

Columbia County

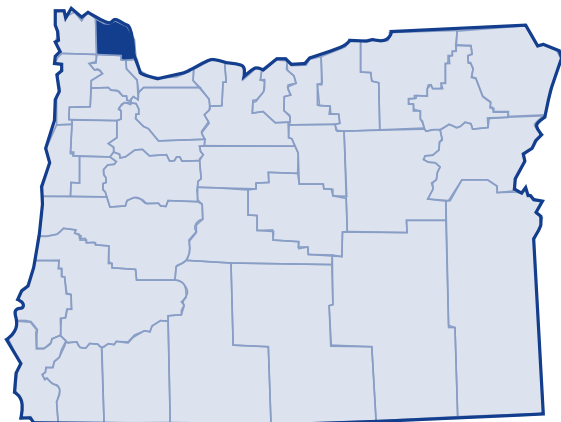
Major findings

Columbia County experienced lower rates of poverty than the state and nation from 1979 to 1999.

Of those living below poverty, 44.3 percent earned 50 percent or less of the poverty threshold for their family type. More than 20 percent of the county population earned less than 185 percent of the poverty threshold, and was possibly qualified for state and federal programs, such as food stamps.

Children, single mothers, and those of Hispanic Origin all experienced disproportionately high rates of poverty. Since 1979, the number of single women with children living in poverty in Columbia County increased by 51.9 percent. In 2000, 60 percent of single mothers with children 5 years of age and younger experienced poverty. One quarter of the Hispanic population experienced poverty.

By 2003, Columbia County experienced an 11.7 percent unemployment rate. That same year, 21.3 percent of Columbia County residents received services from the Department of Human Services.¹



Low-income needs

Community Action Team, Inc., the Community Action Agency for Columbia County, prioritized the needs of the county's low-income population as follows:²

- Develop and implement a Transitional Housing program for homeless youth
- Establish a link between Family Childcare Providers and Food Banks to improve child nutrition
- Maintain five senior center meal programs
- Establish two Family Resource Centers and improve access to services for low-income families
- Increase enrollment in the Even Start Family Literacy program
- Produce and distribute 6,000 Family Resource Directories
- Develop and construct transitional housing for persons released from the Columbia County Corrections Facility
- Complete 15 units of Self Help Housing
- Enroll 600 children in Head Start and prepare them to succeed in school
- Rehabilitate 100 low or moderate income homes
- Weatherize 200 low income homes
- Provide after school child care for 200 children
- Provide emergency energy services to 5,000 low income households

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Growth

According to the 2000 Census, Columbia County grew by 16 percent between 1989 and 1999. The Census Bureau determined the poverty status of 43,202 county residents and found that 9.1 percent (3,910 people) lived below the poverty threshold. This is an increase of 2.5 percent in the number of persons living in poverty (3,813 people) in 1989. The overall percent of Columbia County's population living in poverty decreased from 1989 to 1999, while the number of people living in poverty did not.

20-year trend

In the 20 years after 1979, the poverty rate in Columbia County decreased from 9.3 percent of the population to 9.1 percent. The number of persons in poverty rose from 3,284 people to 3,910 people. Columbia County's poverty rates remained lower than the state and national poverty rates throughout this period.

Poverty and age

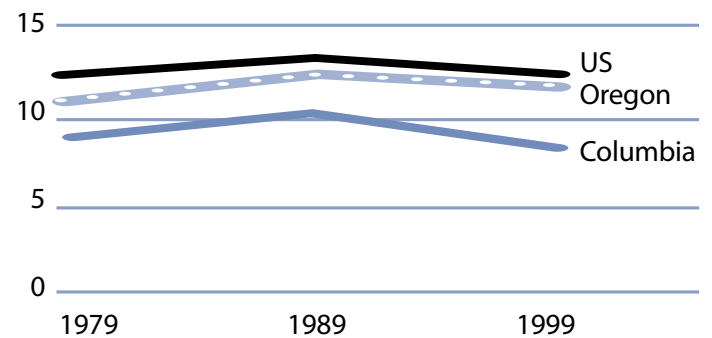
In the 2000 Census, among all age categories examined, children 5 years of age or younger experienced the highest rate of poverty at 15.1 percent. Children younger than 18 years of age experienced poverty at 12.2 percent. People 65 and older experienced the lowest rate at 7 percent. Over the 20-year period from 1979 to 1999, the rate of poverty improved for people 65 years of age and older.

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

	1989	1999	Percent Change
Columbia County	3,813 (10.2%)	3,910 (9.1%)	2.5% (-1.2%)
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%)

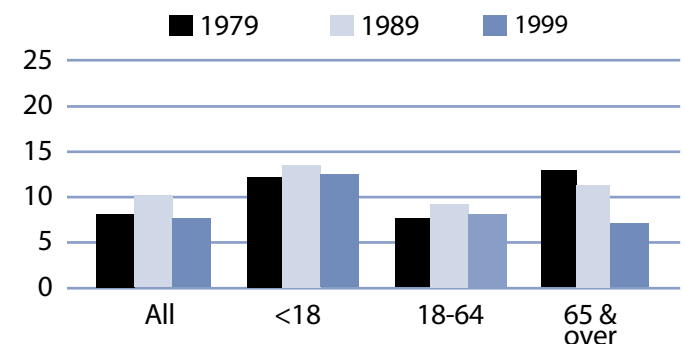
Source: US Census. County numbers have been rounded and, therefore, may not add exactly to totals.

Poverty rates 1979-1999



Source: US Census.

Rate of poverty by age



Source: US Census.

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Poverty and Columbia County families

In 1999, 811 Columbia County families lived in poverty (6.7 percent). Of the 811 families in poverty, 64.2 percent (521 families) had a household member who worked and 14.7 percent (119 families) had a full-time year-round worker.

The poverty rate was higher for families with children. Families with at least one child younger than 18 experienced poverty at a rate of 10.4 percent. Families with a child 5 years and younger experienced poverty at a higher rate of 14.6 percent. The rate for families with children headed by single mothers was 39.1 percent and the rate was even higher with younger children (younger than 5 years) at 59.8 percent. The poverty rate for married couples with children younger than 18 was lower at 3.6 percent. From 1979 to 1999, the number of female-headed households with children (no husband present) who lived in poverty increased from 268 families in 1979 to 407 families in 1999.

Poverty and race/ethnicity

Among racial/ethnic groups,³ White comprised the majority of people in poverty at 88.2 percent. The poverty rate among White was 8.5 percent. Other and Hispanic experienced disproportionately higher rates of poverty. The poverty rate among Other was 34.7 percent, while Hispanic had a 25.7 percent rate. Between 1989 and 1999, poverty rates improved for White and Other.

Columbia County families in poverty

Number Below Poverty Level (poverty rate)				% Change
	1979	1989	1999	1979-99 (rate difference)
All Families	738 (7.4%)	795 (7.6%)	811 (6.7%)	9.9% (-0.7%)
With Children under 18	565 (10.1%)	623 (11.6%)	644 (10.4%)	14.0% (0.3%)
Female-headed with Children under 18	268 (41.7%)	282 (41.7%)	407 (39.1%)	51.9% (-2.6%)

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

Columbia 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	94.3% (40,721)	88.2% (3,450)	8.5%	9.9%
Black	0.3% (116)	0.4% (17)	14.7%	12.9%
American Indian	1.3% (570)	2.5% (99)	17.4%	17.4%
Asian/Pacific Islander	0.5%/0.1% (199/39)	0.5%/0.2% (21/6)	10.6%/15.4%	8.0%*
Other	0.9% (389)	3.5% (135)	34.7%	38.5
2 or More Races	2.7% (1,168)	4.7% (182)	15.6%	NA
Hispanic Origin	2.3% (990)	6.5% (254)	25.7%	25.0%

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

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County income

On a per capita basis, Columbia County's personal income was \$27,234 in 2002, about 95 percent of the state average of \$28,792, and 88 percent of the national average, \$30,906. Per capita income in Columbia County fell 0.7 percent between 2001 and 2002. The ten-year trend, from 1992 to 2002, of per capita income shows average annual growth of 4.4 percent. Average earnings per job for 2001 were \$29,544 in Columbia County compared to \$33,063 for the state.⁴

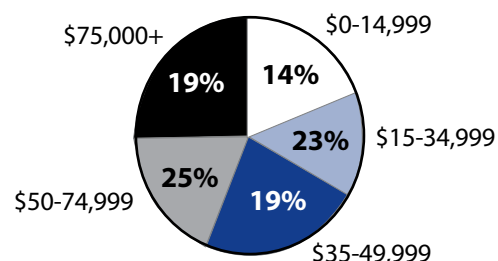
Poverty thresholds

Segmenting census data by income reveals more detail about the people experiencing poverty in Columbia County. The 2000 Census showed that 1,732 people or 44.3 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 needed 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 the Women, Infants, and Children program. In 1999, 21 percent of Columbia County's population, or 9,077 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, 551 households or 3.4 percent of all households in Columbia County reported public assistance income. The average amount of public assistance income for 1999 was \$2,205. The 20-year trend showed a decrease in the number of households that reported receiving public assistance income, from 795 households or 6.2 percent of all households in 1979.

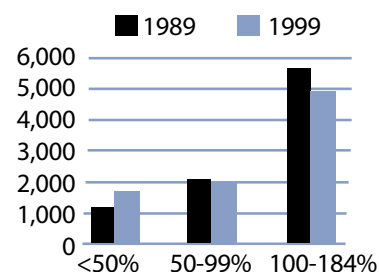
1999 household income distribution—Columbia County



Source: US Census.

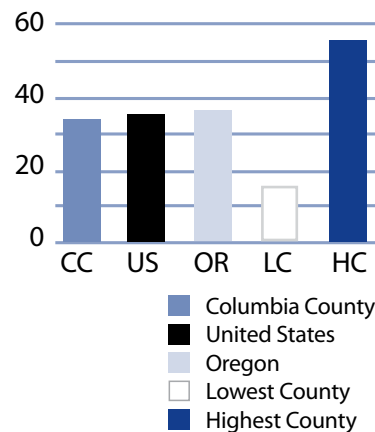
Note: The median household income in Columbia County was \$45,797 in 1999 compared to \$29,507 in 1989 (55.2 percent increase).

Number of persons in poverty Threshold percentiles



Source: US Census.

Public assistance in Orego 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, about 12.6 percent of Oregonian households had difficulty meeting their basic need for food. This chart outlines typical expenses for four family types in Columbia County and the corresponding income those families would need to meet their expenses.

Families with one adult who earned Columbia County's median family income could not afford this basic budget.

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

What the poverty threshold buys

Families at the poverty level in Columbia County could afford 37.2 to 39.9 percent of this basic family budget.

Wages

According to the Oregon Employment Department, the average weekly wage in Columbia County was \$547.07. Of all sectors, transportation, communication and utilities industry had the highest weekly average of \$873.59 and retail trade had the lowest weekly average of \$287.10.

This chart illustrates a family's ability to be self-sufficient based on earnings of average wages for Columbia County. The two-worker scenario relies on both workers earning average wages as well. Families with one full-time worker earning Columbia County's average wage could not afford the basic family budget.

Columbia 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	\$645	\$897	\$645	\$897
Food	\$230	\$489	\$388	\$647
Child Care	\$412	\$891	\$412	\$891
Transportation	\$170	\$170	\$240	\$240
Health Care	\$245	\$245	\$293	\$293
Other Necessities	\$271	\$430	\$320	\$479
Taxes	\$443	\$675	\$504	\$740
Basic Family Budget Needed/Monthly	\$2,416	\$3,797	\$2,802	\$4,187
Basic Family Budget Total/Annual	\$28,993	\$45,561	\$33,624	\$50,248
Median Family Income (Census 2000)	\$22,902	\$22,902	\$58,144	\$58,144
Median Family Income as % of Basic Budget	79.0%	50.3%	172.9%	115.7%

Poverty and Columbia 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	39.6%	37.2%	39.9%	39.6%

Columbia County wages and the basic budget

	1 Worker	1 Worker	2 Workers	2 Workers
Average Monthly Wage (AMW)*	\$2,352	\$2,352	\$4,705	\$4,705
	1 Adult/ 1 Child	1 Adult/ 3 Children	2 Adults/ 1 Child	2 Adults/ 3 Children
Self Sufficiency Wage (SSW)**	\$2,416	\$3,797	\$2,802	\$4,187
Difference (SSW-AMW)	-\$64	-\$1,445	\$1,903	\$518
Wage as % of Self Sufficiency	97.4%	61.9%	168.0%	112.4%

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

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Columbia County Poverty Measures	1995	2000	2001	2002	2003
Population	37,557 ¹	43,560 ²	44,310	45,449	46,261
% of People Living Below Poverty Level	10.2% ¹	9.1% ²	NA	NA	NA
Median Income	\$29,507 ¹	\$45,797 ²	NA	NA	NA
Unemployment Rate	4.8%	5.5%	8.4%	10.4%	11.7%
8th Grade Drug Use	14.8% ³	13.4%	NA	15.5%	NA
HS Dropout	4.1% ⁴	4.8%	3.5%	2.3%	NA
Teen Pregnancy per 1,000 Ages 10-17	13.8	10.9	9.3	610.0%	NA
Prenatal Care	80.3%	85.2%	83.8%	86.8%	NA
Child Care Available per 100 Children Under 13	17.1	16.5	16.2	15.2	NA
Homeownership Rate	74.1% ¹	76.1% ²	NA	NA	NA
% Renters with 30% or More Rental Burden	36.4% ¹	42.6% ²	NA	NA	NA
Columbia County Services	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
One Night Shelter Count	31	106	62	39	41
# of New Units Created with OHCS Funding	67	69	6	5	63
OHCS Funding for Subsidized Housing	\$2.2 m	\$5.1 m	\$1.9 m	\$312,162	\$2.1 m
# Home Loans for Low-Income Households	10	5	9	6	9
\$ Home Loans for Low-Income Households	\$884,109	\$501,315	\$959,301	\$710,461	\$1.1 m
# Households Receiving Energy Assistance	NA	1,236	1,149	925	957
% of Population Enrolled in the Oregon Health Plan	NA	NA	NA	16.7%	13.8%
# Students Eligible for Free/Reduced Lunch	2,220	2,123	2,227	2,303	2,486
% Students Eligible for Free/Reduced Lunch	25.7%	24.7%	25.8%	27.0%	29.2%
% of Population Receiving Food Stamps	NA	NA	NA	14.8%	13.3%
% of Population Receiving TANF	NA	NA	NA	2.0%	1.4%
% of Population Receiving DHS Services	NA	NA	22.2%	23.3%	21.3%
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 Community Action Team, Inc. Community Services Block Grant Work Plan for 2003-05.

³ Please see Methodology and Data References section for information on Census Race/Ethnicity Categories.

⁴ Bureau of Economic Analysis: Regional Economic Accounts.