

Hood River County

Major Findings

In the past decade, Hood River County's population grew, residents' incomes rose, and the number of rent-burdened families fell. However, the number of people in poverty, families in poverty, and families with children living in poverty all increased.

The median income grew 51.8 percent, but remained slightly lower than the state average. Residents who spent 30 percent or more of their income on rental costs decreased to just under half of those who rent.

Between 1979 and 1999, the number of families in poverty increased 68.5 percent; the number of families with children living in poverty increased 117.3 percent.

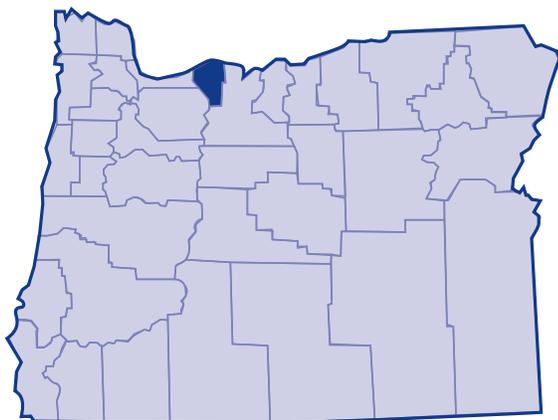
Those of Hispanic Origin and Other faced disproportionately higher rates of poverty. Over a quarter of each of these groups lived in poverty in 1999.

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

Low-income needs

Mid-Columbia Community Action Council prioritized the needs of the low-income population in Hood River County as follows²:

- Employment and jobs
- Rent/mortgage assistance
- Case management or follow up for recipients of assistance programs
- Transitional housing, including services for those with mental health issues and those who have been recently released from prison or drug/alcohol treatment centers
- Utility assistance
- Quality child care centers
- Public transportation available to everyone with cost based on a sliding scale (buses, medical vans, etc.)
- Renter education for low income tenants with poor rental history
- Safe homes for victims of domestic violence



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Growth

According to the 2000 Census, Hood River County grew 20.8 percent between 1989 to 1999. The US Census Bureau determined the poverty status of 19,986 county residents and found that 14.2 percent (2,845 people) lived below the poverty threshold. This is an increase of 9 percent in the number of persons living in poverty (2,610 people) in 1989. The overall percent of Hood River County's population living in poverty decreased from 1989 to 1999, but the number of people living in poverty did not.

20-year Trend

In the 20 years after 1979, the poverty rate in Hood River County increased from 9.5 percent of the population to 14.2 percent. The number of persons in poverty rose from 1,477 people to 2,845 people. Following a substantial increase in poverty rates from 1979 to 1989, Hood River County's poverty rate, although declining, remained higher than the state and national poverty rates from 1989 to 1999.

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 22.1 percent. Children younger than 18 years of age experienced poverty at 18.7 percent. People 65 and older experienced the lowest rate of 7.8 percent. Over the 20-year period from 1979 to 1999, the rate of poverty improved for people 65 and older; it increased for all other age categories.

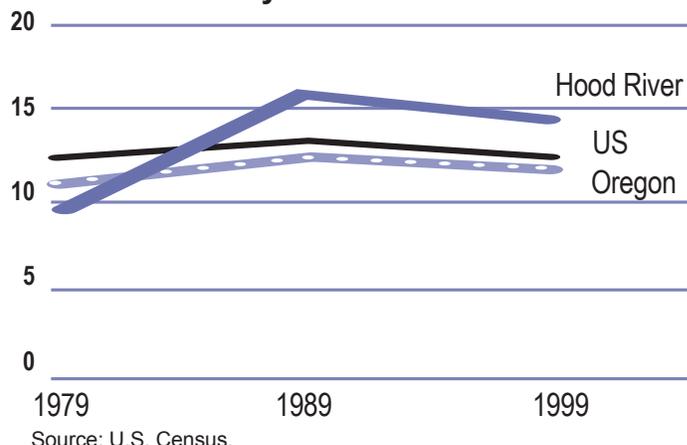
Poverty in Selected Communities

Number of persons below poverty level (poverty rate)

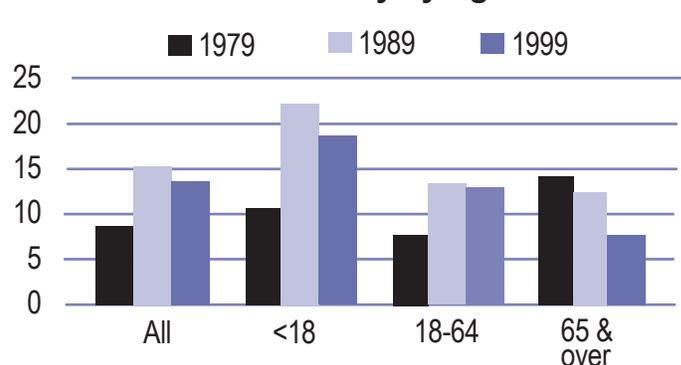
| | 1989 | 1999 | Percent Change (rate difference) |
|-------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Hood River County | 2,610 (15.7%) | 2,845 (14.2%) | 9.0% (-1.4%) |
| Oregon Statewide | 344,867 (12.4%) | 388,740 (11.6%) | 12.7% (-0.8%) |
| United States | 31,742,864 (13.1%) | 33,899,812 (12.4%) | 6.8% (-0.7%) |

Source: US Census. Calculations may not add due to rounding.

Poverty Rates 1979-1999



Rate of Poverty by Age



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Poverty & Hood River County Families

In 1999, 514 Hood River County families lived in poverty (9.8 percent). Of the families in poverty, 75.9 percent (390 families) had a householder who worked and 19.1 percent (98 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 14.1 percent. Families with a child 5 years and younger experienced poverty at a higher rate of 22.1 percent. The rate for families with children headed by single mothers was 32.4 percent and was even higher with younger children (less than 5 years) at 60.2 percent.

The poverty rate for married couples with children younger than 18 was lower at 10.3 percent. From 1979 to 1999, the number of families with children younger than 18 who lived in poverty increased from 185 families in 1979 to 402 families in 1999.

Hood River County Families in Poverty

| Number below Poverty Level (Poverty Rate) | | | | % Change |
|---|---------------|----------------|----------------|---------------------------|
| | 1979 | 1989 | 1999 | '79-'99 (rate difference) |
| All Families | 305 (6.9%) | 491 (10.7%) | 514 (9.8%) | 68.5% (2.9%) |
| With Children under 18 | 185 (8.0%) | 383 (16.7%) | 402 (14.1%) | 117.3% (6.1%) |
| Female-headed with children under 18 | 98 (34.1%) | 118 (42.0%) | 157 (32.4%) | 60.2% (-1.7%) |

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

Poverty and Race/Ethnicity

Among racial/ethnic groups³, White residents comprised the majority of people in poverty at 64.5 percent. When examining poverty based on race/ethnicity, however, the poverty rate among White was 11.7 percent. Other and Hispanic Origin experienced disproportionately higher rates of poverty. The poverty rate among Other was 27.9 percent, while Hispanic Origin had a 34.0 percent rate. From 1989 to 1999, the poverty rate for American Indian increased.

Hood River County and Race/Ethnicity

| Race/Ethnicity | % Total 1999 Population (population) | % Poverty 1999 Population by Race (poverty population) | Poverty Rate 1999 | Poverty Rate by Race 1989 |
|------------------------|--------------------------------------|--|-------------------|---------------------------|
| White | 78.4% (15,673) | 64.5% (1,834) | 11.7% | 13.7% |
| Black | 0.3% (51) | 0.0% (0) | 0.0% | 16.3% |
| American Indian | 0.9% (179) | 0.9% (25) | 14.0% | 13.9% |
| Asian/Pacific Islander | 1.5%/0.1% (294/13) | 0.9%/0.0% (25/0) | 8.5%/0.0% | 7.0%* |
| Other | 16.3% (3,263) | 32.0% (909) | 27.9% | 51.6% |
| 2 or More Races | 2.6% (513) | 1.8% (52) | 10.1% | NA |
| Hispanic Origin | 24.6% (4,921) | 58.8% (1,672) | 34.0% | 41.4% |

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

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County Income

On a per capita basis, Hood River County's personal income was \$24,151 in 2002, about 84 percent of the state average of \$28,792, and 78 percent of the national average, \$30,906. Per capita income in Hood River County rose 2.7 percent between 2001 and 2002. The 10-year trend, from 1992 to 2002, in per capita income shows average annual growth of 3.4 percent. Average earnings per job for 2001 were \$23,680 in Hood River County compared to \$33,063 for the state.⁴

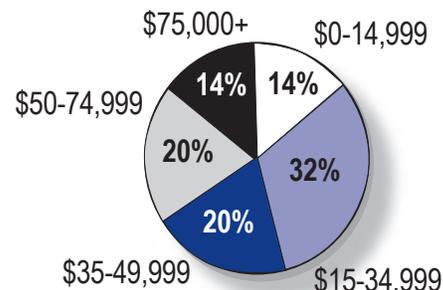
Poverty Thresholds

Segmenting census data by income reveals more detail about the people experiencing poverty in Hood River County. The 2000 Census showed that 930 people or 32.7 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, 33.7 percent of Hood River County's population, or 6,730 people earned below 185 percent of the poverty threshold.

Public Assistance

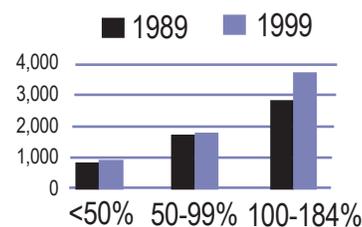
Participation in public assistance programs serves as an indirect measure-or indicator-of the extent of poverty and the measures taken to serve the public. According to the 2000 Census, 232 households or 3.2 percent of all households in Hood River County reported public assistance income. The average amount of public assistance income for 1999 was \$2,595. The 20-year trend showed a decrease in households that reported receiving public assistance income, from 306 households or 5.1 percent of all households in 1979.

1999 Household Income Distribution-Hood River County



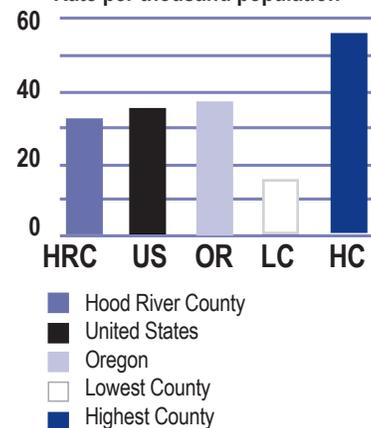
Source: U.S. Census Note: The median household income in Hood River County was \$38,326 in 1999 compared to \$25,242 in 1989 (51.8 percent increase).

Number of Persons in Poverty Threshold Percentiles



Source: U.S. Census

Public Assistance in Oregon Rate per thousand population



Source: U.S. Census.

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Basic Family Budget

According to US Department of Agriculture statistics released in October 1999, about 12.6 percent of Oregon households had difficulty meeting their basic need for food. The following chart outlines typical expenses for four family types in Hood River County and the corresponding income those families would need to meet their expenses.

Only one of the family types—two working adults with one child—could afford this basic family budget at Hood River’s median family income.

To learn more about this basic family budget, see Methodology and Data References section.

Hood River 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 | \$558 | \$726 | \$558 | \$726 |
| Food | \$230 | \$489 | \$388 | \$647 |
| Child Care | \$412 | \$891 | \$412 | \$891 |
| Transportation | \$197 | \$197 | \$277 | \$277 |
| Health Care | \$245 | \$245 | \$293 | \$293 |
| Other Necessities | \$244 | \$377 | \$293 | \$426 |
| Taxes | \$403 | \$566 | \$472 | \$660 |
| Basic Family Budget Needed/Monthly | \$2,289 | \$3,491 | \$2,693 | \$3,920 |
| Basic Family Budget Total/Annual | \$27,466 | \$41,891 | \$32,312 | \$47,035 |
| Median Family Income (Census 2000) | \$23,366 | \$23,366 | \$41,930 | \$41,930 |
| Median Family Income as % of Basic Budget | 85.1% | 55.8% | 129.8% | 89.1% |

What the Poverty Threshold Buys

Families at the poverty level in Hood River County could afford 40.5 to 42.3 percent of this basic family budget.

Poverty and Hood River County’s Basic 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 | 41.8% | 40.5% | 41.5% | 42.3% |

Wages

According to the Oregon Employment Department, the average weekly wage in Hood River County was \$396.98. The federal government had the highest weekly average of \$686.53 and agriculture, forestry and fish had the lowest weekly average of \$287.30.

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

At the average monthly wage, only the family with two working adults and one child could afford this basic family budget.

Hood River 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)* | \$1,707 | \$1,707 | \$3,414 | \$3,414 |
| Self Sufficiency Wage (SSW)** | \$2,289 | \$3,491 | \$2,693 | \$3,920 |
| Difference (SSW-AMW) | -\$103 | -\$1,318 | \$1,284 | \$136 |
| Wage as % of Self Sufficiency | 74.6% | 48.9% | 126.8% | 87.1% |

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

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| Poverty Measures | 1995 | 2000 | 2001 | 2002 | 2003 |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Population | 16,903 ¹ | 20,411 ² | 20,445 | 20,645 | 20,760 |
| % of People living below poverty level | 15.7% ¹ | 14.2% ² | NA | NA | NA |
| Median Income | \$25,242 ¹ | \$38,326 ² | NA | NA | NA |
| Unemployment Rate | 8.3 | 7.8 | 9.1 | 9.4 | 9.7 |
| 8th Grade Drug Use | 16.2% ³ | 10.9% | NA | 17.9% | NA |
| HS Dropout | 5.5% ⁴ | 5.9% | 2.1% | 2.0% | NA |
| Teen Pregnancy per 1,000 ages 10-17 | 13.7 | 13.8 | 9.8 | 6.4 | NA |
| Prenatal Care | 75.0% | 78.9% | 78.6% | 84.6% | NA |
| Child Care available per 100 children under 13 | 19.5 | 25.5 | 20 | 22.5 | NA |
| Homeownership Rate | 62.1% ¹ | 64.9% ² | NA | NA | NA |
| % Renters with 30% or more rental burden | 52.6% ¹ | 47.6% ² | NA | NA | NA |
| Hood River County Services | 1999 | 2000 | 2001 | 2002 | 2003 |
| One Night Shelter Count | 0 | 0 | 7 | 0 | 8 |
| # of New Units created with OHCS Funding | 60 | 17 | 10 | 63 | 14 |
| OHCS Funding for Subsidized Housing | \$2.2 m | \$220,000 | \$375,000 | \$265,730 | \$202,469 |
| # Home Loans for Low-Income Households | 1 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| \$ Home Loans for Low-Income Households | \$108,560 | \$208,693 | \$0 | \$112,249 | \$0 |
| # Households Receiving Energy Assistance | NA | 546 | 527 | 685 | 573 |
| % of Population enrolled in the Oregon Health Plan | NA | NA | NA | 23.0% | |
| # Students Eligible for Free/Reduced Lunch | 1,673 | 1,641 | 1,749 | 1,831 | 2,146 |
| % Students Eligible for Free/Reduced Lunch | 44.4% | 43.5% | 45.3% | 47.4% | 54.4% |
| % of Population Receiving Food Stamps | NA | NA | NA | 19.1% | |
| % of Population Receiving TANF | NA | NA | NA | 1.3% | |
| % of Population Receiving DHS Services | NA | NA | 28.7% | 29.1% | |
| 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 Mid-Columbia Community Action Council Community Service Block Grant Work Plan for 2003-05.

³ Please see Methodology and Data References section for information on Census Race/Ethnicity Categories.

⁴ Bureau of Economic Analysis: Regional Economic Accounts.