%/0.4% (13/9)	17.1%/100.0%	80.0%*
Other	0.8% (124)	1.7% (41)	33.1%	0.0%
2 or More Races	1.8% (293)	2.9% (70)	23.9%	NA
Hispanic Origin	1.9% (317)	3.8% (92)	29.0%	22.6%

* Asian and Pacific Islander were not separate categories in the 1990 Census.

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From 1989 to 1999, most racial categories experienced improvements in poverty rates. Poverty rates increased for Other and Hispanic Origin.

County income

On a per capita basis, Baker County's personal income was \$21,424 in 2002, about 74 percent of the state average of \$28,792, and 69 percent of the national average, \$30,906. Per capita income in Baker County rose 4.3 percent between 2001 and 2002. The 1989 to 1999 trend for per capita income shows average annual growth of 3.6 percent. Average earnings per job for 2001 were \$24,110 in Baker County compared to \$33,063 for the state.³

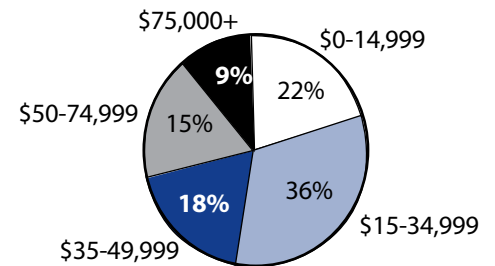
Poverty thresholds

Segmenting Census data by income reveals more detail about the people experiencing poverty in Baker County. The 2000 Census showed that 963 people or 40 percent of those living below the federal poverty threshold actually earned 50 percent or less of the poverty threshold. Other segments of the population earned equal to or above the poverty level but still need assistance. In Oregon, 185 percent of the poverty level is the income guideline used for federal food programs such as food stamps, child nutrition, and WIC. In 1999, 37.7 percent of Baker County's population, or 6,178 people earned below 185 percent of the poverty threshold.

Public assistance

Participation in public assistance programs serves as an indirect measure—or indicator—of the extent of poverty and the measures taken to serve the public. According to the 2000 Census, 283 households or 4.1 percent of all households in Baker County reported public assistance income. The average amount of public assistance income for 1999 was \$1,748. The 20-year trend showed a decrease in the number of households that reported receiving public assistance income, from 349 households or 5.6 percent of all households in 1979.

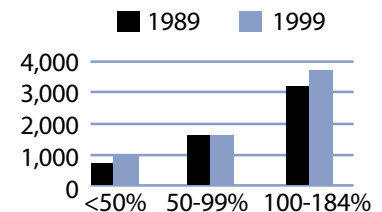
1999 household income distribution—Baker County



Source: US Census.

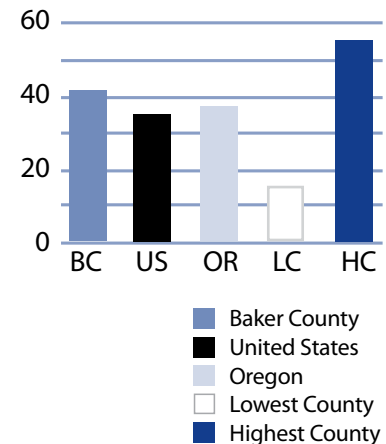
Note: The median household income in Baker County was \$30,367 in 1999 compared to \$22,150 in 1989 (37.1 percent increase).

Number of persons in poverty Threshold percentiles



Source: US Census.

Public assistance in Oregon Rate per thousand population



Source: US Census.

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Basic family budget

According to US Department of Agriculture statistics released in October 1999, 12.6 percent of Oregon households had difficulty meeting their basic need for food. This chart outlines typical expenses for four family types in Baker County and the corresponding income those families would need to meet their expenses. Using this budget, only one family type (two working adults with one child) could afford basic expenses if both adults worked full-time and earned Baker County's median family income.

To learn more about this basic family budget, see Methodology and Data References section.

What the poverty threshold buys

Families with incomes at the poverty level in Baker County could afford 44.4 percent to 48.7 percent of this basic family budget.

Wages

According to the Oregon Employment Department, the average weekly wage in Baker County in 2003 was \$432.84. Of all sectors, the federal government had the highest weekly average of \$803.36 and retail trade had the lowest weekly average of \$129.79.

This chart illustrates a family's ability to be self-sufficient based on earnings of average wages for Baker County. The two-worker scenario relies on both workers earning average wages. Using the basic family budget, families with one adult who earned Baker County's average wages could not afford the basic family expenses.

Baker County's basic family budget

Basic Family Budget/Monthly	1 Adult/ 1 Child	1 Adult/ 3 Children	2 Adults/ 1 Child	2 Adults/ 3 Children
Housing	\$477	\$657	\$477	\$657
Food	\$230	\$489	\$388	\$647
Child Care	\$340	\$765	\$340	\$765
Transportation	\$197	\$197	\$277	\$277
Health Care	\$245	\$245	\$293	\$293
Other Necessities	\$219	\$355	\$268	\$404
Taxes	\$256	\$471	\$395	\$543
Basic Family Budget Needed/Monthly	\$1,964	\$3,179	\$2,438	\$3,586
Basic Family Budget Total/Annual	\$23,569	\$38,149	\$29,260	\$43,026
Median Family Income (Census 2000)	\$18,942	\$18,942	\$39,063	\$39,063
Median Family Income as % of Basic Budget	80.4%	49.7%	133.5%	90.8%

Poverty and Baker County's basic family budget

Basic Family Budget/Monthly	1 Adult/ 1 Child	1 Adult/ 3 Children	2 Adults/ 1 Child	2 Adults/ 3 Children
Poverty Threshold	\$11,483	\$16,954	\$13,410	\$19,882
% of Basic Budget	48.7%	44.4%	45.8%	46.2%

Baker County wages and the basic budget

	1 Worker	1 Worker	2 Workers	2 Workers
Average Monthly Wage (AMW)*	\$1,861	\$1,861	\$3,722	\$3,722
	1 Adult/ 1 Child	1 Adult/ 3 Children	2 Adults/ 1 Child	2 Adults/ 3 Children
Self Sufficiency Wage (SSW)**	\$1,964	\$3,179	\$2,438	\$3,586
Difference (SSW-AMW)	-\$103	-\$1,318	\$1,284	\$136
Wage as % of Self Sufficiency	94.8%	58.5%	152.7%	103.8%

* Source: 1999 Oregon Covered Employment and Payrolls.
** Based on Basic Family Budget for Baker County.

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Baker County Poverty Measures					
	1995	2000	2001	2002	2003
Population	15,317 ¹	16,741 ²	16,654	16,492	16,375
% of People Living Below Poverty Pevel	14.7% ¹	14.7% ²	NA	NA	NA
Median Income	\$22,150 ¹	\$30,367 ²	NA	NA	NA
Unemployment Rate	8.0	7.3	8.8	9.2	9.5
8th Grade Drug Use	15.7% ³	11.1%	NA	16.0%	NA
HS Dropout	3.0% ⁴	3.6%	2.1%	0.8%	NA
Teen Pregnancy per 1,000 Ages 10-17	9.2	8.1	7.1	11.7	NA
Prenatal Care	92.4%	82.2%	84.2%	83.3%	NA
Child Care Available per 100 Children Under 13	18.4	13.1	10.4	16.3	NA
Homeownership Rate	68.8% ¹	70.1% ²	NA	NA	NA
% Renters with 30% or More Rental Burden	39.6% ¹	48.8% ²	NA	NA	
Baker County Services					
	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
One Night Shelter Count	27	31	34	12	31
# of New Units Created with OHCS Funding	10	0	32	0	5
OHCS Funding for Subsidized Housing	\$311,774	\$0	\$814,850	\$400,000	\$256,537
# Home Loans for Low-Income Households	4	7	14	6	3
\$ Home Loans for Low-Income Households	\$219,120	\$460,388	\$890,205	\$373,547	\$208,310
# Households Receiving Energy Assistance	NA	660	596	518	476
% of Population Enrolled in the Oregon Health Plan	NA	NA	NA	24.0%	17.9%
# Students Eligible for Free/Reduced Lunch	1,099	1,015	1,057	1,126	1,177
% Students Eligible for Free/Reduced Lunch	38.2%	35.9%	39.9%	43.2%	46.6%
% of Population Receiving Food Stamps	NA	NA	NA	20.8%	17.1%
% of Population Receiving TANF	NA	NA	NA	4.0%	3.0%
% of Population Receiving DHS Services	NA	NA	31.9%	33.5%	26.7%

¹ 1990 Census data, year is 1989
² 2000 Census data, year is 1999
³ 1998
⁴ 1996
 NA=Not Available

Endnotes

¹ Oregon Department of Human Services Integrated Client Database.

² Please see Methodology and Data References section for information on Race/Ethnicity Categories used by the Census.

³ Bureau of Economic Analysis: Regional Economic Accounts.

⁴ Community Connection of Northeast Oregon's Community Services Block Grant Work Plan for 2003-05.