

# Malheur County

## Major findings

According to the 2000 US Census, the poverty rate in Malheur County exceeded that of the state and the nation between 1979 to 1999.

Children under 18 experienced the highest rate of poverty during this period. Poverty also disproportionately affected the county's minority population. In 1999, Pacific Islander, Black and American Indian populations all experienced a poverty rate higher than 39 percent.

Unemployment reached 9.8 percent in Malheur County in 1999.

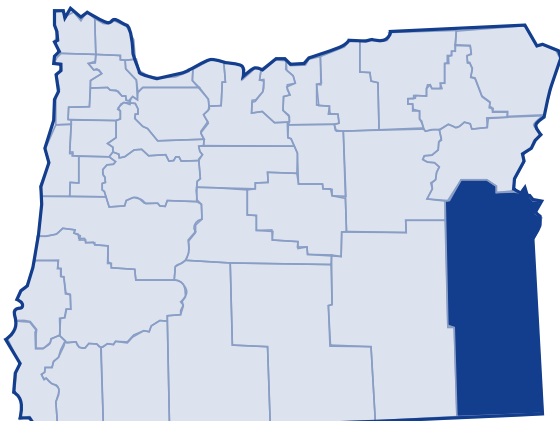
Among Malheur County's renters, 47 percent reported spending 30 percent or more on rental costs in both 1989 and 1999.

In 2003, 30.3 percent of Malheur county residents received services from the Department of Human Services.<sup>1</sup>

## Low-income needs

Malheur County Commission for Children and Families identified the following needs for the county's low-income population.<sup>2</sup>

- Reduce the incidence of family violence
- Increase prenatal care, as measured by the percentage of babies whose mothers received early care
- Reduce teen substance abuse
- Reduce juvenile arrests
- Maintain Oregon Youth Authority bed use
- Reduce juvenile recidivism
- Focus on healthy, thriving youth as measured by teen pregnancy rate, reported suicide attempts by minors, and/or public high school students drop out rates
- Reduce poverty, as measured by the percentage of individuals residing in Malheur County with incomes below 100 percent of the federal poverty level
- Increase community engagement
- Provide adequate assistance and services to all children and families in Malheur County, including but not limited to minority and ethnic populations, girls and boys, men and women, and individuals with special needs



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## Growth

According to the 2000 Census, Malheur County grew 21.4 percent between 1989 and 1999. The US Census Bureau determined the poverty status of 28,235 county residents and found that 18.7 percent (5,265 people) lived below the poverty threshold. This is an increase of 6.5 percent in the number of persons living in poverty (4,945 people) in 1989. The overall percent of Malheur County's population living in poverty decreased slightly between 1989 and 1999, but the number of people living in poverty did not.

## 20-year trend

In the 20 years after 1979, the poverty rate in Malheur County increased from 17.4 percent of the population to 18.7 percent. The number of persons in poverty rose from 4,582 people to 5,265 people. Malheur County's poverty rates remained higher than the state and national poverty rates throughout this period.

## Poverty and age

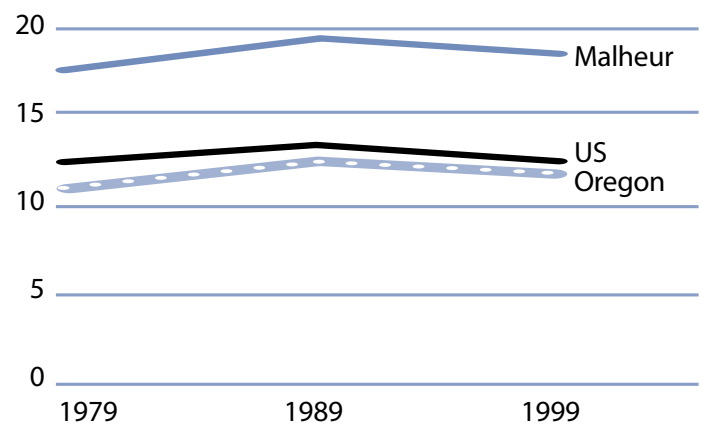
In the 2000 Census, among all age categories examined, children 5 years of age and younger experienced the highest rate of poverty at 28.3 percent. Children younger than 18 years of age experienced poverty at 26 percent. People 65 and older experienced the lowest rate: 8 percent. Over the 20-year period from 1979 to 1999, the rate of poverty was consistently highest for children younger than 18.

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

	1989	1999	Percent Change (rate difference)
Malheur County	4,945 (19.3%)	5,265 (18.7%)	6.5% (-0.7%)
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%)

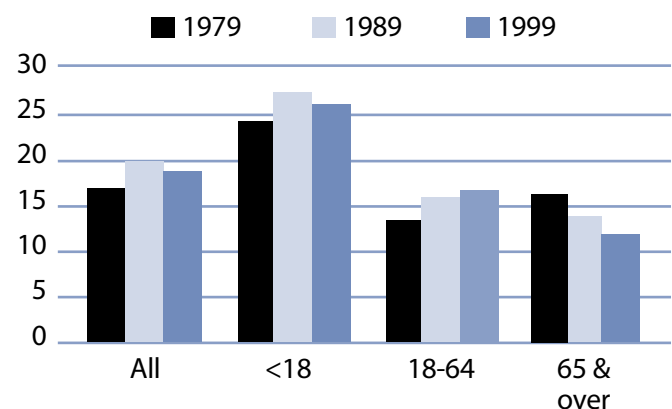
Source: US Census. County numbers have been rounded and, therefore, may not add exactly to totals.

**Poverty rates 1979-1999**



Source: US Census.

**Rate of poverty by age**



Source: US Census.

# Malheur County

## Poverty and Malheur County families

In 1999, 1,080 Malheur County families lived in poverty (14.6 percent). Of the 1,080 families in poverty, 70.6 percent (762 families) had a worker and 25.6 percent (277 families) had a full-time year-round worker.

The poverty rate was higher for families with children. Families with at least one child under 18 experienced poverty at a rate of 22.1 percent. Families with a child 5 years and younger experienced poverty at a higher rate of 29.4 percent. The rate for families with children headed by single mothers was 52.7 percent and even higher with younger children (less than 5 years) at 68.7 percent.

The poverty rate for married couples with children under 18 was lower at 15.5 percent. From 1979 to 1999, the number of female-headed households with children (no husband present) who lived in poverty increased from 243 families in 1979 to 374 families in 1999.

## Poverty and race/ethnicity

Among racial/ethnic groups,<sup>3</sup> White residents comprised the majority of people in poverty at 64.5 percent. When examining poverty based on race/ethnicity, however, the poverty rate among White was 15.8 percent. Pacific Islander, Black and American Indian experienced disproportionately higher rates of poverty. The poverty rate among Pacific Islander was 72 percent, while Black and American Indian exceeded 39 percent rate. From 1989 to 1999, poverty improved for White, Other and Hispanic Origin.

## Malheur County families in poverty

Number Below Poverty Level (poverty rate)	Number Below Poverty Level			% Change
	1979	1989	1999	1979-99 (rate difference)
All Families	999 (13.9%)	1,060 (15.3%)	1,080 (14.6%)	8.1% (0.7%)
With Children under 18	725 (18.2%)	847 (23.6%)	904 (22.1%)	24.7% (3.9%)
Female-headed with Children under 18	243 (43.5%)	349 (64.4%)	374 (52.7%)	53.9% (9.2%)

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

## Malheur 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	76.0% (21,445)	64.5% (3,395)	15.8%	16.2%
Black	0.4% (105)	0.9% (49)	46.7%	4.5%
American Indian	0.7% (195)	1.5% (77)	39.5%	35.2%
Asian/Pacific Islander	1.8%/0.1% (501/25)	0.4%/0.3% (21/18)	4.2%/72.0%	8.1%*
Other	18.0% (5,080)	28.5% (1,501)	29.5%	38.3%
2 or More Races	3.1% (884)	3.9% (204)	23.1%	NA
Hispanic Origin	27.1% (7,638)	41.3% (2,176)	28.5%	39.1%

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

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## County income

On a per capita basis, Malheur County's personal income was \$18,608 in 2002, about 65 percent of the state average of \$28,792, and 60 percent of the national average, \$30,906. Per capita income in Malheur County rose 3.4 percent between 2001 and 2002. The 10-year trend, from 1992 to 2002, of per capita income shows average annual growth of 1.9 percent. Average earnings per job for 2001 were \$23,440 in Malheur County compared to \$33,063 for the state.<sup>4</sup>

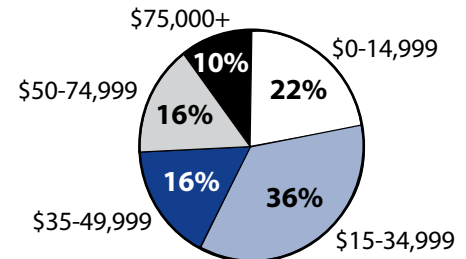
## Poverty thresholds

Segmenting census data by income reveals more detail about the people experiencing poverty in Malheur County. The 2000 Census showed that 1,995 people or 37.9 percent of those living below the federal poverty threshold actually earned 50 percent or less than 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 WIC. In 1999, 42.1 percent of Malheur County's population, or 11,895 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, 505 households or 4.9 percent of all households in Malheur County reported public assistance income. The average amount of public assistance income for 1999 was \$2,363. The 20-year trend showed a decrease in households that reported receiving public assistance income, from 677 households or 7.3 percent of all households in 1979.

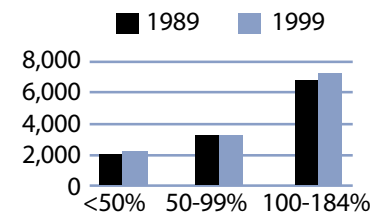
**1999 household income distribution—Malheur County**



Source: US Census.

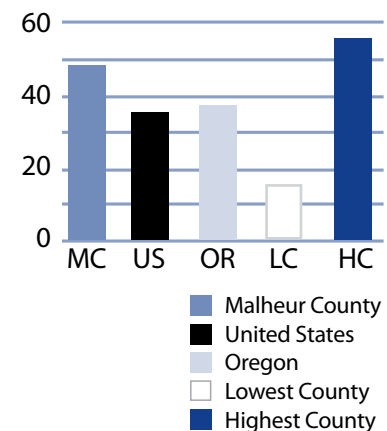
Note: The median household income in Malheur County was \$30,241 in 1999 compared to \$20,242 in 1989 (49.4 percent increase).

**Number of persons in poverty Threshold percentiles**



Source: US Census.

**Public assistance in Oregon Rate per thousand population**



Source: US Census.

# Malheur County

## Basic family budget

According to US Department of Agriculture statistics released in October 1999, about 12.6 percent of Oregon households have difficulty meeting their basic need for food. This chart outlines typical expenses for four family types in Malheur County and the corresponding income those families would need to meet their expenses.

Only families with two adults who both earned Malheur County's median income were able to afford the basic family budget, for themselves and one child.

*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 Malheur County could afford 42.7 percent to 46.6 percent of this basic family budget.

## Wages

According to the Oregon Employment Department, the average weekly wage in Malheur County is \$423.80. The federal government had the highest weekly average of \$723.63 and the retail trade industry had the lowest weekly average of \$294.82.

This chart illustrates a family's ability to be self-sufficient based on earnings of average wages for Malheur County. The two-worker scenario relies on both workers earning average wages.

Only families with two adults who both earned Malheur County's average wages could afford the basic expenses for themselves and one child.

## Malheur 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	\$386	\$854	\$386	\$854
Transportation	\$197	\$197	\$277	\$277
Health Care	\$245	\$245	\$293	\$293
Other Necessities	\$219	\$355	\$268	\$404
Taxes	\$298	\$510	\$415	\$581
<b>Basic Family Budget Needed/Monthly</b>	<b>\$2,052</b>	<b>\$3,307</b>	<b>\$2,504</b>	<b>\$3,713</b>
Basic Family Budget Total/Annual	\$24,622	\$39,685	\$30,048	\$44,562
Median Annual Income (Census 2000)	\$18,839	\$18,839	\$38,904	\$38,904
Median Family Income as % of Basic Budget	76.5%	47.5%	129.5%	87.3%

## Poverty and Malheur 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	46.6%	42.7%	44.6%	44.6%

## Malheur County wages and the basic budget

	1 Worker	1 Worker	2 Workers	2 Workers
	1 Adult/ 1 Child	1 Adult/ 3 Children	2 Adults/ 1 Child	2 Adults/ 3 Children
Average Monthly Wage (AMW)*	\$1,822	\$1,822	\$3,644	\$3,644
Self Sufficiency Wage (SSW)**	\$2,052	\$3,307	\$2,504	\$3,713
Difference (SSW-AMW)	-\$230	-\$1,485	\$1,140	-\$69
Wage as % of Self Sufficiency	88.8%	55.1%	171.7%	98.1%

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

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Malheur County Poverty Measures	1995	2000	2001	2002	2003
Population	26,038 <sup>1</sup>	31,615 <sup>2</sup>	31,453	31,271	31,239
% of People Living Below Poverty Level	19.3% <sup>1</sup>	18.6% <sup>2</sup>	NA	NA	NA
Median Income	\$20,242 <sup>1</sup>	\$30,241 <sup>2</sup>	NA	NA	NA
Unemployment Rate	6.5	7.8	8.4	8.8	9.8
8th Grade Drug Use	16.5% <sup>3</sup>	6.3%	NA	19.1%	NA
HS Dropout	5.6% <sup>4</sup>	3.1%	3.1%	3.2%	NA
Teen Pregnancy per 1,000 Ages 10-17	27.7	17.8	14.1	12.1	NA
Prenatal Care	61.1%	73.4%	72.1%	68.8%	NA
Child Care Available per 100 Children Under 13	0	14.4	13.4	13.6	NA
Homeownership Rate	64.1% <sup>1</sup>	63.8% <sup>2</sup>	NA	NA	NA
% Renters with 30% or More Rental Burden	47.1% <sup>1</sup>	47.0% <sup>2</sup>	NA	NA	NA
Malheur County Services	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
One Night Shelter Count	21	70	124	62	68
# of New Units Created with OHCS Funding	90	48	0	0	40
OHCS Funding for Subsidized Housing	\$1.7 m	\$188,448	\$0	\$0	\$1.9 m
# Home Loans for Low-Income Households	3	9	12	7	12
\$ Home Loans for Low-Income Households	\$214,127	\$503,059	\$797,841	\$365,863	\$826,998
# Households Receiving Energy Assistance	NA	1,090	824	763	736
% of Population Enrolled in the Oregon Health Plan	NA	NA	NA	25.4%	21.5%
# Students Eligible for Free/Reduced Lunch	3,207	3,423	3,356	3,363	3,472
% Students Eligible for Free/Reduced Lunch	56.5%	61.0%	60.0%	61.2%	64.8%
% of Population Receiving Food Stamps	NA	NA	NA	19.7%	18.2%
% of Population Receiving TANF	NA	NA	NA	2.5%	1.6%
% of Population Receiving DHS Services	NA	NA	32.8%	33.6%	30.3%

<sup>1</sup> 1990 Census data, year is 1989

<sup>2</sup> 2000 Census data, year is 1999

<sup>3</sup> 1998

<sup>4</sup> 1996

NA=Not Available

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Oregon Department of Human Services Integrated Client Database.

<sup>2</sup> Malheur County Commission for Children and Families plan.

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

<sup>4</sup> Bureau of Economic Analysis: Regional Economic Accounts.