

Winter 2015

Indicators of the Metroscope: Self-Sufficiency

Institute of Portland Metropolitan Studies

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Self-Sufficiency

The Self-Sufficiency Standard (SSS), developed by Dr. Diana Pearce at the University of Washington, improves on federal poverty standards because it takes into account differences in the cost of living based on family structure, the ages of children, and the county of residence. The Institute of Portland Metropolitan Studies (IMS) and Worksystems recently published a report, *Where the Ends Don't Meet in 2014: Measuring Poverty and Self-Sufficiency among Oregon's Families*, by IMS' Elizabeth Morehead and Sheila Martin, that uses the Self-Sufficiency Standard. Statewide 37 percent of households have incomes below the Standard.

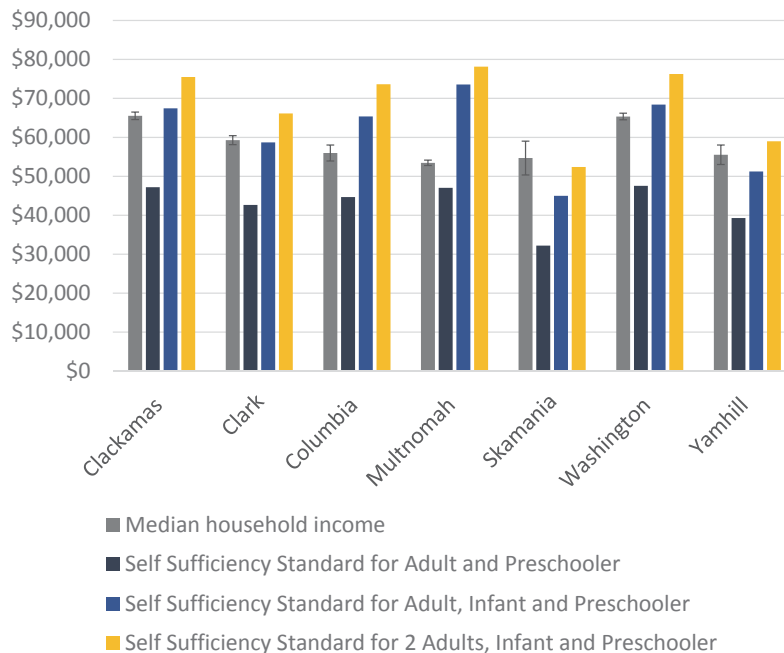
The chart below includes the SSS for three different household types for the metroScape's seven counties. The gray bars indicate median household incomes in 2014. Clackamas and Washington

counties had the highest median household incomes at \$65,521 and \$65,346 respectively, and Multnomah, the region's most populated county, had the lowest at \$53,465.

While it appears that median household incomes, in 2014, were adequate to support households with one adult and a preschooler, they were inadequate for households with two adults, an infant, and a preschooler in all of the counties with the exception of Skamania County (the region's most rural county). In Skamania, the median household income exceeds the Self-Sufficiency Standard for all three household types. Similarly, the median income in Yamhill (another rural county) comes close to meeting the SSS for all three household types.

A detailed analysis of the SSS in Oregon is available at: www.pdx.edu/ims.

Annual Median Income and the Self-Sufficiency Standard for Various Household Types in 2014



Source: Center for Women's Welfare; US Census, American Community Survey Table 19001