

## Social and Economic Context

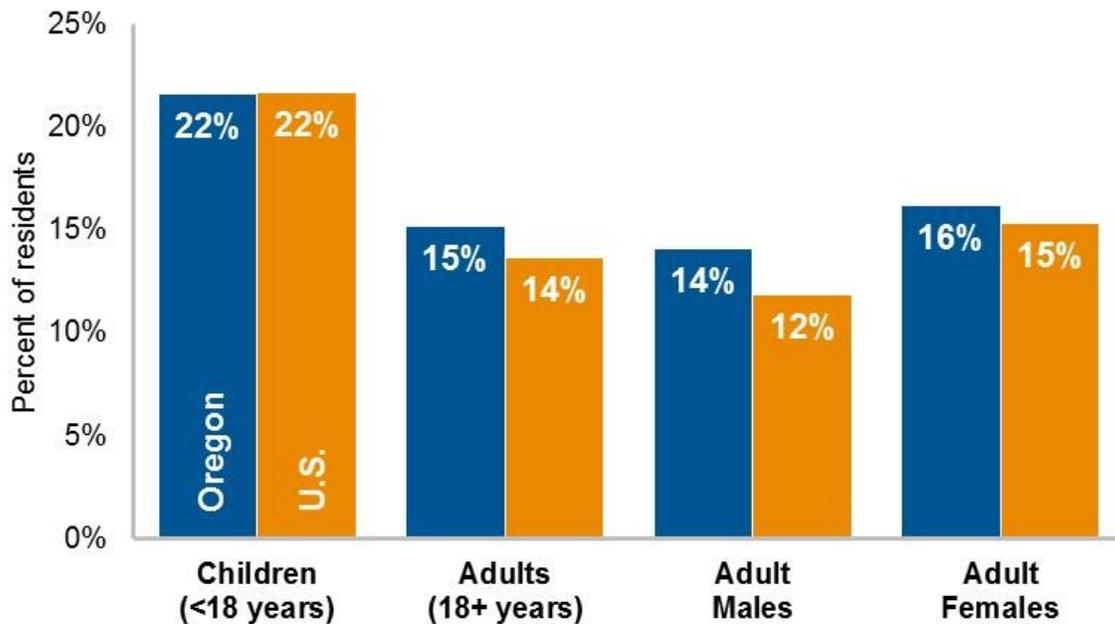
### Poverty

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 2014, 15% of the adult population lived below poverty level (Figure 1). The proportion of children in Oregon living in poverty was higher: 22%. These figures are fairly similar to those for the U.S. overall.

FIGURE 1

**Population living below federal poverty level by age and sex, Oregon & U.S., 2014**

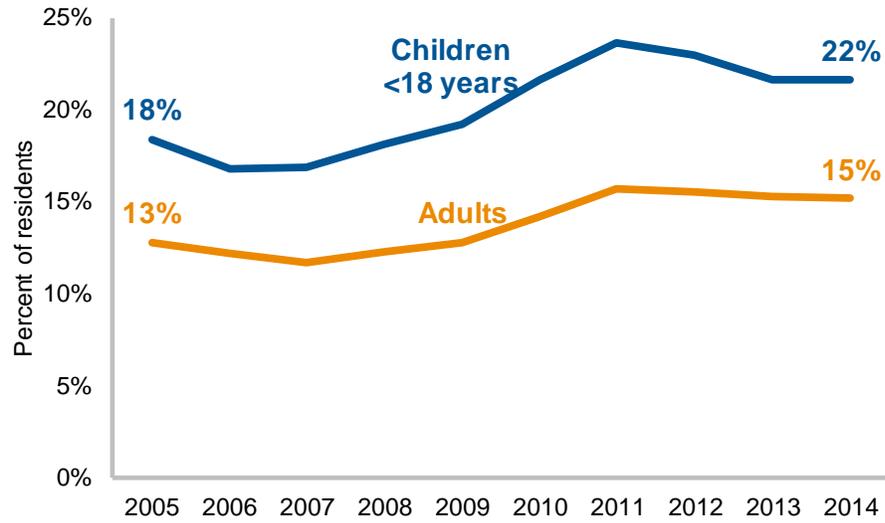


Source: American Community Survey (ACS)

The percentage of the population living below the poverty level rose between 2007 and 2011, likely due to the economic downturn experienced nationwide (Figure 2). In 2012, Oregon saw the first decline of children in poverty since before the recession.

FIGURE 2

**Adults and children <18 years living below federal poverty level by year, Oregon**

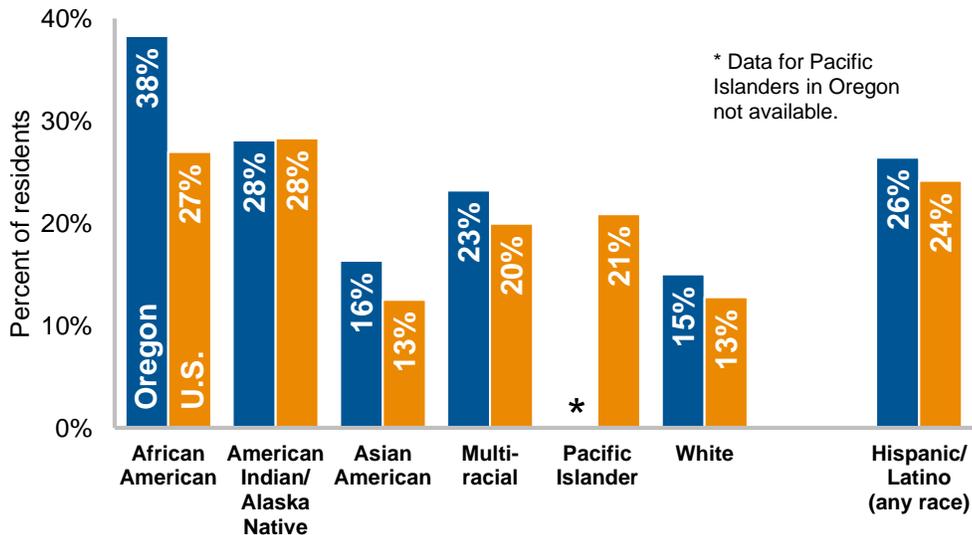


Source: American Community Survey (ACS)

Almost all racial and ethnic groups – particularly African Americans - experience higher levels of poverty in Oregon than in the U.S. as a whole (Figure 3). Within Oregon, the white population has a lower percentage of persons living in poverty than all other racial/ethnic groups although the difference with Asian Americans is not statistically significant.

FIGURE 3

**Population living below federal poverty level by race/ethnicity, Oregon & U.S., 2014**



Source: American Community Survey (ACS)

**Additional Resources:** [U.S. Census Bureau](#)

**About the Data:** Data source is the American Community Survey (ACS). The ACS is an ongoing Census Bureau survey that samples a 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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**Date Updated:** June 21, 2016

[Oregon State Health Profile](#)

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