

**PROFILES
OF
POVERTY
and HUNGER
IN
OREGON**

2002



Oregon Food Bank (OFB) & The OFB Network of Regional Coordinating Agencies

Our Mission:

To eliminate hunger and its root causes — *because no one should be hungry.*

Our Vision:

Everyone shall have the capacity for ready access to an ample, nutritious, affordable and appropriate food supply through traditional, non-emergency channels. The Oregon Food Bank Network distribution system will continue the recovery of grocery products that would otherwise be wasted to address disasters, individual emergencies, and to help qualified non-profit organizations, which provide food as part of a broader range of services, to stretch their resources.

Our Actions:

Oregon Food Bank is the hub of a unique statewide network of hunger-relief agencies serving Oregon and Clark County, Washington. Oregon Food Bank recovers food from farms, government sources, manufacturers, wholesalers, retailers and individuals, and distributes that food to 18 regional food banks across Oregon. OFB also directly operates the two regional agencies serving the Portland metro area, distributing food to food pantries, soup kitchens, shelters and other programs helping low-income individuals in Multnomah, Clackamas, Clark (WA) and Washington Counties. Oregon Food Bank also works to eliminate the root causes of hunger through advocacy and public education.

October, 2002

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Table of Contents

Executive Summary.....	4-6
Introduction.....	7
The Need for Emergency Food Assistance.....	8
Demographic Profile	9-10
Age	9
Household Size	9
Household Composition	10
Race/Ethnicity	10
Poverty/Hunger Factors	11-22
Income	11
Basic Family Budget	12
Employment	13
Child Care	14
Education	16
Housing.....	15
Health	17
Federal Programs	18-19
Hunger Statistics and Explanations	20
Hunger's Effect on Children	21
Other Factors	21
Poverty, Hunger and the Labor Market.....	22
Working for a Living Wage	22
Emergency Food Assistance.....	23
What Do People Feel Would Help?	24
Closing Notes	25
Methodology	26
Appendix: Poverty Line; Statistics Note	27
Endnotes	28
Acknowledgments.....	29

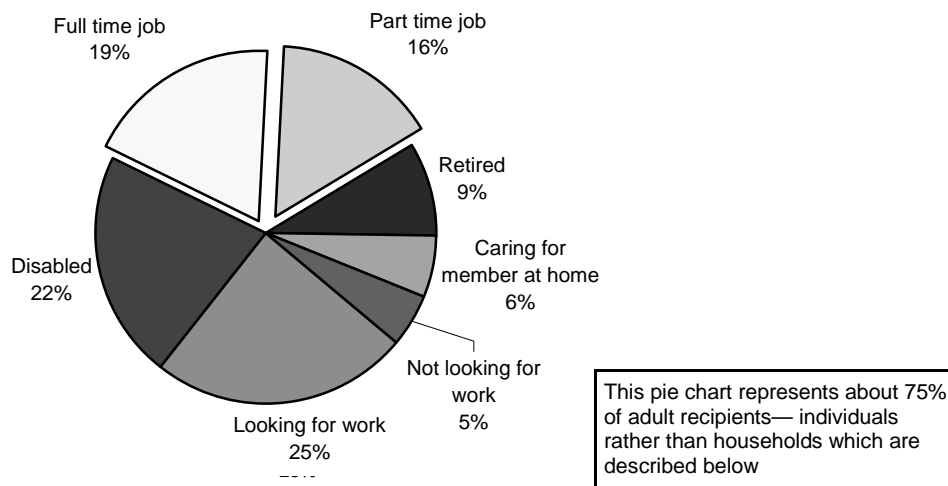
Executive Summary

This report presents the results of a survey of 2,856 households that received an emergency food box from local participating agencies of the Oregon Food Bank Network of Regional Coordinating Agencies. The surveys were sent to 99 food pantries (88 participated) throughout Oregon and Clark Co., Washington for distribution to food box recipients over a two-week period during April 2002. The objective of the survey was to find out directly from the people seeking food assistance who they are and why they need food. This report reveals their varied circumstances and gives voice to their stories.

THE GREATEST NEED IS AMONG CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

- 40%** of household members receiving an emergency food box were under the age of 18.
- 53%** of households were households with children.

Most Adult Recipients are Working, Retired, or Disabled



For households this chart means:

- **42%** of households had one or more members working
- **25%** of households had at least one full-time worker
- **35%** of households with children had a full-time working adult
- **54%** of families with children had at least one adult working
- **33%** of households had at least one person looking for work

Nearly 50% of respondents said that work was their key to a better future, yet:

The poverty rate among working families with children in Oregon grew from 7.3% in the late 1970s to 15.2% in the late 1990s. (U.S. Census and Oregon Center for Public Policy)

BARRIERS TO EMPLOYMENT:

- **30%** of households with members looking for work did not have a **phone**
- **29%** of households with members looking for work did not have a **car**
- **18%** of households with children were unable to work due to **the lack of child care**
- **31%** of respondents and spouse/partners have some education beyond high school compared with 59% of Oregon's general population

Long Way Up to the Poverty Line

Although over **42%** of recipient households had at least one person working (compared to 37% in 1996 and 41% in 1998):

- **80%** of all households live under the 2000 Federal Poverty Level,
- **64%** live below 75% of the poverty level.
- The median annual income for all households was **\$8000** compared to \$40, 916 for Oregon. ¹
- The Northwest Job Gap study released in 2001 calculated the livable wage for a single parent with 2 children to be \$17.95/hr or \$37,336 annually. ²

FOOD STAMPS ARE NOT ENOUGH

- **94%** of households receiving food stamps ran out of their allotment within the first three weeks of the month; **68%** ran out of food stamps within the first two weeks of the month.
- **69%** of surveyed households received Food Stamps in the last 12 months -- up from 55% in 2000.
- **\$74** per month per person is the average allotment.

LACK OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING CONTRIBUTES TO INSTABILITY

- **47% of responding households spend over 50% of their monthly available income on housing.**
- **22% spend 75% of their income on housing.** (The federal standard is 30% of household income for housing.)
- **12%** of households reported themselves as homeless (includes those living in their vehicle, camping, living in shelters, temporarily with friends, or other homeless)
- The average length of residence of survey participants in Oregon or Clark Co. Washington is 22.25 years.
- **26%** of households were forced to move in the last 2 years due to the cost of housing. **15%** had been evicted in the last 2 years.
- **26%** of responding households cite the need for affordable housing as crucial to preventing future crises.

HFA 2002 Backs Up State and Federal Data: Oregon Among the Hungriest States

In August 2002, the Food Security Institute at Brandeis University released a report on hunger in the U.S. The report used data collected from the Current Population Survey from 1998-2000. The analysis found 14.3% of Oregon households classified as food insecure, with 6.2% classified as hungry. **This makes Oregon #1 (worst) for hunger and 3rd for food insecurity.** ⁹

Hunger Factors 2002 included a couple of questions from the Food Security module of Census survey and found that:

- **71%** of adults worried about where their next meal would come from at least sometimes
- **21%** of children had been forced to skip meals from lack of money to buy food
- **39%** of these children have been forced to skip meals every month

“Recently lost our jobs. Having a hard time affording gas to find employment—having a hard time finding a home.”

“Have minimum wage higher so people can make a living. Me and my husband are the working poor.”

“Even “middle class” is stricken by poverty. Between poor wages, long hours and poor benefits medically, families can’t get by.”

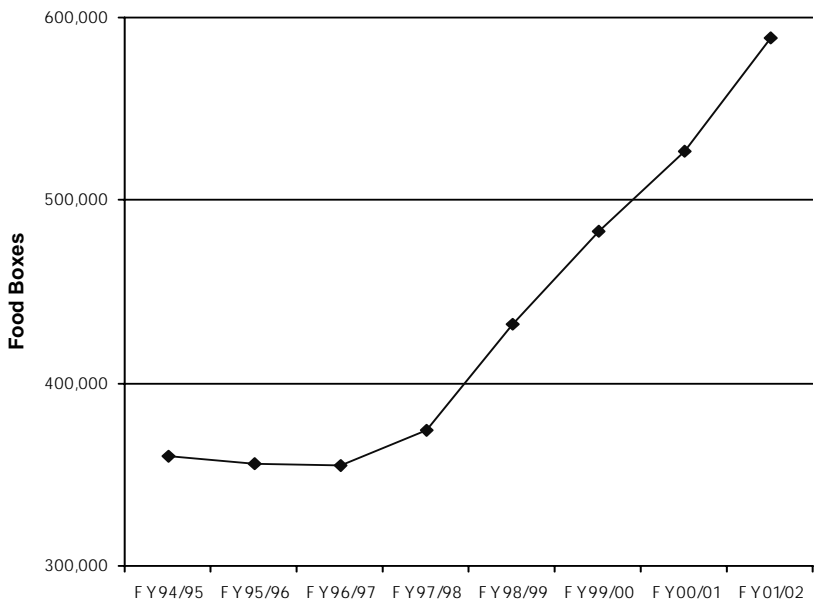
“I think its stupid and unfair for the qualifications to get benefits is based on your gross pay when you don’t have all that money to live off of.”

“Wages and health insurance are important for us regular people to survive.”

“I get \$13 food stamps, rent, utilities, and medical keep me poor. Medications and medical bills because of my health drain me.”

“We need a way for low income families to be able to go to college without having to go into debt for the rest of their lives.”

Food box use has increased dramatically over the last four years:



“I would like to say help is usually there when I need it. I have a hard time asking.”

“Our rent is \$585 and that’s how much our check is so we really don’t have any money for food so we would like to get help out little more.”

“ No one should go hungry or without medical treatment”

The survey asked: “Which are the main things, if you could change them, that will help prevent your family from experiencing another food crisis?”

- Survey participants look to employment/higher wages, job training, health and housing as main factors to change their situation and to prevent needing food assistance in the future.

WHAT TO DO

Here are some of the key elements for assisting people to escape poverty and to ensure a humane standard of living for low wage workers and those unable to work:

- Jobs with **living wages** are essential
- Use of available funds in state programs for critical **support of families** in crisis
- Affordable, quality **child care**, and before- and after-school programs
- **Food stamp** levels that ensure adequate nutrition
- Expansion and outreach for **child nutrition** programs
- Affordable **housing** opportunities
- Refundable earned income tax credits
- Outreach efforts to enroll all eligible Oregonians in the Food Stamp Program
- Maintenance of the **Oregon Health Plan**
- Increased reimbursement levels to child care providers

The continuing and steadily increasing need for charitable food programs in our state and nation is sobering. The efforts of charitable organizations cannot meet the need. Nor can these efforts substitute for consistent, just public policy generated by the creative cooperation of legislators, private sector programs and an informed, caring public.

Introduction

The 1991 Oregon State Legislature created state policy stating: (ORS458.530)

- All persons have the right to be free from hunger.
- Freedom from hunger means all persons have food security, that is, the means to obtain a nutritionally adequate diet through conventional food sources at all times.
- All persons in Oregon have food security by the year 2000.

When the year 2000 arrived, the state of Oregon found that not only had it *not* achieved its goal of food security for all, but it was actually ranked as the worst state for hunger. Many were skeptical of these findings, given that Oregon's economy was in full swing, unemployment moderate, and the state's poverty level was unremarkable. How could Oregon be ranked #1? Shouldn't some of those "other states" be much worse?

The year 2000 has come and gone and 2002 finds Oregon still ranked #1 in hunger. The prosperity of the '90's that many Oregonians missed out on is now a recession and economic downturn that embraces them tightly. Oregon's unemployment rate is among the highest in the nation, and state and local budgets are being slashed at the exact same time that more people will need assistance.

In this atmosphere of economic instability and shrinking opportunities for help, the Oregon Food Bank Network again conducted the Hunger Factors Assessment Survey (HFA) (the eighth since 1986). The purpose of the survey was to give voice to those who generally are not consulted when state agencies reorganize, funding cuts are made, or federal "superwaivers" are proposed. It also recognizes that those affected by hunger are the "true experts" at identifying and solving its underlying causes. HFA 2002 gathers the collective stories and wisdom of 2,856 of these experts, collected from 88 pantries statewide during a two week period in April 2002. Individuals who answered the surveys in English, Spanish and Russian may have come to need emergency food assistance through different circumstances, but their underlying message was the same: **Hunger is real, It is here in Oregon, and we must do something about it!**

The policy that was set forth in 1991, declared that "all persons have the right to be free from hunger." Generally when one speaks of rights, they also speak of the obligations that come with ensuring those rights. What has happened to Oregon, that it has forgotten the obligations contained in our declaration that freedom from hunger is a right we should all enjoy?

Results from HFA 2002 indicate that although statistics may change slightly from one survey year to the next, the underlying issues remain the same. One of this year's survey respondents wrote, "Most likely this survey won't amount to a hill of beans." The truth of his comment depends on how we Oregonians respond.

So, why keep conducting this survey? Are we only documenting the obvious?

The most basic reason is that silence and denial will never lead Oregon to create a solution to its hunger and poverty problems. And one day, when priorities change and eliminating poverty and hunger become top concerns, it is important that information from the "true experts" is available to influence the direction of policy change.

When will priorities change?

When Oregonians live up to their obligations to their neighbors, as set forth by our Legislature over a decade ago.

The Need for Emergency Food Assistance

Why do people need emergency food boxes?

People slip, slide, fall, crash or even climb up to the point that they must ask for help to feed themselves and their children. Most of the households are some mix of working people, people looking for work, persons living with disability, or retired folks. The common denominator: they can't afford to buy enough food.

The survey asked respondents, "What happened that made it necessary for you to be here today?" Respondents could check all choices that applied. The chart below summarizes the responses. Almost all relate to situations that impact household resources for food purchases. Households averaged three responses.

Households Selected	Situations Contributing to Need for Emergency Food Box
66%	Ran out of food stamps—of those receiving food stamps
33%	Unusual expenses recently
28%	Unemployed a long time
28%	High fuel/heating costs (21% in 2000)
24%	Too sick to work (e.g., disabled, mental health problems)
22%	High rent or mortgage costs
20%	Health/medical costs (18% in 2000)
19%	Low wages (23% in 2000)
15%	Recent job loss
15%	Public Asst. (TANF, SSI, GA) is not enough
15%	Retired: on fixed income
8%	Food Stamps cut or reduced
6%	Caring for ill family member
Other:	Unemployment ran out; seasonal worker; divorce

Besides emergency food boxes, where did surveyed households find food during the last 12 months?

- 69%** purchased food using Food Stamps (only 56.6% were currently getting food stamps).
- 45%** of respondents turned to relatives and/or friends and neighbors for help with food.
- 16%** of seniors took meals at a senior meal site or via meals-on-wheels
- 11%** received food as a member of a Community Basket/Brown Bag Program
- 7%** dined at a community soup kitchen
- 6%** received meals at a shelter
- 6%** recovered food from dumpsters

"Food boxes really help when needed."

"State grants need to consider the cost of living (bills, food, etc) when determining a grant. My income barely covers the bills so \$100 in food stamps doesn't feed 4 people. If food stamps were more I wouldn't need a food box all the time. Food stamps I feel are outdated we don't live in the "70's" anymore. We need to improve the amount."

"Food stamps never enough-must supplement with bill money or do without"

"Having a hard time getting to the place to apply for food stamps. Heating utilities too expensive."

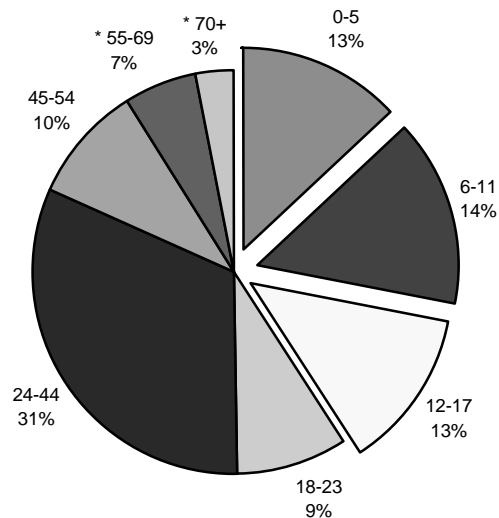
"Prices for all necessities have gone up. Wages have not. We still can't survive on what we make. Health costs are killing my family. Will cause us at some point to lose the home I have worked so hard to get all because I have no medical coverage and increased expenses and lack of state help. Even full time I was struggling to survive."

"If it weren't for community sharing we might have a harder time than we already do."

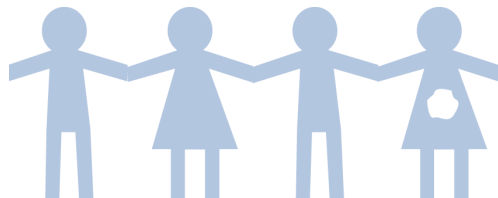
"Unemployment ran out. Start a job May 1st, we just need to get by till May 10th."

Demographic Profile

Age of Recipients



40% of recipient household members were children 17 years and under. Based on federal estimates, 1 in 4 children are food insecure. (see page 19 for more explanation)



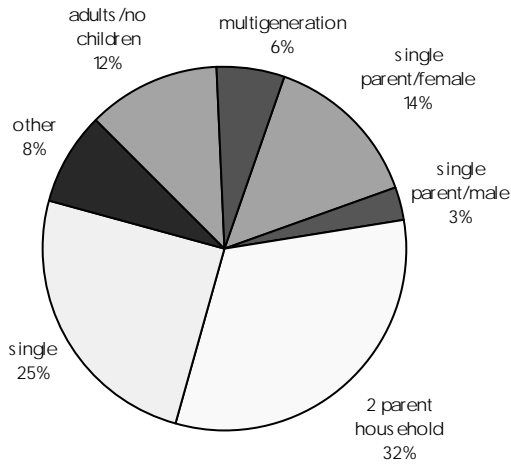
Nearly One in Four Children in Oregon Lives in a Food Insecure Household¹⁶

* 4.8% of recipients were 65 years or older. This age group makes up 12.8% of Oregon's general population. ¹ The low number of seniors who use emergency food box agencies may give the illusion that little need exists in that segment of the population. However, many seniors are eligible for and participate in food assistance programs specifically targeted for their age group such as Meals on Wheels, Loaves and Fishes, Senior Meals and Senior Center programs and therefore may be less likely to seek assistance through the emergency food system. Access to programs due to lack of transportation and/or disability may be a contributing factor.

The average household size was **3.2 persons**.
The state average from the 2000 Census was **2.5**. ¹

Demographic Profile

Household Composition: 55% included children



Race/Ethnicity	2002 Survey	2000 Survey	2000 Cen. Poverty Pop.	2000 Cen. Oregon ¹
White	75%	77%	63%	87%
Hispanic *	12%	10%	15%	*8%
Native Am.	3%	4%	2%	1%
Black	4%	3%	3%	2%
Hawaiian/Pacific***	1%	0.5%	0.3%	0.2%
Asian***	1%	0.6%	3%	3%
Other	na	na	9%	4%
Mixed **	5%	5%	5%	3%

Other Household Characteristics:

- 66% of respondents were female; 34% were male.
- 89% of respondents completed surveys in English; 8% in Spanish; and 3% in Russian.
- 21% of the households included one or more veterans.
- 5% of households had a pregnant member.
- The average age of respondents was 42 years old.

* Hispanic is an ethnic group and may be of any race. The size of the Hispanic proportion mirrors a significant rise in the general population in Oregon — a 76% increase between 1990 and 1999.

** The 1998 and 2000 survey offered choices to be used in 2000 Census including “Mixed” of which the majority were Native American-White or Hispanic-White.

*** The low proportion of Asian/Pacific Islanders completing the survey follows pantry service statistics that show a very low number using the emergency food system in general.

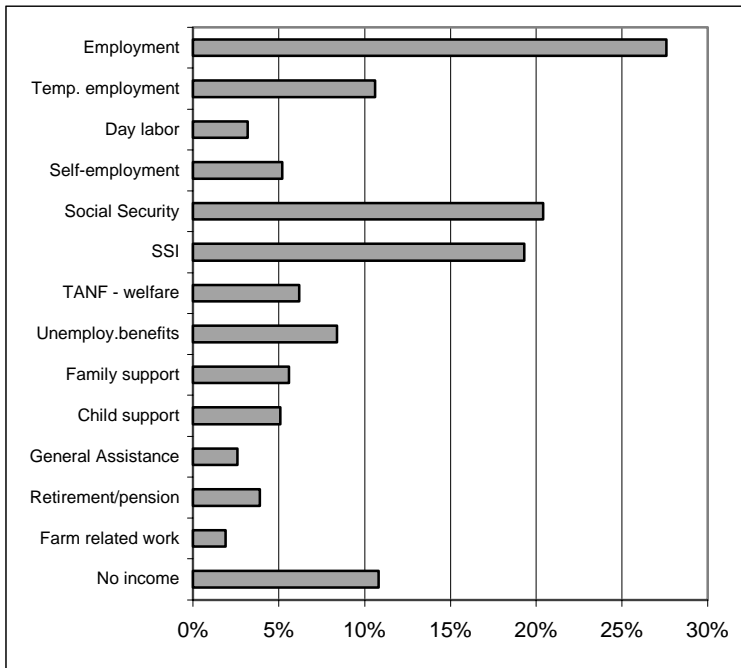
“That more resources should be made for single mothers. With four people, 3 children, it is hard to buy food for the month with only \$160. If places like this were not available, many people would go hungry and your help is truly appreciated.”

“We are disabled in my household-my husband is disabled and retired, and I am disabled. We are now taking care of my elderly father. We are all on fixed income. And still not enough money-either to rent anything decent or enough money to buy food. We are stretching in both directions. It would be nice to have a store with decent prices and places to rent without the rent to high. But most likely this survey wont amount to a hill of beans.”

“Please keep from ignoring the poor, the elderly, and the low income family and keep the programs such as food stamps, medical cheaper and when there is permanent health problems and have to have several prescriptions needed to take and my doctor says I can’t do without and without Oregon Health card would be too expensive.”

“Mas ayuda para los Hispanos, tambien somos humanos. (More help for Hispanics, we are also humans).”

Sources of Income (%)



Although over **42%** of recipient households had at least one person working (the same percentage as in 2000, and 1% more than 1998):

- **80%** of all households live under the 2000 Federal Poverty Level,
- **64%** live below 75% of the poverty level.
- Over **45%** of households identified employment income in the past year.
- The median monthly income for all households was **\$700**.
- The median annual income for all households was **\$8000** compared to \$ 40,916 for Oregon.¹
- The Northwest Job Gap study released in 2000 calculated the livable wage for Oregon to be \$37,336 for a single parent with 2 children.²

“To try living on an income that falls well below the poverty line for a year w/out the assistance of outside resources as much as humanly possible and then try complaining about how their situation is so bad when they make over a hundred grand a year. They have no idea what it is like to not have enough money to take care of the essentials, let alone needs and wants.”

“Everyone should have equal opportunities and not restricted by income/no income.”

“The amount of money the government expects someone to be able to live on is ridiculous. They need to try walking on our shoes for a while.”

“(They) should not think of those less fortunate as deadbeats. Everyone of us has bad times that takes us down to our knees, “stuff happens”.”

“I am the only caregiver for my disabled spouse, but I am told I can’t be monetarily compensated because we are related. So we struggle to keep our heads above water. They will pay a stranger to come in part time to care for him, but not me.”

“The poverty level cut off is too low, I’m not eligible for help, I don’t make enough to make ends meet.”

Hunger Factors – *Income and Poverty*

“There must be something we could do! We have the highest unemployment rate in America.”

“More jobs.”

“Have better paying, better health coverage jobs so people don’t have to worry about how to survive.”

“In this area, if you are out of work you have to have 20 contacts per week looking for employment to get food stamps. That may be OK in Portland but in Eastern OR that’s probably every job that you would be qualified for the 1st week. As a former employer who used to get all those calls week after week from the same person I can tell you that it actually makes it harder to get a job as you are alienating employers who have better things to do with their time than tell 4 or 5 people a day you are not hiring and your name so they can put it on work search paper.”

“I have wrote, wrote, wrote-nothing has helped me. I’ve gone to college. When you are over 40, forget about another job, you’re too old.”

“Public transportation is very expensive.”

“Employment would go a long way to get me out of the morass I am feeling now, and would put food in my mouth.”

“Official Poverty” vs “Basic Family Budget”

“OFFICIAL POVERTY”

The Federal Poverty Line (FPL) is based on a 1955 household survey and, though updated annually, relies on out-of-date assumptions. It fails to address the impact of today’s high housing, health, and child care costs or even work related expenses. The resulting “official” poverty rates seriously underestimate the “real” poverty.

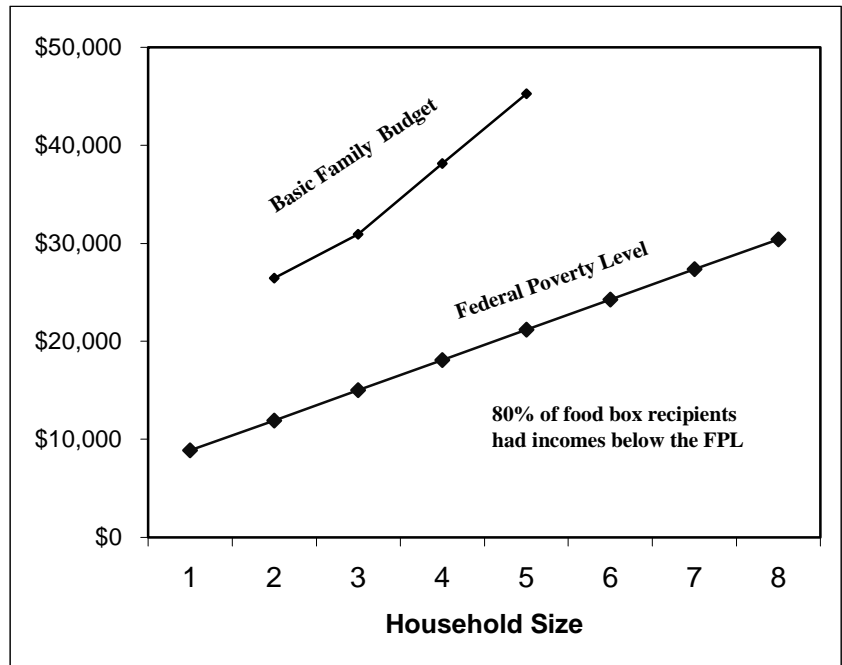
FPL for a family of three = \$15,020

Full time job at minimum wage = \$13,500

Median family income in Oregon for 1999 = \$ 48,680 ¹

80% of HFA surveyed households reported incomes below 100% of FPL.

Income required to provide family basics compared to Federal Poverty Line



“BASIC FAMILY BUDGET”

The Economic Policy Institute, a non-profit, non-partisan think tank, calculated that, in Oregon, a “basic family budget” for essentials such as housing, food, child care, and health insurance ranges from 205% to 249% of the Federal poverty line. ¹⁴

Nearly 1 million Oregonians try to survive with incomes below 200% of the Federal poverty line (\$36,200 for a family of four).

36% of working families in Oregon with one to three children under the age of 12 do not earn enough to meet the “basic family budget.”¹⁴

Hunger Factors – Employment

“I work hard at being a C.N.A. but I don’t get enough for what I do or to take care of my child”

“Everything is too expensive!”

“We live from paycheck to paycheck and when we get hit with any sort of problem we get into a situation where we can’t get back on our feet. I can pay my rent or pay the power bill but then one or the other bills goes unpaid. It is hard to get out of this cycle”

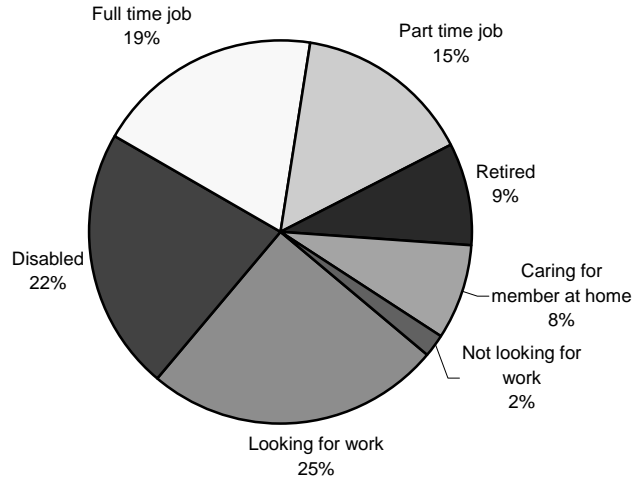
“Base assistance on outgoing cash flow-not gross income.”

“How does the government expect anyone to live on \$531 per month? Could you?”

“Our annual cost of living increase does not keep up with inflation, especially in pharmaceuticals and medical cost. We lose ground every year.”

“Do not cut school funds or social programs. People need help to get training to improve their skills. Need more childcare programs in the community”

Employment situations for Respondent, Spouse/partner and/or third Adult*



The percent of respondent or spouse/partner who were working **full time**:

	Respondent	Spouse/partner
1996	7.8%	21.4%
1998	13.3%	29.2%
2000	14.0%	31.5%
2002	11.5%	26.2%

Employment situations for HFA 2002 households:

42% of households had at least one member working (42.5% in '00; 37% in '96)

Households also reported at least one member:

Looking for work	25%
Disabled	22%
With a full-time job	19%
With a part-time job	16%
Retired	9%

Barriers to Employment:

- **30%** of households with members looking for work did not have a **phone**
- **29%** of households with members looking for work did not have a **car**
- **18%** of households with children could not work due to **the lack of child care**
- **52%** of households have one or more adults living with a disability
- **10%** of households have one or more children with a disability
- **31%** of respondents and spouse/partners have some **education** beyond high school compared with 59% of Oregon’s general population

Hunger Factors – *Child Care*

According to child care advocates, the major barriers for mothers trying to enter the workforce are:

- the high cost of and general lack of availability of child care,
- child care programs willing to take TANF (welfare) clients, and
- child care for children with special needs and off-hour work schedules.

Survey results, which are very similar to 2000 results, confirm their assessment.

- **18%** of respondents with children stated that lack of child care prevents them from working. Of those households:
 - **39%** reported that child care is too costly
 - **14%** said the co-pay for ERDC was too high
 - **12%** needed special care for an infant or disabled child, or worked odd hours, nights, or weekends
 - **11%** lacked transportation
 - **8%** said there was no child care available in their area
 - **8%** no safe programs are available
 - **6%** did not know where to find child care

The median child care costs range from \$380 to \$600 per child depending on the child's age and whether at a child care center or in family child care.³ The median monthly income for HFA 2002 households was \$700.

The average monthly Employment Related Day Care (ERDC) payment made by Adult and Family Services is \$175 per child.

“Better daycare, so I can feel safer leaving my children while I’m at work. More centers so I can have more choices. More training so I get a better job”

“When single moms need assistance the welfare system is willing to pay child care up to \$1200/mo for the mother to go to work as soon as the youngest turns 3 months. If more mom’s could have more help until the child is of school age, then there may be a significant cut in monies going out and in turn could be used for higher education such as scholarships and our children wouldn’t be raised by someone other than the responsible party.”

“Ask for help with childcare.”

“Need cheaper daycare. I was working for a month but the day care was too expensive. I worked just to pay day care. Also when I went to work OHP and daycare help and food stamps were cut off.”

“State assistance wont help with child care while I’m in a brain injury rehabilitation program.”

“We need more help with child care.”

“Grandparents who take on the responsibility of raising their grandchild should get the same amount of money that the foster parents get, I’d like to see the governor raise a child on \$179 a month.”

“Women who choose to stay home and raise their children (for the right reasons) should get all the help they need to do so, even if they are single due to “unfortunate” circumstances.”

“We need more people that care about the situation of todays children, and someone who has the guts to do something about it. Since our children are tomorrow’s generation.”

Hunger Factors – Education

“What is the highest level of education you completed?”

Education	Respondent and Spouse/partner HFA 2002	Oregon Census 2000
8th grade or less	11.1%	5.0%
Some H.S.	19.4%	9.9%
H.S. or GED	38.7%	26.3%
Tech. or vocational	7.3%	—
Some college	13.6%	27.1%
Assoc. Degree	5.6%	6.6%
Bachelors or higher	4.2%	25.1%

A 2000 study of TANF Leavers conducted by the Center for the Study of Women in Society, at the University of Oregon, found access to educational opportunities to be a key barrier to moving out of poverty.¹⁵ Over 84% of those interviewed in the study wanted more education or job training to help them earn higher wages. However, the “work first” model adopted by Oregon does not assist people while they are attending school or in job training. Rather than being provided opportunities to gain the job skills or education needed for higher paying jobs, welfare applicants are required to work in any low wage job that is available.

Maine has taken a different approach with its **Parents As Scholars** Program. Recognizing that education is the key to moving families permanently out of poverty, the program allows TANF recipients to pursue higher education and training without losing benefits. In addition, the program assists with the “incidentals,” that often arise and take priority over schooling. The primary components of the program include:⁴

- Monthly cash assistance: for the same amount they would have received with TANF
- Child care: for children under 13, with age extension for those with special needs
- Transportation: public transit or car pooling reimbursement or private car at 24 cents/mile
- Car repairs: up to \$500 per 12 months for pre-approved vehicle repairs
- Auto liability insurance: pay cost of minimum liability insurance up to \$300
- Eye and dental care: pay the cost not covered by Medicaid, up to certain maximum limits
- Books, supplies, uniforms: up to \$750/yr books, \$300/yr uniforms required for program
- TUITION AND FEES ARE NOT USUALLY PAID, except if unable to get financial aid

“Quit spending money on things we don’t need and start putting it towards the schools. If you keep taking money out of school where are the kids going to be in 10 years?”

“Education is the key. Ignorance is a cop-out.”

“More help for college students..”

“Do not cut school funds or social programs. People need help to get training to improve their skills.”

“I would like to add that more job training (free) classes should be offered.”

“People on public assistance should be able to receive benefits while they go to school instead of having to go out with no skills and try to find work.”

“I would tell them to keep trying to improve their situation by finishing school and don’t ever give up trying.”

“I’ve noticed in Oregon you have to be certified for everything.”

Hunger Factors – Housing

Where recipients live:

“We need more affordable housing. If the rent wasn’t so high we would have more money for food.”

“Is there a way that the amount to move into an apartment or trailer not be so high so you don’t have to play caught up?”

“Need to stay in my motor home-cops look down on that and give you a lot of crap about it!!”

“Need more housing for mentally ill, who have spouses who are not. Most places will take the disabled, not there spouses.”

“We need more shelters for homeless families and for single people.”

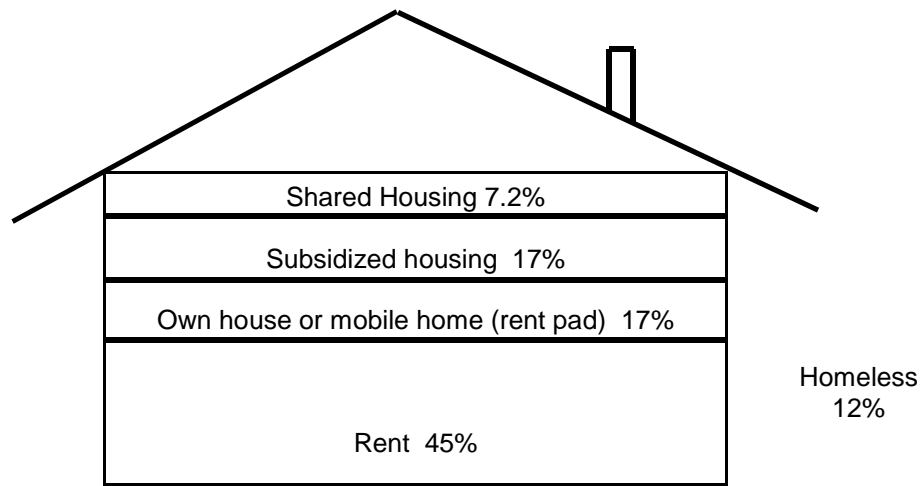
“Need more low cost housing.”

“I am on Section 8 housing- the more I work they make me pay. So I never get ahead. I am stuck in a rut”

“I wish there was more availability of HUD and Section 8 housing.”

“More affordable housing definitely!”

“Housing costs are too high for my income, I cannot find housing for my family due to no money for deposits and no help with move in cost. Even low income housing require excellent credit. We lost our home due to the loss of second income.”



The homeless include those living on the streets, in shelters or vehicles, camping, in migrant camps, and other unstable situations. It also includes those temporarily staying with friends. **12% of households reported themselves as homeless** in 2002, an increase from 8.5% in 2000.

In addition, **7.2% are living in a shared arrangement** with an extended family or with non-family members.

Percentage of respondents forced to move in the last 2 years:
To find work: **23%** Due to cost of housing: **29%**

15% had been evicted in the last 2 years.

The average residency of respondents in Oregon (or Clark Co.): **22.3** years.

Cost of Housing

The cost of housing is the single greatest expense for most households. The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has consistently characterized “affordable housing” as rent or mortgage that consumes no more than 30% of a family’s income. The results of this survey show how far low-income households are from that standard.

- **47%** of responding households spend over **50%** of their monthly available income on housing
- **22%** spend more than **76%** of their income on housing

With the median household income for all respondents of **\$700** per month, after the median rent of **\$425** is paid, little remains for utilities, food and clothing.

In 2001 Fair Market Rent for a two bedroom unit in Oregon was \$664.⁵

A study released in 2001 by The National Low-Income Housing Coalition reports that Oregon’s **affordable “housing wage”** for a two bedroom unit is \$12.78 per hour.⁵

“Get us an affordable doctor.”

“Wages and health insurance are important for us regular people to survive.”

“Make dental insurance more affordable for those in the middle income bracket.”

“The income level needs to be changed. It would be a greater help if the Oregon Health Plan income level were at Food Stamp level. Our family gets \$100 of food stamps, but does not qualify for health insurance?!”

“Medical care is our worst expense, because co-pays get charged for one of our household at every service rendered. The medical system is being run like a for-profit corporation, as opposed to a necessary societal institution.”

“We need more and better healthcare. Medicine especially. Our medical needs are extensive. Wheelchair access to lots of public places needs improvement.”

“I would tell them that the requirements for OHP are too high and that they need to change the criteria for acceptance.”

“Health benefits be available for people (families) who barely make too much for OHP (less than \$100 for us).”

“Vote for Universal health care for all Oregonians.”

From the responses to the survey, it seems apparent that an inadequate diet may affect the health of almost all emergency food recipients. Children who do not eat enough nutritious food may suffer both stunted growth and permanent mental deficiencies. Many teachers will attest to the effect of hunger on the behavior, attention span, and ability to learn on their students (see page 21). Adults may have dietary-related health problems and/or health problems that may be worsened by poor nutrition.

The advent of the Oregon Health Plan (OHP) halved the number of emergency food box clients with no health care coverage by 1996. As in 2000, the number of families covered by OHP in 2002 has remained slightly over half.

Category	2002	2000	1996	1990
Respondent disabled	25%	24%	25%	18%
Partner disabled	17%	19%	20%	12%
No Coverage	<u>37%</u>	<u>25%</u>	<u>28%</u>	<u>56%</u>
No Coverage-children	<u>22%</u>	<u>10%</u>	na	na
Medicaid/OR Hlth. Plan	<u>52%</u>	<u>51%</u>	<u>52%</u>	<u>25%</u>
Putting off medical care	47%	45%	41%	51%
Putting off dental care	54%	51%	51%	66%

- Of households *with children*, 22% were without health care coverage for the children.
- In spite of coverage by OHP, the number of recipients putting off medical and dental care because they can't afford it has remained high.
- When all members of the household are considered, 52% of households have at least one disabled adult member.

Although 42% of households had a working member, only **26%** of those had any employer provided health care.

22% of respondents cited improved health as key to making emergency food assistance less necessary for their family.

According to a report from the Institute of Medicine (IOM)⁶, working age Americans without health insurance are more likely to:

- Receive too little medical care and receive it too late
- Be sicker and die sooner
- Receive poorer care when hospitalized, even in acute situations like a vehicle accident

“Tener seguro de salud mas bajo costo (Have lower cost health insurance).”

“It is hard to find a job that comes with a health benefit. Since my husband is legally blind he does need an insurance. If I get a job without an insurance coverage, we can't afford his medical bills, etc. Thank you for all you do!”

“Don’t cut food stamps because there are too many people who need that extra help.”

“I so much appreciate the food help, only get \$10 month Food Stamps which doesn’t buy hardly anything.”

“1) I would tell them that anybody on “food stamps only” should be given a minimum of \$10 allowable to purchase toilet paper, Kotex, shampoo, soap, etc.
2) I would tell them that stores like BiMart and K-Mart that sell over 1% of their items as edible items should be mandated to by law to accept food stamps. They don’t now.”

“The system is not as effective in helping out as they think they are. It could be a whole hell of a lot better fir the less fortunate or us poor.”

“Have food stamps/ food banks include necessary paper and personal hygiene items-toilet paper, soap, clothes soap, etc.”

“I should be able to get food stamps in a emergency situation without a program!”

Food Stamps

The main purpose of the federal Food Stamp program is to increase the purchasing power of low income households so they can obtain a more nutritious diet. A standard measure of the program’s impact is its ability to reach its target population. Estimates released by Mathematica Inc., in June 2002, found approximately **66% of eligible Oregonians received food stamps in 1999**. Nationally, the percentage was 57%. In Oregon and for the nation, food stamp participation rates declined from 1994-99. However, **in 2000, participation rates began to rise.**⁷

In HFA 2002 survey, 69% of respondents indicated that they had obtained food using food stamps sometime during the previous year. That number is an increase from 55% in 2000.

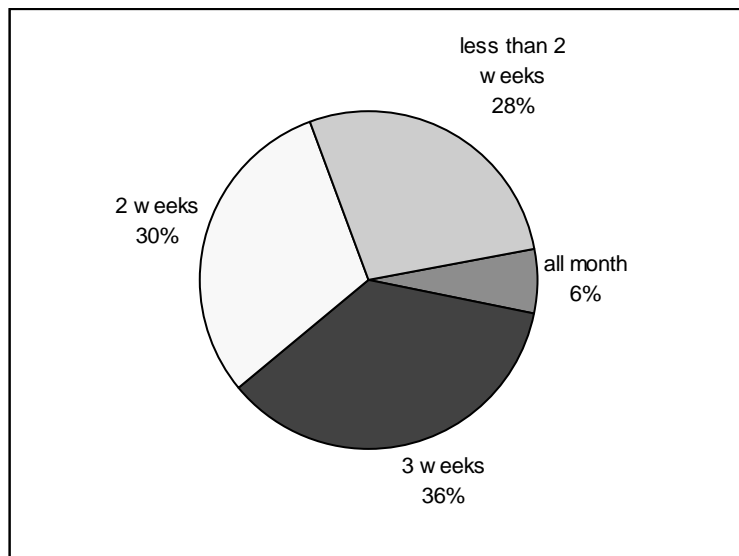
But, only 56.6% indicated that they currently receive food stamps.

Why food box recipients are not receiving food stamps: (respondents were asked to choose only one, main reason)

- 25% don’t know if they are qualified
- 17% state that they applied but were turned down
- 17% said that their food stamps were cut
- 13% said the forms were too much trouble, ask too many questions
- 4% not eligible because they are not U.S. citizen
- 3% don’t have transportation

It is a common misconception that the Food Stamp Program provides all the food resources for a household. The chart below shows how quickly the survey respondents run out of food stamps. The average food stamp allotment is about \$74 per month per person¹² or about 84 cents per meal if stretched over the entire month. The USDA Low Cost Meal Plan estimates the average meal at \$1.40 to \$1.65 per person. Many households receive the minimum \$10 allotment.

How long food stamps last: (% responses)



Food Assistance Participation Increased, But Need Continues

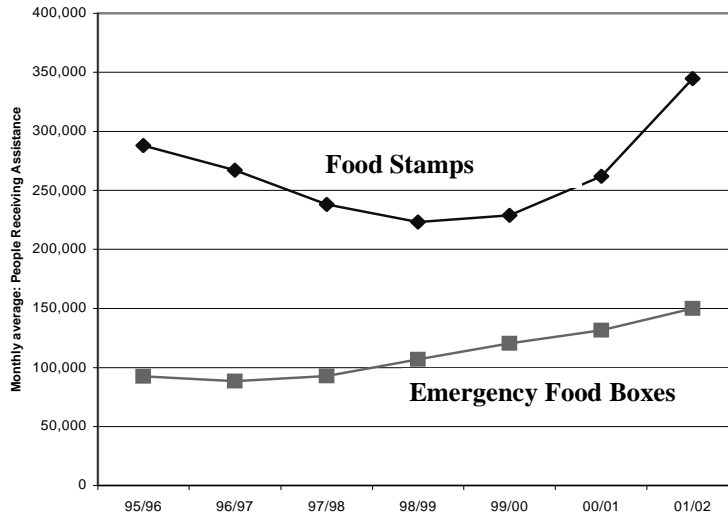
“Make food stamps a little easier to get. Sometimes you only need them for a month or so, 2 or 3 only. I would be honest. I do not mind working. But you got to pay bills before food so at least you can live 1/2 way normal.”

“Make it easier for people on social security to get food stamps.”

“Having trouble getting to the place to apply for food stamps.”

“Emergency pantry is dependable and suitable to meet my families temp need till I figure out how to make some money. Food Stamp allotment is ridiculose, \$10 per month, is it really worth my time and psyc humility to apply for this? Not really. My salary \$950/mo, electric alone in March \$711.”

“The limit for emergency assistance is too low. For a family of 4 its like \$545. How can a family of 4 live on that and be disqualified if you make more than that?”



Food Stamp Program: a monthly income supplement funded by the federal government to help families meet a portion of their monthly food need. The program provides an average supplement of \$74 per month per person, or \$.84 a meal. About 10% of Oregon recipients, 34,000 people, receive the \$10/month minimum.

Emergency Food Box Program: a 3-5 day supply of groceries accessed from one of the 317 pantries run by churches and other non-profit groups in the OFB Network. Most families request help 3 or fewer times in a year.

Although USDA’s Food Stamp Program is the nation’s main nutrition assistance program for low income people, **less than 70% of eligible Oregonians** are receiving help.

Food Stamp outreach projects have proven successful at helping eligible people to access the Food Stamp Program. The number of participants has increased 44% in the last three years to over 340,000 people per month—the highest increase in the U.S. Currently over \$27 million Food Stamp dollars come to Oregon communities and over \$1 million to Clark Co. each month.

School Breakfast and Lunch:

In 2002, 97.5% of Oregon public schools participated in the school lunch program.⁸

- ◆ **50%** of recipient households with school-age children participated in the school breakfast program — up 12% from 2000.
- ◆ **60%** of recipient households with school-age children participated in the school lunch program — up 12% from 2000.

Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)

For HFA 2002:

- **54%** of households with children ages newborn to 4 yrs. received WIC
- **55%** of households with 1 or more pregnant members received WIC

Oregon Remains the Hungriest State

In August 2002, the Center on Hunger and Poverty of Brandeis University released a report on hunger and food insecurity in the U.S.⁹ The report analyzed data collected from the Current Population Survey, Food Security Module from 1998-2000 (pre-recession years). The analysis for Oregon found 14.3% of household were categorized as food insecure; 6.2% of those classified as food insecure with hunger. Nationally, these numbers were 10.8% and 3.3%, respectively.

As with the previous 3-year analysis (1996-98), **Oregon again ranks #1 (worst) for food insecurity with hunger and has moved from 6th to 3rd for food insecurity.**

Hunger Factors 2002, Food Security Responses:

- ◆ **21%** of households with children reported that their children had to cut or skip meals
- ◆ **39%** of these households reported that this happened every month
- ◆ **71%** of respondents said they worry at least sometimes where their next meal is coming from

<p>Food security has been defined briefly as “assured access to enough food for an active, healthy life.”</p>	<p>Food insecurity is defined as “Limited or uncertain availability of nutritionally adequate and safe foods or limited or uncertain ability to acquire acceptable foods in socially acceptable ways.”</p>
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And **Hunger** is defined as “ The uneasy or painful sensation caused by a lack of food. The recurrent and involuntary lack of access to food. Hunger may produce malnutrition over time...”

WHY IS OREGON’S HUNGER RATE SO HIGH?

Oregon’s poverty rate is 11.6% - Mississippi’s is 19.9%
Oregon’s “hunger rate” is 6.2% - Mississippi’s is 3.3%

Poverty is as much a matter of what your money can buy as it is how much money you have.

Oregon Center for Public Policy traces the causes to four main conditions:

- Housing costs have soared while wages have stagnated.
In the last decade, housing values in Oregon have risen 129%. According to the Economic Policy Institute, because of lower rents, child care, and other expenses, the “basic family budgets” are 22-25% lower in Mississippi than in Oregon, though poverty rates are much higher.
- The gap between rich and poor grew four times faster in Oregon than nationally.
From the late ‘80’s to ‘90’s, the average family incomes of the richest fifth grew 34% while the poorest fifth declined by 6%. In Mississippi, the poorest fifth saw average income rise 42% over the same period.
- The changing nature of employment in Oregon has resulted in fewer family-wage industrial jobs and more low-wage service jobs.
- Rural Oregon fares poorly due to more seasonal employment that equals low annual incomes overall.

Hunger's Effect on Children

Failing to address Oregon's #1 ranking for hunger creates consequences beyond the individual family dinner table. Recent research has clearly documented a link between food insecurity and negative health and academic outcomes.¹⁰ Among the findings on effects of food insecurity on children:

Health

- Poorer overall health status and compromised ability to resist illness
- Elevated occurrence of stomachaches, headaches, colds, ear infections
- Greater incidence of hospitalizations

Behavior and Academics

- Higher levels of aggression, hyperactivity, and anxiety as well as passivity
- Impaired cognitive functioning and diminished capacity to learn
- Lower test scores and poorer overall school achievement
- Increased school absences, tardiness, and school suspensions

Source: "The Consequences of Hunger and Food Insecurity for Children: Evidence from Recent Scientific Studies." Center on Hunger and Poverty, Brandies University, June 2002.

Other Factors

Debt

Often overwhelmed by the cost of providing for the basics (food, shelter, clothing, health care) and with incomes most often below the federal poverty line, many families are forced to move bill money to grocery money in order to keep food on the table. The following percentages are derived from those who answered the survey's question on household debt and indicated having a debt in one or more of the predetermined categories (ex: Of those who responded to the question on debt, 50% said they had medical debts).

Medical Debts	50%	Back Rent	19%
Collection Agency	48%	Student Loans	15%
Unpaid/back Utilities	39%	Back Taxes	15%
Credit Card	35%	Back Child Support	12%
Family/Friends	32%	Other	7%
Vehicle Loan	21%		

It is not surprising that medical debts were cited most frequently, since **37% of respondents indicated having adults in their household with no health coverage, and 22% indicated no coverage for their children.** Often these large medical bills go to collections, which may explain why collection agency was the second most commonly checked category.

With **28%** of respondents indicating that **high fuel and heating costs made it necessary for them to seek food assistance**, it is only logical that a significant percentage would identify having unpaid utility bills.

Access to Financial Services

Having an account at a financial institution can save one the expense of money orders or check cashing fees and provide them with access to more affordable credit. However:

- **57%** of respondents did not have a bank account
- **15%** of respondents had used a check cashing or title loan service

Poverty, Hunger, and the Labor Market

Excerpted from 'The Question Isn't Just Poverty. For Many Its Survival.' By Peter Edleman, former Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation at the Department of Health and Human Services.

We need to step back and ask why so many people are poor in this incredibly wealthy country. For the last 30 years, especially, we have heard over and over that the only reason anyone is poor is that they do not take responsibility for themselves, and that those failures of individual responsibility are enhanced by the provision of the cash assistance that we call welfare. The landscape is dotted with broken lives, but to ascribe all such cases to personal dereliction is a terrible distortion.

The basic problem is the way our economy is structured. There are too many jobs that don't pay workers enough to get by. Everyone knows that the high paying manufacturing jobs have disappeared to automation and that those opportunities have been replaced by lower paying service jobs. But not everybody seems to know what this has done to the incomes of millions of Americans. They do the best they can every day but don't earn enough to make ends meet.

Two studies, one issued by the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) and the other by the Economic Policy Institute, summarize the situation. The CBO studied income changes between 1979 and 1997. The average after-tax income of the bottom 20% of people actually went down by \$100, or about 1%, over that period. The average after-tax income of the top 1% increased by \$414,200, or 157%.

The Economic Policy Institute study looked at all the research that has been done on what it really costs to live in America. It concluded that the right way to see things is not the so-called poverty income line, but a level double that. That means that **the real number of Americans in economic trouble is something like two-and-a-half times the number characterized as poor. These are the people who typically report problems affording enough food, paying the rent, or paying the phone bill, or paying for health care or child care.**

The labor market in the wealthiest country in the history of the world doesn't produce jobs that pay enough to create minimal comfort for nearly a third of our people. And our politics does not respond to the fact that most Americans have not shared fairly in the growth of our economy over the past 20-plus years.

We use the word "poverty" to describe the problem, but that obscures the number of people who have real crises and the extent to which the problem is closely tied to work. These problems are not going to be fixed by faith-based initiatives or volunteerism. The right answer is to make the labor market work better for more people and to use public policy to fill out what's needed.

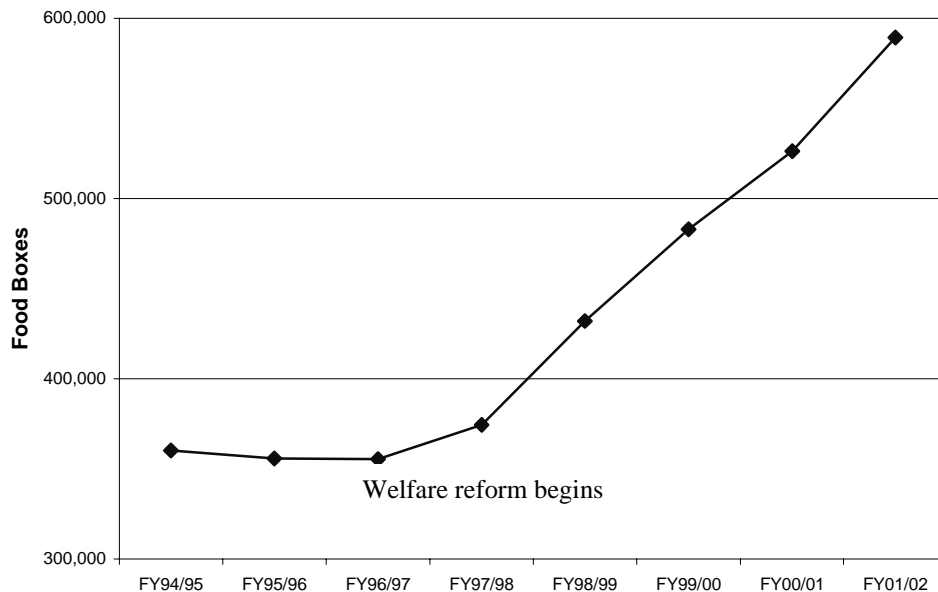
Working for a Living Wage

A living wage is a wage that allows families to meet their basic needs without resorting to public assistance and provides them some ability to deal with emergencies and plan ahead. Living wages are calculated on the basis of family budgets, which include basic necessities; state, local and federal taxes; and minimal savings.²

- ◆ In 2000, the living wage for a single adult in Oregon was \$11.05/hr
- ◆ For a single adult with 2 children, the wage is \$17.95/hr
- ◆ Only 37% of single adults with 2 children earn a living wage for their household type
- ◆ Each job opening that pays at least the living wage for a single adult has 5 applicants

Source: Northwest Job Gap Study: Searching for Work That Pays Oregon, 2001.

There has been a continued increase in the amount of emergency food boxes distributed through the Oregon Food Bank Network.



A typical **food box contains enough food to last for 3-5 days**. The contents of the box usually include both USDA commodities and donated food, and the overall nutritional content can be variable. The number of food boxes a family may receive depends on the agency that they visit. Each agency sets its own limits for food box distribution based on pantry resources, but most find they must limit to once per month.

64% of respondents stated that they **needed more than one food box per month** to help meet their food needs

About 25% of respondents said that the food box they got at the time of the survey was the only one they had gotten that year. However, 14% said they had received 12 or more food boxes in the year. It appears that pantries may be serving more “first timers,” while also meeting the increased needs of those already accessing emergency food.

The average number of food boxes distributed per pantry has jumped from 1300/year in 1996 to 1860/year in 2002. (The number of food boxes range from 80 per year to over 10,000 at several large urban pantries.) **The Food Bank Network added only 44 more pantries during that time.**¹¹

The emergency food system is feeling the strain of trying to serve more people for a longer period of time. **Some areas of the state are underserved.** Even where a pantry is available, **hours and days pantries are open are often limited, especially in rural areas.** It is also difficult to expand program access when relying on the time and energy of (often senior citizen) volunteers.

The Food Bank network should not be considered as a nutrition program or as a long term solution to providing food to low income families. Rather, changes must occur at the state and federal levels to eliminate the factors that cause families to need emergency food assistance.

“The food baskets are good and helpful.”

“Would like to have help with transportation to get food box home for people who have no transportation.”

“All family cases do not come from textbook situations. There are so many rules and regulations people are not qualifying for the services that are offered to help. Be tough, ask for help, speak up and tell your story to anyone who will listen until someone gives you the services you need and deserve.”

“Define 1. Hunger, 2. Emergency, 3. What constitutes 1&2 above.”

“I think you need to go back to 4 boxes monthly. We could really benefit greatly from this transaction and a great deal of others with kids who could also.”

“The assistance that is available now is a good help for the community. It’s a great easing of some stress to know my kids aren’t going hungry every day.”

“It’s my first time.”

“I would like to say that the food banks need more donations. Maybe do something to encourage more donations.”

“We work hard but there seems to be no future for our children with the way things are going.”

“It’s just not enough to live on.”

What do people feel would help?

“Help us! We are not lazy, stupid or greedy! Do not make us feel ashamed, we feel bad enough without other people’s help.”

“We need Oregon’s sliding scale social programs reinstated due to the high cost of co-payments and lack of funds for OHP. I currently am in need of dental and medical assistance but can’t afford it.”

“Just need a job.”

“Every penny counts. Learn to make good bean soup.”

“ I live in moderate income apts. & my rent is now \$696 it will go up June 1st \$25 more. I would like to say that rent & child care & utilities are too high. My rent goes up \$25 a year on each lease that I sign. My income does not go up that much. I have never been on welfare or food stamps & I have always worked full time & still broke-suck!

“We need to lower the cost of power, help more people that are disabled. I’m glad for churches and for your assistance.”

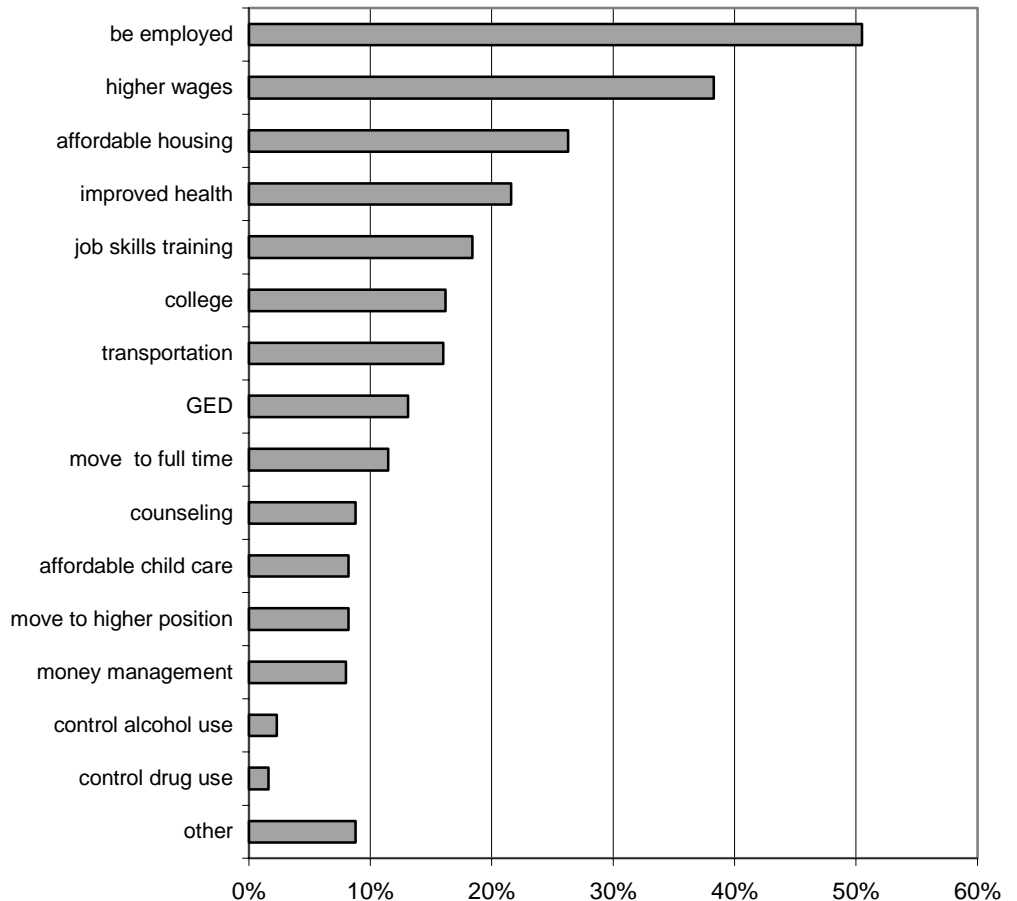
“Do not be embarrassed, that they don’t look down on you ‘cause you need help.”

“Aumentar un poco mas el salario minimo para ganar mas dinero y que la renta sean menos caras. (Raise the minimum wage a little to make more money and that rents be less expensive.)”

Survey results reveal that few respondents were confident or optimistic about the immediate future, although several comments called on others to “keep the faith” and “to keep on keepin’ on.”

Respondents were asked: “Which are the main things, if you could change them, that will help prevent your family from experiencing another food crisis?” As in past HFA surveys, respondents focused on **employment, living wages, affordable housing, education and health**. These obvious and basic components of a successful, productive life continue to remain out of reach for many Oregonians.

What will help prevent another food crisis?



“To let them know that food prices have sky rocketed and food stamps no way meet the need. That they need to put back rent caps on rents so landlords cannot raise people’s rents to the point of eviction or losing their homes when on a fixed income.”

Closing Notes

The findings from the Hunger Factors Assessment 2002 demonstrate that the majority of those seeking food assistance are employed, retired, disabled or looking to work. They are our fellow Oregonians who, through a variety of circumstances, have found themselves in need of emergency food assistance.

As in past Hunger Factors surveys, housing and child care costs, low wages, poor health, lack of education or job skills, under-employment, and unemployment are all significant contributors to respondents' "hard times." The serious weakening of the web of our nation's social "safety net," and the mounting state and county budget deficits, has exacerbated the hard times by moving people from "subsidized poverty to unsubsidized poverty."

Asked what changes in their lives would help prevent future food crises, the majority expressed their desire for employment, a higher wage, affordable housing, job training opportunities, access to higher education, and to safe, affordable child care. Yet this survey shows that without support or a livable wage, jobs don't do all the good they should. While 42% of the households responding to this survey had at least one member working, 80% had incomes below the federal poverty line.

In the words of those who know best, here are some of the key elements to escaping poverty and ensuring a humane standard of living for low wage workers and those unable to work:

- **Jobs** that pay wages to provide for basic family needs
"Oregon has been terrible for employment, both public and private sector jobs do not pay a sustainable, decent wage."
- More flexible rules to allow people on TANF to pursue **education and job training**
"I would like to say more options for training in the work force."
- Affordable, quality **child care** and before- and after-school programs.
"Need cheaper day care. I was working for a month but the day care was too expensive. I worked just to pay day care."
- **Food stamp** levels that ensure adequate nutrition.
"Food stamps never enough-must supplement with bill money or do without."
- Affordable **housing** opportunities.
"People need more housing that is affordable and less red tape to struggle through to get. By the time a person can find a place on their own they have paid out over \$100-\$300 in application fees."

To these should be added:

- Adoption of the Parents As Scholars Program in Oregon to allow TANF clients to complete basic or pursue higher education.
- Expansion and outreach for Child Nutrition Programs (especially assisting Summer Food Program sponsors).
- Significant Food Stamp outreach to eligible households.
- More equitable tax policy. (Oregon currently taxes the income of people below the poverty line)
- Increased reimbursement levels for child care providers and lower co-payments for parents receiving subsidized child care.

The continuing and steadily increasing need for charitable food programs in our state and nation is sobering. The efforts of these charitable organizations cannot meet the need; nor can voluntary efforts substitute for consistent, just public policy generated by the creative cooperation of legislators, private sector programs and an informed, caring public.

Methodology

The findings of this report are based on a survey of emergency food box clients conducted in the spring of 2002. The Oregon Food Bank selected 99 of 317 emergency food box agencies for participation. The original 68 agencies, chosen for the HFA 1996, were chosen through a stratified cluster sampling technique, based on geography and agency size. The state was divided into five regions: Eastern Oregon, Coast, South, Mid-Valley and North Valley (see below). Within each region, local member agencies were selected with the conditions of one agency selected from each Regional Coordinating Agency area, and agencies serving more people were weighted to be more likely to be selected. Additional agencies were added for HFA 1998, 2000 and 2002 by random selection within each RCA's member agencies.

The six page, 42-item questionnaire was modified from the Hunger Factors Assessment surveys conducted in previous years. Training packets on distribution of surveys were sent to all participating agencies. Regional Coordinating Agency representatives worked with local member agencies to do the same. Surveys were sent directly to selected member agencies in a quantity estimated on the number of households served in one week based on 2001 service figures. The number of Spanish- and Russian-language surveys were estimated based on advice from Regional Coordinating Agency representatives.

The selected agencies offered a survey to a representative of every household that requested a food box during a two-week period or until the surveys ran out. Surveys were distributed from April 6 through April 24. Clients could refuse to fill out the survey. Completion of the survey was not a requirement for receipt of a food box. Respondents were assured anonymity and confidentiality. Of the 4520 surveys distributed to the 99 local agencies, 2856 were completed and used for analysis. Eleven of the 99 agencies did not participate.

The data was analyzed using SPSS 10 for Windows.

Note:

Emergency food box agencies distribute a 3-5 day supply of food to recipients within their service area. Each agency has its own distribution guidelines; recipients can usually receive an emergency food box between three and 12 times per year. Individuals who suffer food shortages but do not seek help from emergency food box agencies in the Oregon Food Bank Network are not included in this study.

Regional breakout of surveys returned:

East	<i>Hood River, Wasco, Sherman, Gilliam, Wheeler, Morrow, Umatilla, Union, Wallowa, Baker, Grant, Crook, Jeffer., Deschutes, Klamath, Lake, Harney and Malheur Counties</i>	370 surveys	13% of total
Coast	<i>Clatsop, Tillamook, Lincoln, Coos and Curry Counties</i>	304	10.6%
North	<i>Yamhill, Washington, Columbia, Clackamas, Multnomah and Clark Counties</i>	1037	36.3%
Valley	<i>Marion, Polk, Linn, Benton and Lane Counties</i>	623	21.8%
South	<i>Douglas, Josephine and Jackson Counties</i>	523	18.3%

Appendix: Poverty line; Statistics

Excerpted or adapted from: *Prosperity in Perspective: The State of Working Oregon 2000*, Oregon Center for Public Policy¹³

What is the “poverty line”?

When people talk about the “federal poverty level” or “federal poverty line,” they are usually referring to guidelines adjusted annually for inflation and issued by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services early each year. The poverty line varies by family size, as the 2002 guidelines below indicate.

Some critics point out that, by failing to include [non-cash] income that many low-income people receive in the form of public assistance, the federal poverty line over-states the amount of poverty. However, the federal poverty line is based on out-of-date assumptions about the costs of living that cause the measure to underestimate poverty overall.

The original measure was formulated in the 1960s using a survey of American families in 1955. Most survey respondents at the time had one wage-earner and a spouse who did not work for pay. These families were spending about one-third of their income on food, so researchers set the poverty line at three times the cost of a minimal food budget. Five decades later, spending patterns have changed in America. Families no longer spend one-third of their income on food and two-thirds on other basic needs. Furthermore, expenses most families now regard as crucial elements of their household budget are simply excluded from consideration in the poverty calculation.

Federal poverty guidelines, 2002, for the 48 contiguous states and the District of Columbia		
Number in family	Gross yearly income	Gross monthly income
1	\$8,860	\$738
2	\$11,940	\$995
3	\$15,020	\$1,251
4	\$18,100	\$1,508
5	\$21,180	\$1,765
6	\$24,260	\$2,022
7	\$27,340	\$2,278
8	\$30,420	\$2,535
Over 8 add for each child	+\$3,080	+\$257

Source: Federal Register v.67 n.31, 2/14/2002 pp. 6931-6933. Monthly data calculated by the OFB and is rounded to the nearest dollar.

The increased cost of child care, commuting, housing, and work-related expenses now have a huge impact on family budgets. These additional basic expenses mean that more money is required to maintain the same standard of living in today’s world. The poverty measure ignores these factors, and underestimates poverty as a result.

Statistics

Mean or average is the sum of the measures in a set divided by the number of measures in the set. A small number of high or low values can pull an average higher or lower.

Median is defined as the middle value when the numbers are arranged in increasing or decreasing order. The median sometimes gives a more accurate picture of sample measured than the mean, especially when there are outliers, or extreme values.

For example: The citizens of Verysmall Village have incomes: \$20,000, \$30,000, \$30,000, \$35,000, \$40,000 and \$100,000. Therefore, the **mean** income for the village is \$42,500, though only one villager has an income equal to or greater than the average. The **median** income is \$32,500 (the average of the two middle incomes: \$30,000 and \$35,000).

The median, which says that half of the villagers make less than \$32,500 and half make more, gives a more accurate picture of the village than the mean income - only one villager’s income is equal to or higher than the mean.

Endnotes

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Regional Coordinating Agency (Counties Served)

ACCESS, Inc. (Jackson)
CAPECO (Gilliam, Morrow, Umatilla & Wheeler)
COCAAN (Crook, Deschutes & Jefferson)
Clatsop Community Action (Astoria)
Columbia Pacific Food Bank (Columbia)
Community Connection
(Baker, Grant, Union & Wallowa)
FOOD For Lane County (Lane)
Josephine County Food Share (Josephine)
Klamath Lake Co. Food Bank (Klamath & Lake)
Lincoln County Food Share (Lincoln)
Linn Benton Food Share (Linn & Benton)
Marion Polk Food Share (Marion & Polk)

Mid-Columbia Community Action
(Hood River, Sherman & Wasco)
Oregon Food Bank
(Clackamas, Multnomah & Clark)
Oregon Food Bank—serving Washington Co.
South Coast Food Share (Coos & Curry)
St. Vincent de Paul of Tillamook (Tillamook)
Umpqua Community Action Network
Food Shares (Douglas)
Yamhill County Community Action (Yamhill)
Malheur Council on Aging (Harney & Malheur)

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Allen Temple Pantry (Portland)	LIFE Center (Portland)	Silverton Area Comm. F. B.
A.W.A.R.E (Woodburn)	Lincoln City Pantry-Pac. Baptist	Snow-CAP (Portland)
ACCESS West Medford Pantry	Lincoln Co Food Share (Newport)	So. Benton F.B. (Corvallis)
Bandon Emergency Food	Lord's Store House (Lebanon)	South County F. B. (Seaside)
Benedictine Sisters (Mt. Angel)	NE Emergency Food Program	St. Mary's Outreach (Pendleton)
Brooks Assembly of God Pantry	North County F. B. (Wheeler)	St. Patrick's - Cascade Locks
Catholic Comm. Srvcs (Springfld)	Oak Grove Church Pantry	St. Vincent de Paul - McMinnville
C.A.S.L. (Hillsboro)	Philomath Food Bank	St. Vincent de Paul - Corvallis
Church of Christ (Santa Clara)	Portland Adventist Comm. Svc.	St. Vincent de Paul - Glendale
Clatsop Emergency FB (Astoria)	Rogue Family Center (White City)	St. Vincent de Paul - Salem
Common Good (Port Orford)	Salvation Army - Clackamas	St. Vincent de Paul - Eugene
Dillard-Winston Food Bank	Salvation Army - Eugene	St. Vincent de Paul - Scappose
Ella Curan F.B. (Independence)	Salvation Army - Hillsboro	St. Vincent de Paul - For Grove
Elgin Food Bank	Salvation Army - La Grande	St. Vincent de Paul - Hillsboro
1st Presby Church (Klamath Falls)	Salvation Army - Medford	St. Vincent de Paul - Prineville
FISH Hood River	Salvation Army - Vancouver	St. Vincent de Paul - Tigard
FISH Newburg	SDA Comm. Svc - Beaverton	St. Vincent de Paul - Vanc.WA
FISH Roseburg	SDA Comm. Svc. - Bend	St. Vincent de Paul - Canby
FISH Emergency Svcs Portland	SDA Comm. Svc. - Coquille	St. Vincent de Paul - Portland
FISH Albany	SDA Comm. Svc - Eugene	St. Vincent de Paul - St. Andrew
Free Methodist of Lebanon	SDA Comm. Svc. - Grants Pass	Sutherlin Oakland Food Pantry
Gloria Dei Luth. Ch. (Central Pt.)	SDA Comm. Svc. - Medford	The F.I.S.H. (Grants Pass)
Grant County FB (John Day)	SDA Comm. Svc. - Tualatin	Tillamook Food Bank
Harney Co Senior Ctr (Burns)	SDA Comm. Svc. - Tualatin	Trinity United Methodist (Toledo)
H.E.L.P. Inc. (St. Helens)	SDA Comm. Svc. - Pendleton	Triangle Lake Grange (Blachly)
HOPE - 1st Presby (Oregon City)	SDA Comm. Svc. - Sweet Home	Treasure Valley Food Bank
Illinois Valley Open Door	SDA Comm. Svc. - Tualatin	(Ontario)
(Cave Junction)	SDA Comm. Svc. - Vancouver	Turning Point CC - (St. Helens)
Irrigon-Boardman Emerg. Assist.	Sherman Co. FB (The Dalles)	West Salem United Methodist
Joseph Project (Powers)	Signs of Victory F. B. (Albany)	William Temple House (Portland)



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