Social and Economic Context

Poverty

Poverty is a strong social determinant of poor health. People with lower socioeconomic status have higher premature mortality as well as increased rates of health risk behaviors such as smoking and obesity.

In Oregon in 2012, 15.5% of the adult population lived at or below poverty level. The proportion of children in Oregon living in poverty was higher: 23.0%. These figures are fairly similar to those for the U.S. overall.

The percentage of the population living at or below the poverty level rose between 2007 and 2011, likely due to the economic downturn experienced between 2007 and 2011.
nationwide. In 2012, Oregon saw the first decline of people in poverty since before the recession.

**Additional Resources:** [U.S. Census Bureau](https://www.census.gov)

**About the Data:** Data source is the American Community Survey (ACS). The ACS is an ongoing Census Bureau survey that samples a small percentage of the population every year.

The U.S. Census Bureau uses income cutoffs calculated for family size, number of children age <18 years. Unrelated individuals and two-person families are further differentiated by age of reference person (< age 65 years and ≥ 65 years).

To determine poverty status, total family income in the last 12 months is compared to the poverty threshold for that family size and composition. If the total income is less than the threshold, then the family and all its members are considered “below the poverty level.” If a person is not living in a family structure (with anyone related by birth, marriage, or adoption), then the person’s own income is compared with his or her poverty threshold. The total number of people below the poverty level is the sum of all people (both those living in families and those not) living in the last 12 months below the poverty threshold.
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Oregon State Health Profile

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