



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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September 5, 2005

Losing Ground: Workers slipping back as the economy expands

by Michael Leachman

Oregon's economy is improving, but thousands of Oregon workers are still losing ground as the incomes of more fortunate Oregonians improve.

- Jobs have not caught up with population growth. While there were 32,100 more jobs in Oregon in July 2005 than in November 2000, the peak jobs month before the recession, there were also 161,400 more working-age Oregonians.
- In July 2005, there were 74 jobs for every 100 working-age Oregonians, compared to 79 jobs for every 100 working-age Oregonians in November 2000.
- The share of working-age Oregonians working or actively looking for work declined sharply last year, even as the economy picked up steam.
- One in five part-time workers in Oregon want full-time work but can't find it. This is the highest rate of any state in the country.
- Among Oregonians working a substantial number of hours as the economy recovered in 2004, nearly all the earnings growth went to the highest paid workers. Low-pay workers lost \$93, mid-pay workers lost \$79, and high-pay workers gained \$1,261.
- In 2003-04, 22 percent of all Oregonians of working-age went without health insurance for a full year, up from 15.6 percent in 2000-01.
- The share of Oregon adults living in a home where someone went hungry at times is climbing even as the economy improves.
- As Oregon's economy grew, near-record levels of Oregonians filed for bankruptcy.
- The top one percent saw their real incomes increase by \$32,500 in 2003, while the real income of the typical household slipped back, losing another \$170.
- In every Oregon county but two the incomes of the top one percent of households at least doubled between 1980 and 2003, even after adjusting for inflation. In 14 Oregon counties, the top one percent saw their real average income more than triple.