

Multnomah County

Major findings

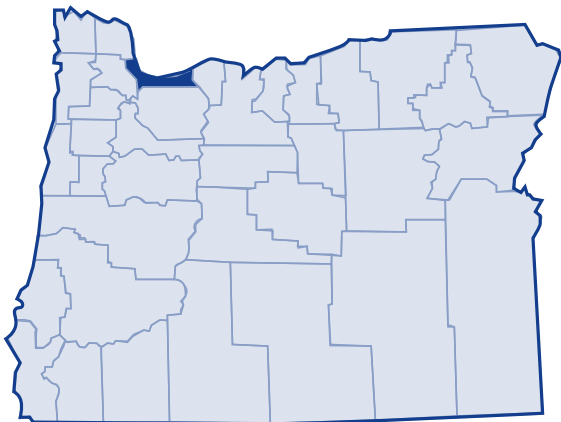
According to the 2000 US Census, the poverty rate in Multnomah County remained relatively constant (0.5 percent decrease) from 1989 to 1999. This rate matched the state and national averages.

Poverty was most prevalent among children between 1979 and 1999. Poverty among families and families with children remained relatively constant. Families headed by single mothers experienced a decreased poverty rate even though the number of these families living in poverty increased.

According to the basic family budget, families with one adult who earned median income in Multnomah County could not afford basic expenses.

Hit hard by recession, Multnomah County unemployment rose from a 4.3 rate in 2000 to 9.0 rate in 2003.

In 2003, 26.6 percent of Multnomah County residents received services from the Department of Human Services.¹



Low-income needs

ASDF (MULTCO) prioritized the needs of the low-income population in Multnomah County as follows:²

- **Utilities**—maintain and expand utility assistance availability for low-income residents of Multnomah County
- **Housing**—maintain and improve access to affordable permanent housing for low-income residents of Multnomah County
- **Clothing**—support community based programs to provide clothing to low-income families, particularly those that maintain and improve school attendance and lead to employment opportunities
- **Domestic Violence related**—support existing and developing projects, including those for emerging immigrant/refugee populations in the community
- **Health care**—Efforts include early childhood immunization, improving homeless families' living conditions, Oregon Health Plan enrollment; and health care budget training for low-income families
- **Employment**—related issues-connect clients with resources such as One-Stop centers
- **Food**—support the local food bank and organizations providing “food boxes;” support and improve school attendance and achievement through student nutrition
- **Skill development**—maintain funding and support for client skills development such as family stability, parenting, and tenant roles and responsibilities
- **Counseling/support**—maintain and develop the network of; maintain funding for local program that offers school-based programs.
- **Education/Children/Youth Activities**—maintain and expand programs such as Schools Uniting Neighborhoods (SUN schools) and Student Attendance Initiative.

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Growth

According to the 2000 Census, Multnomah County grew 13.1 percent between 1989 and 1999. The US Census Bureau determined the poverty status of 645,584 county residents and found that 12.7 percent (81,711 people) lived below the poverty threshold. This was an increase of 9.1 percent in the number of persons living in poverty (74,885 people) since 1989. The overall percent of Multnomah County's population living in poverty remained relatively constant from 1989 to 1999, but the number of people living in poverty did not.

20-year trend

In the 20 years after 1979, the poverty rate in Multnomah County increased from 11.4 percent of the population to 12.7 percent. The number of persons in poverty rose from 62,593 people to 81,711 people. Multnomah County's poverty rates were slightly lower to the state and national poverty rates throughout this period.

Poverty and age

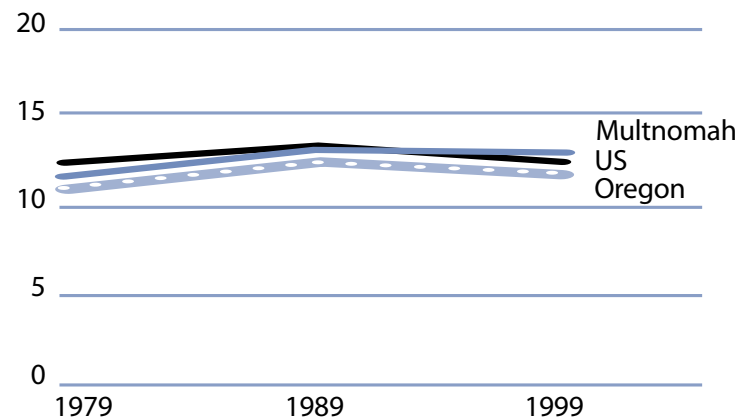
In the 2000 Census, among all age categories examined, children 5 years of age and younger experienced the highest rate of poverty at 17.4 percent. Children younger than 18 years of age experienced poverty at 16.2 percent. People 65 and older experienced the lowest rate at 9.8 percent. Over the 20-year 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)
Multnomah County	74,885 (13.1%)	81,711 (12.7%)	9.1% (-0.5%)
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%)

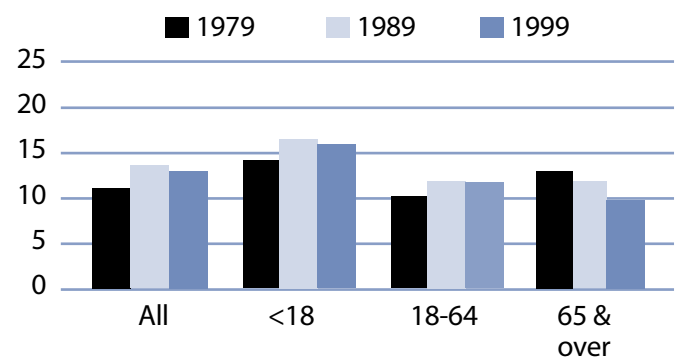
Source: US Census. County numbers have been rounded and, therefore, may not add exactly to totals.

Poverty rates 1979-1999



Source: US Census.

Rate of poverty by age



Source: US Census.

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Poverty and Multnomah County families

In 1999, 12,593 Multnomah County families lived in poverty (8.2 percent). Of the families in poverty, 57.8 percent (7,278 families) had a worker and 13.8 percent (1,735 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 12.9 percent. Families with a child 5 years and younger experienced poverty at a higher rate of 16.9 percent. The rate for families with children headed by single mothers was 30.7 percent and was even higher with younger children (less than 5 years) at 43.1 percent.

The poverty rate for married couples with children under 18 was lower at 6.3 percent. From 1979 to 1999, the number of female-headed households with children (no husband present) who lived in poverty decreased from 33.7 percent in 1979 to 30.7 percent in 1999.

Poverty and race/ethnicity

Among racial/ethnic groups,³ 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 10.3 percent. Other, Black and Hispanic Origin experienced disproportionately higher rates of poverty. The poverty rate among Other was 30 percent, while Black and Hispanic Origin both had a 26 percent rate.

Multnomah County families in poverty

Number Below Poverty Level (poverty rate)				% Change
	1979	1989	1999	1979-99 (rate difference)
All Families	10,875 (7.7%)	12,838 (8.9%)	12,593 (8.2%)	15.8% (0.5%)
With Children under 18	8,574 (12.2%)	10,184 (14.1%)	10,132 (12.9%)	18.2% (0.7%)
Female-headed with Children under 18	5,085 (33.7%)	6,064 (36.5%)	5,821 (30.7%)	14.5% (-3.0%)

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

Multnomah 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	79.0% (510,278)	64.5% (52,688)	10.3%	11.1%
Black	5.3% (34,527)	11.0% (9,006)	26.1%	30.5%
American Indian	1.0% (6,463)	1.7% (1,427)	22.1%	28.1%
Asian/Pacific Islander	5.7%/0.4% (36,622/2,444)	5.6%/0.4% (4,597/339)	12.6%/13.9%	21.0%*
Other	4.1% (26,168)	9.6% (7,863)	30.0%	28.0%
2 or More Races	2.6% (29,082)	5.5% (5,791)	13.8%	NA
Hispanic Origin	7.4% (48,073)	15.3% (12,465)	25.9%	25.5%

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

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From 1989 to 1999, most categories experienced improvements in poverty rates, but Other and Hispanic Origin did not.

County income

On a per capita basis, Multnomah County's personal income was \$33,840 in 2002, about 118 percent of the state average of \$28,792, and 109 percent of the national average, \$30,906. Multnomah County's per capita income rose 0.6 percent from 2001 to 2002. The 10-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 \$37,725 in Multnomah County compared to \$33,063 for the state.⁴

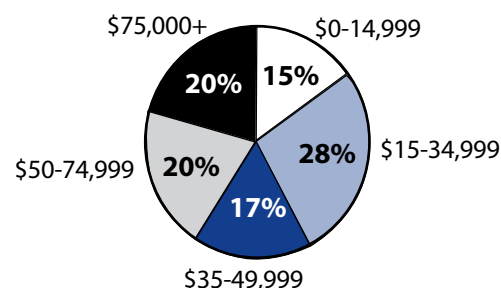
Poverty thresholds

Segmenting census data by income reveals more detail about the people experiencing poverty in Multnomah County. The 2000 Census showed that 37,243 people or 45.6 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, 27 percent of Multnomah County's population, or 174,207 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, 11,478 households or 4.2 percent of all households in Multnomah County reported public assistance income. The average amount of public assistance income for 1999 was \$2,624. The 20-year trend showed a decrease in households that reported receiving public assistance income, from 16,870 households or 7.2 percent of all households in 1979.

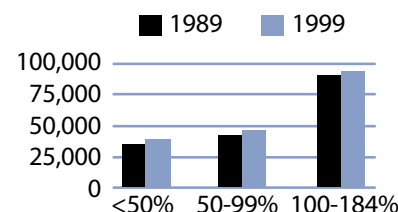
1999 household income distribution—Multnomah County



Source: US Census.

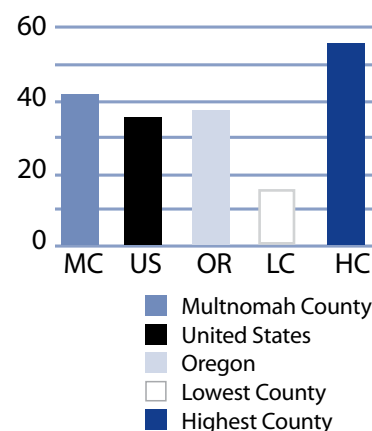
Note: The median household income in Multnomah County was \$41,278 in 1999 compared to \$26,928 in 1989 (53.3 percent increase).

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, 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 Multnomah County and the corresponding income those families would need to meet their expenses.

Families with one adult earning Multnomah County's median income could not afford the basic family 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 Multnomah County could afford 37.0 to 40.5 percent of this basic family budget.

Wages

According to the Oregon Employment Department, the average weekly wage in Multnomah County was \$666.12. The mining industry had the highest weekly average of \$895.03 and the retail trade industry had the lowest weekly average of \$390.80.

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

An adult who had three children and who worked full-time at Multnomah County's average wage could not afford the basic family budget.

Multnomah 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	\$413	\$897	\$413	\$897
Transportation	\$148	\$148	\$208	\$208
Health Care	\$245	\$245	\$293	\$293
Other Necessities	\$271	\$430	\$320	\$479
Taxes	\$434	\$644	\$491	\$729
Basic Family Budget Needed/Monthly	\$2,386	\$3,750	\$2,758	\$4,150
Basic Family Budget Total/Annual	\$28,633	\$44,999	\$33,097	\$49,799
Median Annual Income (Census 2000)	\$23,775	\$23,775	\$59,751	\$59,751
Median Family Income as % of Basic Budget	83.0%	52.8%	180.5%	120.0%

Poverty and Multnomah County's Basic 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	40.1%	37.0%	40.5%	39.9%

Multnomah County wages and the basic budget

	1 Worker	1 Worker	2 Workers	2 Workers
Average Monthly Wage (AMW)*	\$2,864	\$2,864	\$5,728	\$5,728
1 Adult/ 1 Child	1 Adult/ 3 Children	2 Adults/ 1 Child	2 Adults/ 3 Children	
Self Sufficiency Wage (SSW)**	\$2,386	\$3,750	\$2,758	\$4,150
Difference (SSW-AMW)	\$478	-\$886	\$2,970	\$1,578
Wage as % of Self Sufficiency	120.0%	76.4%	207.7%	138.0%

* Source: 1999 Oregon Covered Employment and Payrolls.

** Based on Basic Family Budget for Multnomah County.

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Multnomah County Poverty Measures	1995	2000	2001	2002	2003
Population	583,887 ¹	660,486 ²	668,969	675,438	677,813
% of People Living Below Poverty Level	13.1% ¹	12.7% ²	NA	NA	NA
Median Income	\$26,928 ¹	\$41,278 ²	NA	NA	NA
Unemployment Rate	4.1	4.3	6.4	8.5	9
8th Grade Drug Use	18.4% ³	10.5%	NA	18.7%	NA
HS Dropout	9.0% ⁴	9.5%	8.6%	7.7%	NA
Teen Pregnancy per 1,000 Ages 10-17	26	19.1	16.9	14.3	NA
Prenatal Care	78.1%	79.5%	80.1%	80.6%	NA
Child Care Available per 100 Children Under 13	17.3	22.7	20.5	19	NA
Homeownership Rate	55.3% ¹	56.9% ²	NA	NA	NA
% Renters with 30% or More Rental Burden	41.6% ¹	45.5% ²	NA	NA	NA
Multnomah County Services	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
One Night Shelter Count	2,846	2,010	2,639	2,455	2,632
# of New Units Created with OHCS Funding	530	577	1,163	1,735	1,434
OHCS Funding for Subsidized Housing	\$4.5 m	\$20.9 m	\$32.0 m	\$74.8 m	\$77.3 m
# Home Loans for Low-Income Households	392	330	325	253	252
\$ Home Loans for Low-Income Households	\$40.5 m	\$34.9 m	\$35.0 m	\$29.9 m	\$32.0 m
# Households Receiving Energy Assistance	NA	15,425	15,955	12,236	11,485
% of Population Enrolled in the Oregon Health Plan	NA	NA	NA	21.2%	18.5%
# Students Eligible for Free/Reduced Lunch	34,571	34,555	38,236	39,548	40,468
% Students Eligible for Free/Reduced Lunch	37.1%	37.0%	40.6%	42.1%	44.3%
% of Population Receiving Food Stamps	NA	NA	NA	16.7%	16.3%
% of Population Receiving TANF	NA	NA	NA	3.6%	3.4%
% of Population Receiving DHS Services	NA	NA	27.9%	28.6%	26.6%

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 ASDF (MULTCO) Community Service 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.