

Major findings

According to the 2000 Census, median income in Harney County was lower than the state average. The county's unemployment rate rose from 9.5 in 2000 to 11.3 in 2003. Of those earning a paycheck, 20 percent earned less than \$14,999. Of those who rented in Harney County, 51.1 percent paid 30 percent or more of their income on rental costs.

Harney County experienced an increase in the number of persons living in poverty and the overall percent of the population living in poverty. Of those living in poverty in 1999, 42.4 percent earned 50 percent or less of the federal poverty threshold.

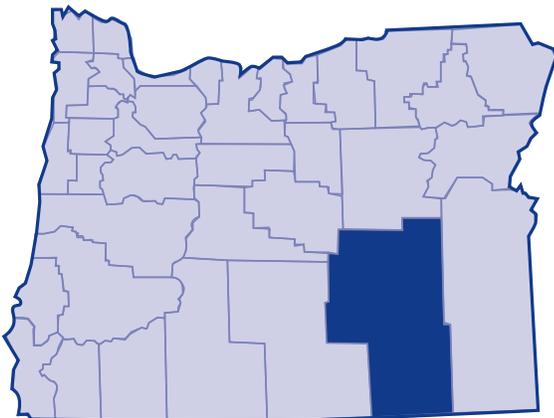
One group most affected by poverty was children. In 1999, 14.6 percent of children 5 years and younger lived in poverty. Over half of the county's families headed by single mothers with children younger than 5 lived in poverty.

In 2003, 26.7 percent of Harney County residents received services from the Department of Human Services.¹

Low-income needs

The Harney County Commission and other community partners set the following priorities for the county's low-income population as follows:

- Promote 40 Developmental Assets campaign
- Establish a home visitation plan that is a continuum of support from birth to 18
- Increase the number of preschool programs and registered childcare facilities in Harney County
- To implement a free before-school program for Slater Elementary students in grades 1-3
- Increasing the hours of operation of the Harney County Boys and Girls Club
- Provide intervention to students in the junior high school and high school identified as "high risk" by trained school counselors and teachers
- Reduce the stigmatization of parent education
- Open a local alternative school program
- Open ten detention/treatment beds in local regional detention facility
- Hire a dedicated full time adolescent/family clinician



Harney County

Growth

According to the 2000 Census, Harney County grew 7.8 percent from 1989 to 1999. The US Census Bureau determined the poverty status of 7,429 county residents and found that 11.8 percent (875 people) lived below the poverty threshold. This is an increase of 18.6 percent in the number of persons living in poverty (738 people) in 1989. The overall percent of Harney County's population living in poverty increased from 1989 to 1999, as well as the number of people living in poverty.

20-year Trend

In the 20 years after 1979, the poverty rate in Harney County increased from 8.9 percent of the population to 11.8 percent. The number of persons in poverty rose from 732 people to 875 people. From 1979 to 1999, Harney County's poverty rates increased to equal those of the state and nation.

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 14.6 percent. Children younger than 18 years of age experienced poverty at 12.9 percent. People 18 to 64 experienced the lowest rate at 10.8 percent. Over the 20-year period from 1979 to 1999, the rate of poverty was consistently lowest for people 18 to 64.

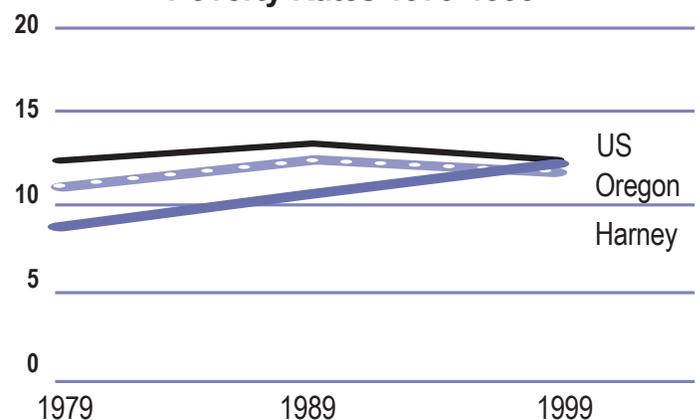
Poverty in Selected Communities

Number of persons below poverty level
(poverty rate)

	1989	1999	Percent Change (rate difference)
Harney County	738 (10.6%)	875 (11.8%)	18.6% (1.2%)
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%)

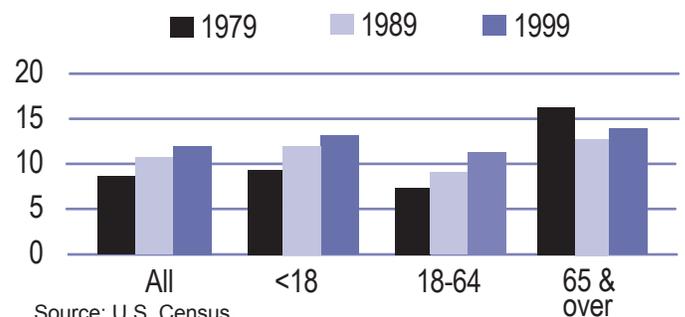
Source: U.S. Census. County numbers have been rounded and, therefore, may not add exactly to totals.

Poverty Rates 1979-1999



Source: U.S. Census.

Rate of Poverty by Age



Source: U.S. Census.

Harney County

Poverty & Harney County Families

In 1999, 180 Harney County families lived in poverty (8.6 percent). Of the families in poverty, 52.2 percent (94 families) had a householder who worked and 19.4 percent (35 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 11 percent. Families with a child 5 years and younger experienced poverty at a higher rate of 14.5 percent. The rate for families with children headed by single mothers was 28.4 percent and was even higher with younger children (younger than 5 years) at 55.2 percent.

The poverty rate for married couples with children younger than 18 was lower at 4.9 percent. Although the number of female-headed households with children (no husband present) who lived in poverty increased, the overall percent decreased from 52.1 percent in 1979 to 28.4 percent in 1999.

Poverty and Race/ Ethnicity

Among racial/ethnic groups², White residents comprised the majority of people in poverty at 80.1 percent. When examining poverty based on race/ethnicity, however, the poverty rate among White was 10.4 percent. Pacific Islander and American Indian experienced disproportionately higher rates of poverty: 42.1 percent for Pacific Islander and 36.1 percent for American Indian. From 1989 to 1999, poverty improved for American Indian and Other. Black and Hispanic Origin remained the same.

Harney County Families in Poverty

Number below Poverty Level (Poverty Rate)	1979			1989		1999		% Change '79-'99 (rate difference)
	1979	1989	1999	1979	1989	1979	1989	
All Families	181 (7.8%)	171 (8.3%)	180 (8.6%)					-0.6% (0.8%)
With Children under 18	113 (9.0%)	118 (11.3%)	100 (11.0%)					-11.5% (2.0%)
Female-headed with children under 18	37 (52.1%)	60 (42.6%)	46 (28.4%)					24.3% (-23.7%)

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

Harney County 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	90.5% (6,724)	80.1% (701)	10.4%	9.1%
Black	0.1% (7)	0.0% (0)	NA	NA
American Indian	3.6% (266)	11.0% (96)	36.1%	38.2%
Asian/Pacific Islander	0.7%/0.3% (50/19)	0.6%/0.9% (5/8)	10.0%/42.1%	19.6%*
Other	0.8% (62)	1.7% (15)	24.2%	40.7%
2 or More Races	4.1% (301)	5.7% (50)	16.5%	NA
Hispanic Origin	4.4% (329)	8.1% (71)	21.6%	21.6%

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

Harney County

County Income

On a per capita basis, Harney County's personal income was \$22,382 in 2002, about 78 percent of the state average of \$28,792, and 72 percent of the national average, \$30,906. Per capita income in Harney County rose 3.6 percent between 2001 and 2002. The 10-year trend, from 1992 to 2002, of per capita income shows average annual growth of 3.2 percent. Average earnings per job for 2001 were \$23,680 in Harney County compared to \$33,063 for the state.³

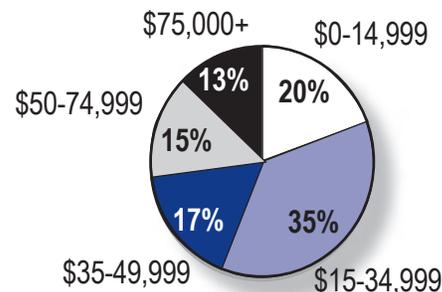
Income Levels and Poverty Thresholds

Segmenting census data by income reveals more detail about the people experiencing poverty in Harney County. The 2000 Census showed that 371 people or 42.4 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, 33.2 percent of Harney County's population, or 2,470 people earned below 185 percent of the poverty threshold.

Public Assistance

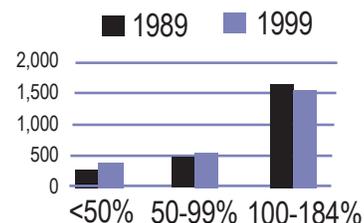
Participation in public assistance programs serves as an indirect measure-or indicator-of the extent of poverty and the measures taken to serve the public. According to the 2000 Census, 97 households or 3.2 percent of all households in Harney County reported public assistance income. The average amount of public assistance income for 1999 was \$5,649. The 20-year trend showed a decrease in households that reported receiving public assistance income, from 154 households or 5.2 percent of all households in 1979.

1999 Household Income Distribution-Harney County



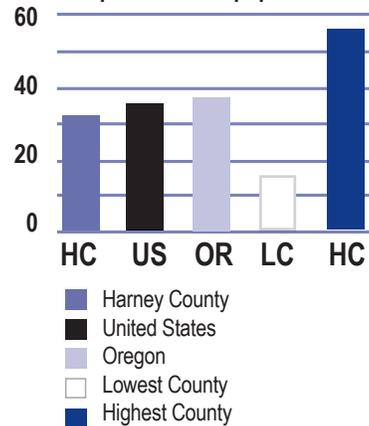
Source: U.S. Census Note: The median household income in Harney County was \$30,957 in 1999 compared to \$22,334 in 1989 (38.6 percent increase).

Number of Persons in Poverty Threshold Percentiles



Source: U.S. Census

Public Assistance in Oregon Rate per thousand population



Source: U.S. Census.

Harney County

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. The following chart outlines typical expenses for four family types in Harney County and the corresponding income those families would need to meet their expenses.

One adult who earned median family income in Harney County could not afford the basic family expenses for themselves and one child.

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 Harney County could afford 45.4 to 49.8 percent of this basic family budget.

Wages

According to the Oregon Employment Department, the average weekly wage in Harney County is \$432.12. The federal government had the highest weekly average of \$718.95 and wholesale trade had the lowest weekly average of \$267.43.

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

One adult with one child and who worked full-time earning average wages in Harney County could not afford the basic family expenses.

Harney 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	\$477	\$657	\$477	\$657
Food	\$230	\$489	\$388	\$647
Child Care	\$317	\$720	\$317	\$720
Transportation	\$197	\$197	\$277	\$277
Health Care	\$245	\$245	\$293	\$293
Other Necessities	\$219	\$355	\$268	\$404
Taxes	\$237	\$452	\$386	\$522
Basic Family Budget Needed/Monthly	\$1,922	\$3,115	\$2,406	\$3,520
Basic Family Budget Total/Annual	\$23,069	\$37,375	\$28,867	\$42,244
Median Family Income (Census 2000)	\$22,149	\$22,149	42,802	\$42,802
Median Family Income as % of Basic Budget	96.0%	59.3%	148.3%	101.3%

Poverty and Harney 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
Poverty threshold	\$11,483	\$16,954	\$13,410	\$19,882
% of Basic Budget	49.8%	45.4%	46.5%	47.1%

Harney County Wages and the Basic Budget

	1 Worker 1 Child	1 Worker 3 Children	2 Workers 1 Child	2 Workers 3 Children
Average Monthly Wage (AMW)*	\$1,858	\$1,858	\$3,716	\$3,716
Self Sufficiency Wage (SSW)**	\$1,941	\$3,115	\$2,406	\$3,520
Difference (SSW-AMW)	-\$83	-\$1,257	\$1,310	\$196
Wage as % of Self Sufficiency	95.7%	59.6%	154.4%	105.6%

*Source: 1999 Oregon Covered Employment and Payrolls.
** Based on Basic Family Budget for Harney County.

Harney County

Poverty Measures	1995	2000	2001	2002	2003
Population	7,060 ¹	7,609 ²	7,418	7,326	7,184
% of People living below poverty level	10.6% ¹	11.8% ²	NA	NA	NA
Median Income	\$22,334 ¹	\$30,957 ²	NA	NA	NA
Unemployment Rate	11.1	9.5	14.1	9.8	11.3
8th Grade Drug Use	17.3% ³	14.0%	NA	23.9%	NA
HS Dropout	5.4% ⁴	6.9%	2.7%	0.9%	NA
Teen Pregnancy per 1,000 ages 10-17	20.9	15.2	4.4	4.2	NA
Prenatal Care	81.3%	80.4%	89.0%	84.4%	NA
Child Care available per 100 children under 13	0	15.3	6.5	9.1	NA
Homeownership Rate	70.3% ¹	72.7% ²	NA	NA	NA
% Renters with 30% or more rental burden	35.4% ¹	51.1% ²	NA	NA	NA
Harney County Services	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
One Night Shelter Count	15	14	18	15	0
# of New Units created with OHCS Funding	0	0	0	0	0
OHCS Funding for Subsidized Housing	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$105,000	\$0
# Home Loans for Low-Income Households	4	3	1	2	5
\$ Home Loans for Low-Income Households	\$202,591	\$205,733	\$87,288	\$134,500	\$281,031
# Households Receiving Energy Assistance	NA	354	486	556	557
% of Population enrolled in the Oregon Health Plan	NA	NA	NA	22.1%	
# Students Eligible for Free/Reduced Lunch	642	688	708	709	681
% Students Eligible for Free/Reduced Lunch	43.3%	48.3%	50.7%	50.7%	51.1%
% of Population Receiving Food Stamps	NA	NA	NA	14.3%	
% of Population Receiving TANF	NA	NA	NA	2.7%	
% of Population Receiving DHS Services	NA	NA	32.6%	31.5%	
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 Please see Methodology and Data References section for information on Census Race/Ethnicity Categories.

³ Bureau of Economic Analysis: Regional Economic Accounts