



Oregon

John A. Kitzhaber, MD, Governor



Housing and Community Services

North Mall Office Building
725 Summer Street NE, Suite B
Salem, OR 97301-1266
(503) 986-2000



FAX (503) 986-2020
TTY (503) 986-2100
www.ohcs.oregon.gov

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Contacts:

Ann Brown, 503-986-2122, ann.brown@state.or.us

Tim Fitzgerald, 503-986-2057, timothy.fitzgerald@state.or.us

Oregon Homeless Population Increases Again

Salem –Homelessness in Oregon has continued to increase over the past two years, according to Oregon’s January 2011 Point-in-Time count. Unemployment is the chief cause for homelessness, followed closely by underemployment, or families’ inability to afford rent, which continues to be out of reach for too many working Oregonians.

During January’s one-night count, OHCS’s partners across the state identified 22,116 people experiencing homelessness. That number represents a 29 percent increase over the one-night count conducted in January 2009. Approximately half of the increase is due to better reporting by counties.

“Everyone deserves a place to live,” said Rick Crager, OHCS acting director. “Children deserve a safe, warm home and families need to stay together in a secure environment to succeed.”

During the count, 3277, or 23 percent of all households surveyed, attributed their homelessness to unemployment.

Another 3165 households, or 22 percent, attributed their homelessness to an inability to pay rent.

In 2009, according to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, 133,660 low-income renter households in Oregon paid more than half of their monthly cash income for housing costs.

When housing costs consume more than half of household income, low-income families are at greater risk of becoming homeless. About 39 percent of those cost-burdened renters are elderly or people with disabilities, while 25 percent are families with children.

“Affordable housing and rental assistance are key solutions to the problem of homelessness in our state,” said Crager. “We are committed to preserving as many units of affordable housing as we can to keep families safe, secure and stable.”

- Of the 22,116 individuals experiencing homelessness, 6686, or 30 percent, were children under the age of 18. Of those children, 612 were unaccompanied by an adult.
- Of those who answered the related questions during the one-night survey:
- 1,370 children, or 20 percent, had been homeless for six months or less;

- 590 children, or 9 percent, had been homeless for more than a year;
- 242 children, or 4 percent, had been homeless for more than two years.
- 1,617 adults had been homeless for more than two years.
- The average length of homelessness for children was nine months.
- The average length of homelessness for all people across the state was 18 months.

The number is still not a full picture of homelessness in Oregon, however, because some counties did not participate in the January 2011 one-night count.

Overall, the number of people experiencing homelessness in Oregon would have been higher were it not for the state's receipt of \$14.9 million of Homeless Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing Program (HPRP) funds.

In 2010, HPRP served a total of 9,894 people who were experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness.

See statewide Point-in-Time report:

http://www.ohcs.oregon.gov/OHCS/RA_2011_Point_In_Time_Homeless_Counts.shtml

Media contacts for county reports:

Baker, Grant, Union and Wallowa Counties

Community Connection of Northeast Oregon (CCNO)

Jeff Hensley

541-963-3186, jeff@ccno.org

Benton, Lincoln and Linn Counties

Community Services Consortium (CSC)

Cindy Pratt

541-758-2798, cpratt@communityservices.us

Clackamas County

Clackamas County Social Services Division (CSSDD)

Elizabeth Bartell

503-655-8640, lizb@co.clackamas.or.us

Clatsop County

Clatsop Community Action (CCA)

George Sabol, Executive Director

503-325-1400, director@ccaservices.org

Columbia County

Community Action Team (CAT)

Martha Olmstead

503-366-6559, molmstead@cat-team.org

Coos and Curry Counties

Oregon Coast Community Action (ORCCA)

Patricia Gouveia

541-888-1514, pgouveia@orcca.us

Crook, Deschutes and Jefferson Counties

Kenny LaPoint

541-323-7419, <mailto:klapoint@housing-works.org>

Douglas and Josephine Counties

United Community Action Network (UCAN)

Kelly Wessels

541-956-4470, Kelly.wessels@ucancap.org

Gilliam, Morrow, Umatilla and Wheeler Counties

Community Action Program of East Central Oregon (CAPECO)

Marci McMurphy

541-276-5073, mcmurphy@capeco-works.org

Harney and Malheur Counties

Community In Action (CinA)

Michele Grimaldo

541-889-1060, michele@communityinaction.info

Hood River, Sherman and Wasco Counties

Mid-Columbia Community Action Council (MCCAC)

Jim Slusher

541-298-5131, js@mccac.com

Jackson County

Aging Community Coordinated Enterprises and Support Services (ACCESS, Inc.)

Edward J. Angeletti, Planning Director

541-774-4330, ejangeletti@access-inc.org

Klamath and Lake Counties

Klamath Lake Community Action Services (KLCAS)

Donna J. Bowman, Director

541-882-3500 *8 ext. 13, dbowman@klcas.org

Lane County

Lane County Human Services Commission (LCHHS)

Pearl Wolfe

541-682-4629, Pearl.WOLFE@co.lane.or.us

Marion and Polk Counties (two contacts)

Mid-Willamette Valley Community Action Agency (MWVCAA)

Carla Cary

503-399-9080, Carla.cary@mwvcaa.org

Diane Merry

503-399-9080, Diane.merry@mwvcaa.org

Multnomah County (two contacts)

Althea Milechman

503-988-6805, althea.m.milechman@multco.us

Maileen Hamto, Portland Housing Bureau

503.823.3239, maileen.hamto@portlandoregon.gov

Tillamook County

Community Action Resource Enterprises, Inc. (CARE)
Erin Skaar, Executive Director
503-842-0249, eskaar@careinc.org

Washington County

Community Action Organization (CAO)
Annette Evans, Homeless Program Coordinator, Chair, Housing and Supportive Services Network (HSSN)
Phone: 503-846-4760, Annette_Evans@co.washington.or.us

Yamhill County (two contacts)

Yamhill Community Action Partnership (YCAP)
Lee Means
503-883-4172, mlee@ycap.info

Lindsay Combs
503-883-4172, LindsayC@yamhillcap.org

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