



# PRESS release

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**Please see poverty correction at:  
<http://www.econ.state.or.us/opb/popsurv/2000pop.htm>**

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## **Survey Shows Slower Growth in Oregonians' Incomes, While Poverty and Hunger Appear to be Down**

*Survey Also Finds Oregonians are Generally Happy with Public Services*

**SALEM (OR)**—After rapid increases during the early to mid-1990s, Oregonians' household income growth has slowed significantly. In a two-year period from 1997 to 1999, median household income increased only four percent—from \$37,200 to \$38,700. This is a dramatic slowdown from the 13.8% increase in median household income Oregonians experienced between 1995 and 1997.

At the same time, the percentage of persons in poverty fell to 10.3% after remaining at nearly 12% since 1989. And the percentage of Oregonians who have hunger or food insecurity issues appears to be lower than previously thought—6.5% of Oregonians as compared to 12.6%. These findings are part of a recent survey released today by the Oregon Progress Board and the Department of Administrative Services, Office of Economic Analysis.

“There are many possible explanations for the slowdown in income,” said Jeff Tryens, executive director of the Oregon Progress Board. “Higher-income Oregonians may be feeling the effects of the Asian downturn, and we are also experiencing a stagnation in wages as we exit the high-growth 1990s.” As for the reductions in the poverty rate and food insecurity, Tryens stated that many factors could be influencing the drops in rates, including Oregon's high minimum wage. But Tryens emphasized that the apparent declines in poverty and hunger are significant enough to warrant additional research.

Researchers working on the survey project also found improvements in many other indicators have slowed. “Levels of educational attainment and access to health insurance coverage have not improved significantly since 1996,” said Kanhaiya Vaidya, state demographer at the state Office of Economic Analysis. “Oregonians with bachelor's degrees remains at 29%, and Oregonians with health insurance coverage remains at 90%.”

Despite this slowdown, Oregonians generally feel positive about the state's ability to generate jobs. Seventy-eight percent of the respondents believed that Oregon was doing a good job in creating jobs—a substantial increase from 55% in 1994.

(more)

Other key findings from the report are:

- Fifty-four percent of Oregonians were not born in Oregon. However, in-migration, primarily from California, has slowed.
- Attitudes about traffic congestion are worsening. These concerns have accompanied the rapid growth in Oregon's population. Only 22% of Oregonians found traffic congestion a serious problem in 1990 as compared to 33% in 2000.
- Oregonians feel that the performance on most indicators, like crime control to providing quality education, have improved since 1998 with one exception—health care. In 1998 75% of Oregonians thought the state was doing a good job providing health care as compared to only 66% in 2000.
- Computer ownership and usage of the Internet are up. Seventy percent of Oregonians have a computer in their homes and nearly 63% of homes have Internet access. Public libraries usage has declined. Some 83% of children between ages 5 and 17 use their local library—down from 87% in 1998. Usage rate for adults, ages 18 to 64, has also dropped, from 64% in 1998 to 58% in 2000.
- Support for improving salmon runs remains strong, yet has declined slightly—from 55% in 1998 of Oregonians seeing it as very important to 52% in 2000.
- The percentage of Oregonians playing a lottery game has declined (down from 52% in 1998 to 47% in 2000), but support for the lottery remains strong (70% in favor of the lottery).
- Oregonians lack knowledge of their state government's revenue source and expense. Only 40% know that the biggest source of state government revenue comes from the personal income tax.

These findings appear in the *2000 Oregon Population Survey: Summary of Findings*, a comprehensive look at the state's people, economy, and culture sponsored by the Oregon Progress Board and the state Office of Economic Analysis.

Every two years since 1990, the *Oregon Population Survey* has asked Oregonians a battery of questions covering areas ranging from child care, to employment, to technology use. The result is an in-depth picture of the lives, families and jobs of Oregonians and the state's quality of life. "The data in these surveys is a powerful tool for citizens, elected officials and organizations across the state, said Tryens. "They provide the hard facts our state needs to make informed public policy decisions."

The *2000 Oregon Population Survey* was conducted during the spring and summer of 2000. Approximately 3,600 household representatives were interviewed statewide. (Some questions were answered by a smaller number of respondents.)

PLEASE NOTE: The *Summary of Findings* is available online at [www.oea.das.state.or.us/ops2000/ops2000\\_report.pdf](http://www.oea.das.state.or.us/ops2000/ops2000_report.pdf).

Complete *2000 Oregon Population Survey* data are available online through the Office of Economic Analysis at [www.oea.das.state.or.us/](http://www.oea.das.state.or.us/). The data are also organized by region and race/ethnicity.

Please look for updated stories throughout the spring and summer.

