

Oregon Is Only State with Improved Health Coverage, but Poverty Rises and Income Flatlines

The first two full years of economic growth following the end of the Great Recession brought mixed news for Oregon, as shown by the U.S. Census Bureau's Current Population Survey (CPS). Data for 2010-11 showed that Oregon experienced a rise in poverty and stagnation of income for the typical Oregon household. But the data also showed fewer Oregonians without health insurance, making Oregon the only state in the nation to accomplish that goal.

Due to the sample size of the survey instrument, the Census Bureau and the Oregon Center for Public Policy report CPS state estimates using multiple-year averages; the small sample size of the annual survey makes annual estimates unreliable.

Poverty in Oregon

Poverty rate in 2010-11: 14.3 percent.

Change in Oregon poverty rate: Oregon's 2010-11 poverty rate was 2.4 percentage points greater than the 12.0 percent rate in 2008-09, the years spanning most of the recession. However, Oregon's poverty rate in 2010-11 was not statistically different from the 12.3 percent rate estimate for 2006-07, prior to the recession.

Total number of Oregonians living in poverty: In 2010-11 about 545,000 Oregonians, including about 184,000 Oregon children, were living in poverty. In 2008-09 about 457,000 Oregonians were living in poverty, about 140,000 of them children.

Child poverty rate in 2010-11: 21.5 percent.

Change in Oregon child poverty rate: Oregon's 2010-11 child poverty rate was 5.6 percentage points greater than in 2006-07 (a 35 percent increase), the period just before the recession, and 5.3 percentage points greater than in 2008-09 (a 33 percent increase), during the recession.

Household Income in Oregon

Median household income in 2010-11: \$51,862.

No change in median household income: Adjusted for inflation, Oregon's median household income in 2010-11 remained unchanged from 2008-09, the recessionary period. It also remained unchanged from 2006-07, prior to the recession.

Health Coverage in Oregon

Share of Oregonians without health insurance coverage in 2010-11: 14.9 percent.

Change in Oregon health coverage: Oregon was the only state in the country with a reduction in the share of individuals lacking coverage from 2008-09 to 2010-11. The share of Oregonians without health coverage decreased 1.7 percentage points over that period.

Share of Oregon children without health coverage in 2010-11: 8.8 percent.

Change in child health coverage: There was no statistically significant change in the share of Oregon children lacking health coverage between 2008-09 and 2010-11. However, the survey showed a 9.4 percentage point decline in employer-provided coverage for children between 2000-01 and 2010-11 and an increase of 14.3 percentage points in Medicaid-funded coverage for children over the same period.

National Trends

The sample size of the CPS allows for the use of single-year data when looking at national trends.

Nationwide, the Census Bureau reported that 15 percent of Americans, or 46.2 million people, were in poverty in 2011. After three consecutive years of increases, neither the poverty rate nor the number of Americans in poverty in 2011 were statistically different from the prior year.

From 2010 to 2011, after adjusting for inflation, the nation saw its median household income drop by 1.5 percent to \$50,054.

The share of individuals lacking health coverage across America decreased from 16.3 percent in 2010 to 15.7 percent in 2011. The share of children lacking health coverage in 2011 was 9.4 percent, statistically the same as the 9.8 percent estimate for 2010.

About the Census Data

As mentioned above, the sample size of the CPS requires using multi-year averages for individual states.

Additional estimates of poverty, income and health coverage in Oregon will become available later in September, when the Census Bureau releases the results of a different survey, the American Community Survey (ACS). The ACS draws on a much larger sample of the population. Thus, single-year estimates can be used at the state level and even sub-state areas with a population of at least 65,000 people.

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