

Major findings

Between the years of 2001 and 2005, Malheur County lost 550 non-farm employment positions. Unemployment remained high—8.8 percent—compared to the state average—6.1 percent—but had fallen from Malheur County's 2004 high of 10.1 percent.

Income remained low in Malheur County, with the per capita personal income—\$20,222—at 66 percent of the state per capita income of \$30,561. The 2005 average wage in Malheur County—\$2,161—could not fund the basic expenses for a single adult with one child or more. Those families who earned poverty level wages could only afford 46.7 percent to 51.2 percent of basic expenses.

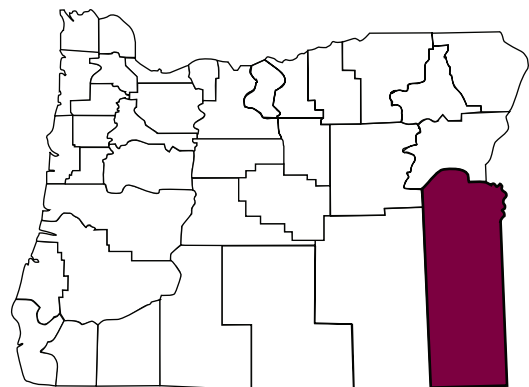
In 1999, over half of single women with children lived in poverty as did 26.0 percent of children younger than 18. During the 2004 and 2005 school year 65.9 percent of children in Malheur County qualified for free and/or reduced lunch.

Minority populations, except the Asian population, experienced poverty rates of 23.1 percent and above. The highest rate of poverty for minority groups was faced by the Pacific Islander population at 72.0 percent.

Prioritized low-income needs

Malheur Council on Aging and Community Services (MCOA&CS) prioritized the needs of the low-income population in Malheur County as follows:

- Housing—increased resources for transitional housing and emergency housing. Case management for these low-income families to address budgeting, workforce training, employment and other life skills. Unstable living arrangements affects not only work performance and consistency for parents, it also affects the academic performance of children.
- Nutrition—Food insecurity is a high priority. Food needs to be more accessible to the families in need. More funds are needed for the food pantries throughout Malheur County. Food assistance to the rural areas of the county needs to be more consistent, especially during the winter months. Increase the funding for Meal On Wheels to ensure that all eligible seniors receive adequate and proper nutrition every day of the week.
- Low Income Energy Assistance Program—additional funds are needed to serve all eligible low-income families. Energy education is needed to help low-income families make educated decisions regarding their energy burden. Budget management is also needed to help families in crisis due to high energy costs.



Malheur County

- Weatherization—help low-income families remain in their homes. More homes need to be weatherized (a long-term solution). Data proves weatherization reduces a household energy burden dramatically.

Recent efforts

Malheur Council on Aging and Community Services (MCOA&CS) increased rental assistance for the families who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

MCOA&CS coordinated with the Salvation Army Ministerial Association and other community partners to help homeless or transient individuals access temporary housing.

MCOA&CS co-led an Energy Symposium with Idaho Power inviting other agencies and utility companies to meet one another and discuss the plight of the low-income family and the energy burden.

MCOA&CS provided intake of applications for seniors for the low-income energy assistance program (LIEAP) at the senior meal sites in order to reach more seniors unable to access our program due to transportation issues.

More than 2,582 unduplicated client records were entered into the OPUS system. The OPUS system is used for collecting client data and is utilized statewide by Oregon Housing and Community Services (OHCS) and other statewide agencies. Three intake workers were trained in use and security of the OPUS system.

MCOA&CS coordinated with the Southeast Oregon Regional Food Bank (SEORFB) to bring food to rural communities when doing Low Income Energy Assistance intake.

County income

According to the Bureau of Economic Analysis, Malheur County's per capita personal income was \$20,222 in 2004, 66 percent of the state average of \$30,561, and 61 percent of the national average, \$33,050. Per capita income in Malheur County rose 5.2 percent between 2003 and 2004. The 1994 to 2004 trend in per capita income shows 1.9 percent average annual growth. Average earnings per job for 2004 were \$25,050 in Malheur County compared to \$35,005 for the state.

Basic family budget

According to a US Department of Agriculture report, from 2002 to 2004 11.9 percent of Oregon households struggled to meet their basic need for food. The following chart outlines typical expenses for four family types in Malheur County and the corresponding income those families would need to meet their expenses. To learn more about this basic family budget, see Appendix 2.

Malheur County's basic family budget

| Basic family budget/ month | 1 adult and 1 child | 1 adult and 3 children | 2 adults and 1 child | 2 adults and 3 children |
|---|------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------|
| Housing | \$525 | \$759 | \$525 | \$759 |
| Food | \$303 | \$580 | \$479 | \$722 |
| Child care | \$516 | \$929 | \$516 | \$929 |
| Transportation | \$381 | \$381 | \$535 | \$535 |
| Health care | \$239 | \$249 | \$324 | \$360 |
| Other necessities | \$257 | \$415 | \$311 | \$459 |
| Taxes | (\$10) | (\$156) | \$184 | (\$84) |
| Basic family budget needed/month | \$2,211 | \$3,157 | \$2,874 | \$3,680 |
| Basic family budget total/annual | \$26,532 | \$37,884 | \$34,488 | \$44,160 |
| Hourly wage needed for basic family budget | \$12.76 | \$18.21 | \$16.58 | \$21.23 |
| Poverty threshold | \$12,830 | \$19,350 | \$16,090 | \$22,610 |
| % Of basic budget | 48.4% | 51.1% | 46.7% | 51.2% |

What the poverty threshold buys

Families with incomes at the poverty level in Malheur County could afford 46.7 percent to 51.2 percent of this basic family budget.

Malheur County

Wages

According to the Oregon Employment Department, the average monthly earnings in Malheur County in 2005 were \$2,161. Of all sectors, federal government paid the highest monthly average of \$3,739 and leisure and hospitality paid the lowest monthly average of \$954.

The following 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. Using this basic budget, Malheur County's average monthly wage could not fund basic expenses for a single adult and one child or more.

Malheur County wages and the basic family budget

| | 1 worker | 1 worker | 2 workers | 2 workers |
|--|---------------------|------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------|
| Average monthly wage (AMW)* | \$2,161 | \$2,161 | \$4,322 | \$4,322 |
| | 1 adult and 1 child | 1 adult and 3 children | 2 adults and 1 child | 2 adults and 3 children |
| Self sufficiency wage (SSW)** | \$2,211 | \$3,157 | \$2,874 | \$3,680 |
| Difference (AMW-SSW) | -\$50 | -\$996 | \$1,448 | \$642 |
| Wages as % of self sufficiency | 97.7% | 68.5% | 150.4% | 117.4% |
| * Source: Oregon Covered Employment and Wages 2005 | | | | |
| **Based on basic family budget for Malheur County | | | | |

Employment

According to Oregon's Current Employment Statistics (CES), Malheur County lost 550 non-farm positions from 2001 to 2005.

Largest three industries in Malheur County 2005

| | Number of positions 2005 | Number of positions gained/lost | Average annual pay* |
|--|-----------------------------|------------------------------------|---------------------|
| Trade, transportation and utilities | 2,880 | -220 | \$23,946 |
| Local government | 1,980 | -50 | \$26,021 |
| Educational and health services | 1,420 | + 10 | \$29,395 |

*Oregon Covered Employment and Wages 2005

Of all industries, natural resources, mining and construction experienced the largest decrease—28.2 percent—from 390 positions in 2001 to 280 in 2005. Professional and business services experienced the largest growth—13.3 percent—growing from 450 positions to 510 positions.

2000 US Census information

Number of persons below poverty level (poverty rate)

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

Rates of poverty by age (1979-1999)

| | All | Children younger than 18 | People 18-64 | People 65 and older |
|------|-------|-----------------------------|--------------|------------------------|
| 1979 | 17.4% | 24.1% | 13.7% | 16.2% |
| 1989 | 19.3% | 27.2% | 16.2% | 14.0% |
| 1999 | 18.6% | 26.0% | 16.5% | 11.6% |

Source: US Census

In 1999, children younger than 18 years of age experienced the highest rate of poverty in Malheur County.

Malheur County

Malheur County poverty and race/ethnicity

| Race/ethnicity | % Total population 1999 (population) | % Poverty population 1999 (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

Malheur County families in poverty

| Number below poverty level (poverty rate) | 1979 | 1989 | 1999 | % Change 1979-1999 (rate difference) |
|--|----------------|------------------|------------------|--------------------------------------|
| All families | 999 (13.9%) | 1,060 (15.3%) | 1,080 (14.6%) | 8.1% (0.7%) |
| With children younger than 18 | 725 (18.2%) | 847 (23.6%) | 904 (22.1%) | 24.7% (3.9%) |
| Single women with children younger than 18 | 243 (43.5%) | 349 (64.4%) | 374 (52.7%) | 53.9% (9.2%) |

Source: US Census

Poverty and Malheur County families

In 1999, 1,080 of Malheur County's 7,421 families lived in poverty (14.6 percent). Of the 1,080 families in poverty, 70.6 percent (762 families) had a household member who worked and 25.6 percent (277 families) had a full-time year-round worker.

Malheur County

| Poverty Measures | 2000 | 2001 | 2002 | 2003 | 2004 | 2005 |
|---|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|---------|
| Population | 31,615 | 31,571 | 31,418 | 31,355 | 31,326 | 31,330 |
| People living below poverty level-% | 18.6% | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA |
| Median income | \$30,241 | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA |
| Unemployment rate | 7.5 | 8.3 | 9.1 | 9.9 | 10.1 | 8.8 |
| 8th grade drug use | 6.3% | NA | 19.1% | 18.9% | 17.7% | 16.7% |
| HS dropout | 3.1% | 3.1% | 3.2% | 2.6% | 3.1% | NA |
| Teen pregnancy per 1,000 ages 10-17 | 17.8 | 14.1 | 12.1 | 14.2% | NA | NA |
| Prenatal care | 73.4% | 72.1% | 68.8% | 71.2% | NA | NA |
| Child care available per 100 children under 13 | 14.4 | 13.4 | 13.6 | NA | 14.3 | NA |
| Homeownership rate | 63.8% | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA |
| Renters with 30% or more rental burden-% | 47.0% | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA |
| Malheur County Services | 2000 | 2001 | 2002 | 2003 | 2004 | 2005 |
| One night shelter counts | 70 | 124 | 62 | 68 | 111 * | 94 |
| New units created with OHCS funding resources | 48 | 0 | 0 | 40 | 0* | 32 |
| OHCS funding for affordable housing | \$188,448 | \$0 | \$0 | \$1.9 m | \$0* | \$1.0 m |
| Home loans for low-income households-# | 9 | 12 | 7 | 12 | 11 | 13 |
| Home loans for low-income households-\$ | \$503,059 | \$797,841 | \$365,863 | \$826,998 | \$877,505 | \$1.1 m |
| Households receiving energy assistance-# | 1,090 | 824 | 763 | 736 | 856 | NA |
| Units weatherized-# | NA | NA | NA | 21 | 31 | 12 |
| Population enrolled in the Oregon Health Plan-% | NA | NA | 25.4% | 21.5% | 16.8% * | 16.3% |
| Students eligible for free/reduced lunch-# | 3,423 | 3,356 | 3,363 | 3,472 | 3,513 | NA |
| Students eligible free/reduced lunch-% | 61.0% | 60.0% | 61.2% | 64.8% | 65.9% | NA |
| Population receiving Food Stamps-% | NA | NA | 19.7% | 18.2% | 15.4% * | 15.5% |
| Population receiving TANF-% | NA | NA | 2.5% | 1.6% | 0.8% * | 0.8% |
| Population receiving DHS services-% | NA | 32.8% | 33.6% | 30.3% | NA | NA |
| NA = Not Available | | | | | | |
| *Cannot be compared to previous years due to changes in data collection | | | | | | |