

County comparisons

Social Services

Oregon Health Plan

The Oregon Health Plan (OHP) provides basic coverage to eligible Oregonians below 100 percent of the federal poverty level. In 2003, major changes in the benefits of the plan produced a significant drop in OHP enrollment. In 2004, OHP experienced benefit reductions and OHP-Standard enrollment curtailed. In 2004 and 2005, 11.9 percent and 11.2 percent of Oregon's population were enrolled in the Oregon Health Plan.

In 2005, Malheur County had the highest percentage of OHP enrollees—16.3 percent—while Clackamas County had the lowest percentage—6.5 percent. Of the 36 Oregon counties, 25 counties (69.4 percent) had ten percent or more of their population enrolled on the Oregon Health Plan.

Students eligible for free or reduced lunch

The United States Department of Agriculture, through the Oregon Department of Education, funds the free and reduced-price lunch program. Children from families with incomes at or below 130 percent of the poverty level are eligible for free meals. Families with incomes between 130 and 185 percent of the federal poverty level are eligible for reduced-price meals.

The percentage of students eligible for free or reduced lunch in Oregon increased from 34.0 percent in the 2000-2001 school year to 41.8 percent in the 2004-2005 school year. During the same time, 32 of Oregon's 36 counties saw the percentage of eligible children increase. Only four counties, Gilliam, Hood River, Wallowa, and Wheeler saw decreases. During the 2004 and 2005 school year, 12 Oregon counties (33.3 percent) had at least half of the children qualify for free and reduced lunch. In Jefferson County, 75.2 percent of school children qualified.

Food Stamps

Oregon's food stamp program provides cash benefits to qualifying individuals through the state's Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) system, the "Oregon Trail Card." These benefits supplement food budgets for low-income Oregonians. The program is administered by the Children, Families, and Adults Division of the Department of Human Services.

In 2004 and 2005, 11.7 percent of Oregonians received food stamp benefits. In 2005, Jefferson County had the highest percent of population who received food stamp benefits—18.4 percent, while Washington County had the lowest—6.4 percent. During 2005, at least 10 percent of the population received food stamp benefits in 27 of the state's 36 counties.

TANF

The Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Program (TANF) provides a cash grant to low-income Oregon families with children. Many TANF families also receive food stamps and medical benefits and must participate in the states employment and training program for people on public assistance.

In 2004 and 2005, 1.1 percent of Oregon's population received TANF assistance. In 2005, Josephine County had the highest percent of population who received TANF assistance—1.9 percent, while Wheeler County had the lowest—0.3 percent.

Housing

One-night shelter count

The one-night shelter count serves as an estimate of the homeless population. Shelters across the state count the number of people seeking services on a single night. Prior to 2004, these counts occurred twice a year—once in March and once in November. In 2004, this changed to one count in January. The counts include both those who received shelter and those turned away. The count does not include those who did not seek shelter, such as families and individuals sleeping in cars or on streets.

Methods for counting people without homes vary greatly. In some areas, active outreach efforts increased the percentage of homeless people actually counted.

The number of those who sought shelter increased by 3,161 individuals between 2000 and 2005—a 42.9 percent increase. Of the 36 counties in Oregon, 25 (69.4 percent) experienced increased counts between 2000 and 2005. In both 2000 and 2005, Multnomah and Lane Counties saw the largest numbers of individuals seeking services.

Subsidized housing units

OHCS subsidizes housing through a variety of grant and tax credit programs. Funding is made available to for-profit, nonprofit and governmental entities to develop, construct, acquire and/or rehabilitate housing projects that contain two or more units. Grants are awarded on a competitive basis twice a year. Funding applications consistently exceed twice the available resources.

Between 2000 and 2005, the number of housing units subsidized increased by 1,044 units. The number of units subsidized in Multnomah County increased from 577 units in 2000 to 1,156 units in 2005. Multnomah, Washington, and Lane Counties saw the highest numbers of subsidized units in 2005.

Single-family low-income loans

In partnership with private lending institutions, OHCS provides loans to individuals who make less than 80 percent of the median income for the county in which they are buying the home. The program also helps those who qualify to make downpayments.

From 2000 to 2005, the single-family low-income loan program financed less home loans—dropping from 1,033 homes to 926 homes. Although the number of home loans decreased, the amount of funding provided increased from \$93.1 million in 2000 to 118.9 million in 2005. This reflected Oregon's increasing home values.

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Other assistance

Energy assistance

The Low-Income Energy Assistance Program (LIEAP) and the Oregon Energy Assistance Program (OEAP) assist low-income households with home heating costs. Administered through OHCS in partnership with local community action agencies, these programs serve households with income at or below 60 percent of Oregon's median income.

In 2004, 74,585 households received energy assistance. From 2000 to 2004, 3,780 fewer low-income households received assistance. Of Oregon's 36 counties, 24 counties experienced a drop in the number of households receiving help. This drop in households largely results from increased energy costs and greater need among households served.

Weatherization

Weatherization programs have operated in Oregon since 1979, providing conservation services, health and safety repairs, heating system repair and replacement, base load measures and energy education to households at or below 60 percent of Oregon's median income.

Administered by OHCS, these programs are locally delivered by community based organizations such as community action agencies, senior centers, housing authorities and tribal governments.

Priority is given to seniors (60 years of age or older), people with disabilities, and households with children under the age of six.

In 2003, 1,759 units received weatherization assistance through the OHCS Community Resources Division. By 2005, an additional 2,661 units received weatherization assistance. Annual savings averaged \$325 per weatherized unit—saving low-income Oregonians \$864,825 in energy costs. According to the Energy Information Annual Energy Outlook, homes weatherized in 2006 will generate \$358 in first-year savings.