

## Major findings

In 2005, Polk County unemployment was 5.5 percent, lower than the state rate of 6.1 percent. Eighth grade drug use fell 23.1 percent in 2002 to 14.7 percent in 2005. During the 2004 and 2005 school year, 39.9 percent of students qualified for free and/or reduced lunch down from 43.9 percent the previous year.

Between 2001 and 2005, the employment department reported job growth of 1,597 employment positions. However, federal government, the industry that paid the highest monthly wage in 2005, experienced significant job loss between 2001 and 2005, dropping 25.2 percent. The Polk County 2005 average wage of \$2,262 could not fund the basic family budget for a single adult with one child or more.

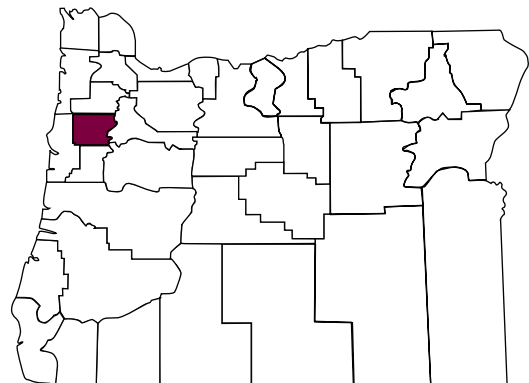
Families who earned poverty level wages in 2005 could not afford half of the basic family budget. In 1999, 1,028 (6.3 percent) of Polk County families lived in poverty, although 61.9 percent had a household member who worked. Of the Polk County families in poverty, 47.4 percent were single women with children younger than 18.

In 1999, minority groups in Polk County were also more likely to live in poverty than non-minority groups. People who identified as Black, Other, or of Hispanic Origin experienced poverty rates at or above 26.8 percent.

## Prioritized low-income needs

Community Action Agency Marion/Polk (CAA) prioritized the needs of the low-income population in Polk County as follows:

- Housing—increase resources to address homeless issues, particularly emergency shelter beds and transitional housing and case management. Provide additional emergency rental and utility assistance to prevent homelessness. Increase affordable, low-income and permanent supportive housing stock and provide tenant education so homeless families with poor rental and credit histories can access permanent housing
- Nutrition—address food insecurity including longer-term emergency food assistance. Increase the number of in-home child care providers who access USDA child nutrition program
- Youth issues—establish after-school programs in middle schools and a shelter program for runaway and homeless youth
- Health issues—increase free and low-cost mental health services, including access to medication and medication management



- Early childhood issues—increase the number of Head Start slots and establish an Early Head Start program
- Substance issues—increase the number of free and reduced cost detoxification and inpatient services; increase the number of employers who support a Drug Free Workplace
- Child care issues—increase the number of affordable child care slots for low-income working parents; increase the availability of training for providers to assure quality child care
- Energy issues—increase energy conservation skills and client case management to prevent shut-off and reduce the impact of rising energy costs; increase the number of households receiving assistance to prevent or restore energy services
- Information and referral—family support programs are needed as many families have difficulty accessing community services and often need help with identifying their needs and developing an action plan. Some families need advocacy and case management to ensure they receive the services they need and that their goals are met. This is particularly true in rural communities where there are fewer services and the lack of transportation and employment options are more readily apparent

### **Recent efforts**

Energy programs prevented 168 household energy shut-offs; restored services for 94 households and weatherized 33 households that resulted in significant energy savings and increased comfort and safety for individuals and families.

The Ready-Set-Read! program, funded through Polk County Children and Families Commission, provides child care providers with an opportunity to receive quality training in early literacy utilizing the Early Words Curriculum. Attendees of this class receive parent literacy packets to take and share with the families in their child care programs. This project combines quality training with follow-up measures to insure provider implementation of proven strategies to help children learn.

Recognizing the need for a comprehensive approach to address homelessness, community partners representing business, government and non-profits have come together to begin the development of a “10 Year Plan to End Homelessness.” The focus of this effort looks at existing resources and develops a variety of deliverables to meet the varying needs of individuals and families.

## County income

According to the Bureau of Economic Analysis, Polk County's per capita personal income was \$26,671 in 2004, 87 percent of the state average of \$30,561, and 81 percent of the national average, \$33,050. Per capita income in Polk County rose 3.1 percent between 2003 and 2004. The 1994 to 2004 trend in per capita income shows 4.0 percent average annual growth. Average earnings per job for 2004 were \$25,237 in Polk 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 Polk County and the corresponding income those families would need to meet their expenses. To learn more about this basic family budget, see Appendix 2.

### Polk 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	\$616	\$895	\$616	\$895
Food	\$303	\$580	\$479	\$722
Child care	\$508	\$1,075	\$508	\$1,075
Transportation	\$337	\$337	\$473	\$473
Health care	\$239	\$249	\$324	\$360
Other necessities	\$285	\$457	\$339	\$501
Taxes	\$264	\$568	\$277	\$106
Basic family budget needed/month	\$2,552	\$4,161	\$3,016	\$4,132
Basic family budget total/annual	\$30,624	\$49,932	\$36,192	\$49,584
Hourly wage needed for basic family budget	\$14.72	\$24.01	\$17.40	\$23.84
Poverty threshold	\$12,830	\$19,350	\$16,090	\$22,610
% Of basic budget	41.9%	38.8%	44.5%	45.6%

## What the poverty threshold buys

Families with incomes at the poverty level in Polk County could afford 38.8 percent to 45.6 percent of this basic family budget.

## Polk County

### Wages

According to the Oregon Employment Department, the average monthly earnings in Polk County in 2005 were \$2,262. Of all sectors, federal government paid the highest monthly average of \$3,919 and leisure and hospitality paid the lowest monthly average of \$878.

The following chart illustrates a family's ability to be self-sufficient based on earnings of average wages for Polk County. The two-worker scenario relies on both workers earning average wages. Using this basic budget, Polk County's 2005 average wage could not fund the basic family budget for a single adult with one child or more.

#### Polk County wages and the basic family budget

	1 worker	1 worker	2 workers	2 workers
Average monthly wage (AMW)*	\$2,262	\$2,262	\$4,524	\$4,524
	1 adult and 1 child	1 adult and 3 children	2 adults and 1 child	2 adults and 3 children
Self sufficiency wage (SSW)**	\$2,552	\$4,161	\$3,016	\$4,132
Difference (AMW-SSW)	-\$290	-\$2,262	\$1,508	\$392
Wages as % of self sufficiency	88.6%	54.4%	150.0%	109.5%
* Source: Oregon Covered Employment and Wages 2005				
**Based on basic family budget for Polk County				

### Employment

According to Oregon's Covered Employment and Wages, Polk County added 1,597 positions from 2001 to 2005.

### Largest three industries in Polk County 2005

	Number of positions 2005	Number of positions gained/lost	Average annual pay*
Local government	3,577	+ 109	\$32,575
Manufacturing	2,538	+ 19	\$32,921
Education and health services	2,198	+ 189	\$22,594

\*Oregon Covered Employment and Wages 2005

Of all industries, state government experienced the largest job growth—48.5 percent—from 1,051 positions in 2001 to 1,561 in 2005. Federal government saw the largest decrease—25.2 percent—from 119 positions to 89 positions.

### 2000 US Census information

#### Number of persons below poverty level (poverty rate)

	1989	1999	% Change (rate difference)
Polk County	6,475 (13.6%)	6,943 (11.5%)	7.2% (-2.1%)
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	12.0%	13.0%	10.6%	14.2%
1989	13.6%	17.2%	13.2%	8.2%
1999	11.5%	13.9%	12.2%	5.5%

Source: US Census

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

## Polk County

### Polk 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	89.3% (54,057)	80.7% (5,602)	10.4%	12.3%
Black	0.3% (168)	0.7% (52)	31.0%	53.0%
American Indian	1.6% (958)	3.0% (209)	21.8%	14.8%
Asian/Pacific Islander	1.2%/0.2% (741/136)	1.5%/0.1% (102/6)	13.8%/4.4%	23.0%*
Other	4.6% (2,776)	10.7% (743)	26.8%	38.1%
2 or more races	2.7% (1,690)	3.3% (229)	13.6%	NA
Hispanic origin	9.0% (5,421)	22.4% (1,557)	28.7%	36.6%

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

### Polk County families in poverty

Number below poverty level (poverty rate)	1979	1989	1999	% Change 1979-1999 (rate difference)
All families	1,000 (8.2%)	1,093 (8.4%)	1,028 (6.3%)	2.8% (-1.9%)
With children younger than 18	723 (11.4%)	864 (13.0%)	881 (11.2%)	21.9% (-0.2%)
Single women with children younger than 18	376 (44.2%)	453 (41.2%)	487 (35.7%)	29.5% (-8.5%)

Source: US Census

### Poverty and Polk County families

In 1999, 1,028 of Polk County's 16,205 families lived in poverty (6.3 percent). Of the 1,028 families in poverty, 61.9 percent (636 families) had a household member who worked and 13.1 percent (135 families) had a full-time year-round worker.

Poverty Measures	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Population	62,380	63,824	64,806	66,148	67,871	70,295
People living below poverty level-%	11.5% <sup>1</sup>	NA	NA	NA	NA	19.9% <sup>2</sup>
Median income	\$42,311 <sup>1</sup>	NA	NA	NA	NA	\$43,963 <sup>2</sup>
Unemployment rate	4.8	5.7	6.2	6.7	6.4	5.5
8th grade drug use	18.9%	NA	23.1%	17.3%	16.1%	14.7%
HS dropout	5.9%	4.7%	4.7%	4.1%	3.5%	NA
Teen pregnancy per 1,000 ages 10-17	7.8	11.4	8.5	8.0	NA	NA
Prenatal care	81.2%	78.9%	79.5%	78.6%	NA	NA
Child care available per 100 children under 13	17.0	17.2	17.9	NA	13.2	NA
Homeownership rate	68.4%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Renters with 30% or more rental burden-%	49.3%	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Polk County Services	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
One night shelter counts	64	68	181	151	116*	110
New units created with OHCS funding resources	12	40	1	0	3*	74
OHCS funding for affordable housing	\$361,300	\$365,860	\$414,000	\$0	\$196,163*	\$4.6 m
Home loans for low-income households-#	8	16	14	13	17	13
Home loans for low-income households-\$	\$699,510	\$1.4 m	\$1.3 m	\$1.3 m	\$1.9 m	\$1.6 m
Households receiving energy assistance-#	912	722	817	681	726	NA
Units weatherized-#	NA	NA	NA	49	35	42
Population enrolled in the Oregon Health Plan-%	NA	NA	17.0%	13.6%	10.9%*	10.5%
Students eligible for free/reduced lunch-#	2,428	2,458	2,630	2,789	2,547	NA
Students eligible free/reduced lunch-%	37.3%	38.0%	41.6%	43.9%	39.9%	NA
Population receiving Food Stamps-%	NA	NA	13.8%	12.8%	8.7%*	8.8%
Population receiving TANF-%	NA	NA	2.6%	1.8%	1.0%*	1.2%
Population receiving DHS services-%	NA	21.2%	22.0%	20.9%	NA	NA

NA = Not Available

\*Cannot be compared to previous years due to changes in data collection

<sup>1</sup> 2000 US Census<sup>2</sup> American Community Survey