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Citation Details

Byerly, Jack and Jason R. Jurjevich. 2013. "New Census Data Show Poverty on the Rise in Oregon and Nationwide." Metropolitan Knowledge Network (MKN). March.

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New Census Data Show Poverty on the Rise in Oregon and Nationwide

Jack Byerly and Jason Jurjevich

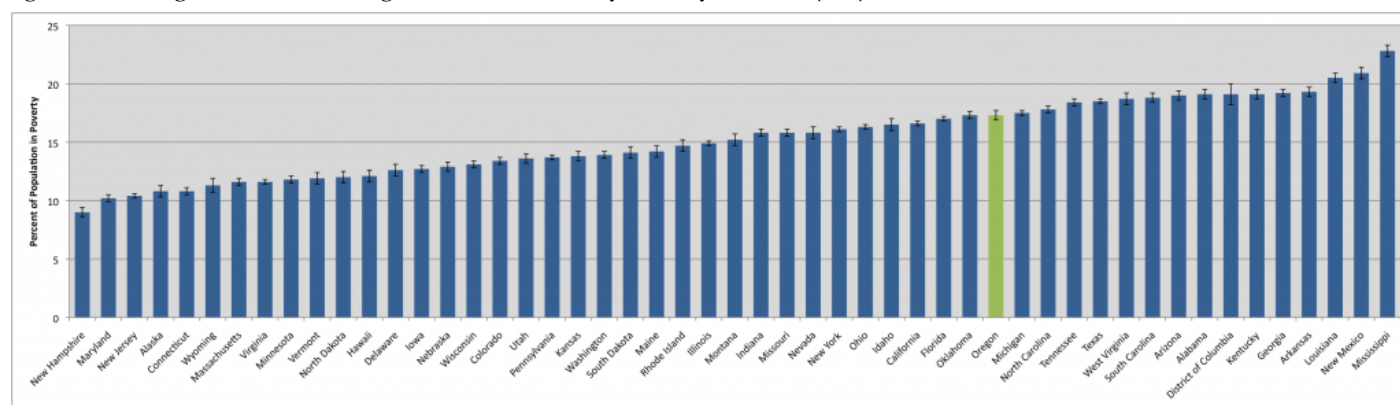
Population Research Center

February 2013

The U.S. Census Bureau's latest Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates (SAIPE), released in December 2012, show an increase in poverty in Oregon and nationwide from 2010 to 2011. During this period, the nation's poverty rate rose from 15.3 percent (/- 0.1 percent) to 15.9 percent (/- 0.1 percent), while the rate in Oregon rose sharply from 15.8 percent (/- 0.3 percent) to 17.3 percent (/- 0.4 percent)[1]. Both the national and state increases are statistically significant. In 2011, Oregon had the sixteenth highest rate of poverty (tied with Oklahoma) among the fifty states and the District of Columbia (see Figure 1).

The new data also estimate the median household income for 2011. Among Oregon households, the median income stood at \$46,876 (/- \$676), compared to the national median income of \$50,502 (/- \$73).

Figure 1: Percentage of Americans Living At or Below the Poverty Level, by U.S. State (2011)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau's 2011 Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates (SAIPE)

Oregon Counties

The 2010 and 2011 SAIPE data for Oregon counties are summarized in Table 1. Three counties experienced statistically significant increases in poverty rates from 2010 to 2011: Washington, Klamath, and Jackson. The only county with a statistically significant decrease was Malheur County, which dropped from 39.5 percent in 2010 (/- 3.6 percent) to 24.5 percent in 2011 (/- 4.6 percent). Despite this sharp drop, however, roughly 1 in 4 Malheur County residents still live at or below the poverty level — the highest of any county in Oregon. Table 2 shows median household income in Oregon counties for 2010 and 2011. The only Oregon county to experience a statistically significant change in median household income for this period was Multnomah County, which saw median household income fall from \$49,534 (/- \$1,451) to \$46,989 (/- \$1,444) (all values are 2011 dollars).

Multnomah County, at 19.4 percent (/- 1.2 percent) in 2011, continues to experience a higher poverty rate than its Portland metro area neighbors. Washington County experienced a statistically significant increase in poverty rates, rising from 9.7 percent (/- 1.3 percent) in 2010 to 12.6 percent (/- 1.2 percent) in 2011. Clackamas County had one of the state's lowest poverty rates in 2011, at 11.0 percent (/- 1.3 percent). Across the Columbia River in Clark County, Washington, the 2011 poverty rate was 13.7 percent (/- 1.3 percent).

About SAIPE

The Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates (SAIPE) are produced annually by the U.S. Census Bureau. Combining data from the decennial census and the ongoing American Community Survey, as well as administrative records such as summaries of federal income tax returns and participation counts for programs such as SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, formerly known as Food Stamps), the Bureau estimates poverty rates and household income for school districts, counties, states, and the nation.

Table 1: Percentage Living in Poverty by Oregon County

	2010		2011		Statistically Significant Change*?
	Percent in Poverty	Margin of Error [MOE] (+/-)	Percent in Poverty	Margin of Error [MOE] (+/-)	
METRO					
Clackamas	10.4%	1.4%	11.0%	1.3%	Increase
Washington	9.7%	1.3%	12.6%	1.2%	
Multnomah	18.0%	1.0%	19.4%	1.2%	
CENTRAL					
Deschutes	14.8%	2.0%	13.8%	2.4%	Increase
Crook	17.4%	3.6%	18.6%	3.4%	
Jefferson	21.1%	4.2%	20.7%	4.4%	
EASTERN					
Baker	20.0%	4.0%	20.0%	3.9%	Decrease
Gilliam	11.4%	2.8%	11.8%	2.7%	
Grant	16.5%	3.6%	17.2%	3.8%	
Harney	19.1%	4.2%	18.6%	4.3%	Increase
Hood River	13.0%	3.1%	14.7%	3.2%	
Klamath	17.4%	3.2%	23.0%	3.0%	
Lake	20.4%	4.5%	20.6%	4.5%	Decrease
Malheur	39.5%	3.6%	24.5%	4.6%	
Morrow	16.7%	3.4%	16.1%	3.4%	
Sherman	13.7%	3.2%	15.0%	3.2%	
Umatilla	15.5%	2.7%	17.7%	3.2%	
Union	16.7%	3.3%	15.8%	2.9%	
Wallowa	16.6%	3.8%	16.0%	3.5%	
Wasco	15.7%	3.6%	17.1%	3.5%	
Wheeler	19.8%	4.7%	20.1%	4.8%	
NORTHWEST					
Clatsop	14.8%	3.1%	18.6%	3.0%	
Columbia	13.4%	2.4%	12.3%	2.3%	
Lincoln	17.0%	3.2%	16.3%	3.2%	
Tillamook	16.0%	3.2%	16.2%	3.4%	
SOUTHERN					
Coos	19.1%	3.4%	19.8%	3.4%	Increase
Curry	16.0%	3.8%	17.9%	3.5%	
Douglas	19.5%	2.8%	18.1%	2.9%	
Jackson	15.7%	2.3%	19.7%	2.3%	
Josephine	18.8%	3.2%	20.8%	3.4%	
VALLEY					
Benton	19.1%	2.0%	21.8%	2.0%	
Lane	19.1%	1.5%	21.1%	1.4%	
Linn	18.1%	2.1%	19.2%	2.4%	
Marion	17.9%	1.8%	20.5%	2.0%	
Polk	15.7%	2.4%	14.1%	2.4%	
Yamhill	14.7%	2.5%	14.1%	2.4%	
*Statistical significance reported at the 90% confidence level					

Source: U.S. Census Bureau's 2010 and 2011 Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates (SAIPE)

Table 2: Median Household Income by Oregon County

	2010^		2011		Statistically Significant Change*?
	Percent in Poverty	Margin of Error [MOE] (+/-)	Percent in Poverty	Margin of Error [MOE] (+/-)	
METRO					
Clackamas	\$59,790	\$2,572	\$58,496	\$2,114	
Washington	\$62,466	\$1,853	\$62,463	\$1,628	
Multnomah	\$49,534	\$1,451	\$46,989	\$1,444	Decrease
CENTRAL					
Deschutes	\$48,103	\$3,126	\$47,924	\$3,128	
Crook	\$41,125	\$3,817	\$37,473	\$3,122	
Jefferson	\$42,179	\$3,583	\$40,910	\$3,213	
EASTERN					
Baker	\$39,063	\$2,915	\$36,877	\$3,642	
Gilliam	\$47,274	\$4,488	\$49,378	\$4,969	
Grant	\$37,953	\$3,358	\$37,191	\$3,741	
Harney	\$37,591	\$3,146	\$35,141	\$3,459	
Hood River	\$51,052	\$4,333	\$48,516	\$4,430	
Klamath	\$38,550	\$2,948	\$36,765	\$2,465	
Lake	\$37,309	\$3,393	\$35,517	\$3,535	
Malheur	\$33,435	\$3,030	\$36,039	\$2,727	
Morrow	\$47,093	\$4,168	\$46,902	\$4,523	
Sherman	\$50,851	\$4,765	\$52,263	\$5,073	
Umatilla	\$45,070	\$2,627	\$43,231	\$3,647	
Union	\$42,492	\$2,184	\$41,510	\$2,881	
Wallowa	\$39,738	\$3,437	\$38,486	\$3,569	
Wasco	\$43,028	\$3,117	\$41,144	\$2,260	
Wheeler	\$32,993	\$3,170	\$32,491	\$3,083	
NORTHWEST					
Clatsop	\$45,630	\$2,951	\$43,544	\$3,433	
Columbia	\$52,308	\$3,934	\$55,646	\$4,212	
Lincoln	\$39,511	\$2,970	\$40,507	\$2,917	
Tillamook	\$42,085	\$3,173	\$41,246	\$3,328	
SOUTHERN					
Coos	\$37,359	\$2,593	\$36,567	\$2,824	
Curry	\$38,162	\$3,194	\$39,958	\$3,109	
Douglas	\$38,159	\$2,310	\$38,196	\$2,515	
Jackson	\$41,885	\$2,149	\$40,013	\$2,419	
Josephine	\$37,242	\$2,626	\$36,269	\$2,868	
VALLEY					
Benton	\$50,708	\$3,987	\$46,272	\$3,204	
Lane	\$41,825	\$1,414	\$40,689	\$968	
Linn	\$44,377	\$2,338	\$42,836	\$2,858	
Marion	\$46,137	\$1,680	\$44,275	\$1,706	
Polk	\$51,067	\$2,941	\$52,277	\$3,493	
Yamhill	\$51,875	\$2,600	\$52,103	\$3,943	
*Statistical significance reported at the 90% confidence level					
^Reported in inflation adjusted 2011 dollars based on the Consumer Price Index (CPI)					

Source: U.S. Census Bureau's 2010 and 2011 Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates (SAIPE)

[1] All comparisons and margins of error are reported at the 90% confidence level.

Special thanks to Risa Proehl, Charles Rynerson and Lisa Yarbrough.