

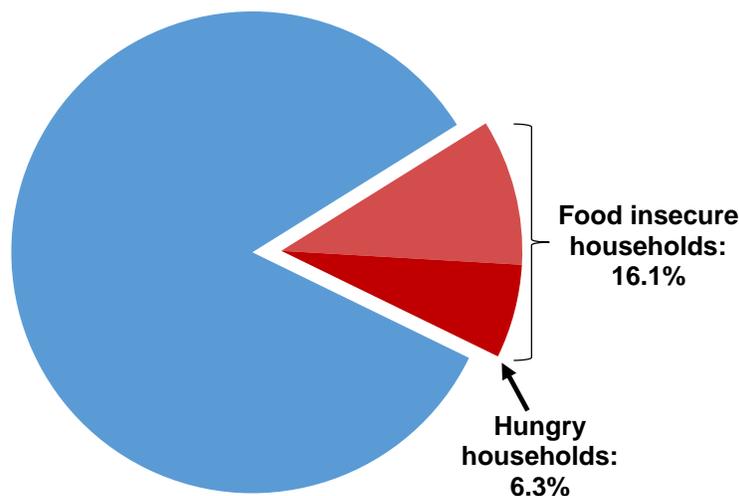
Hunger and Food Insecurity Rise in Oregon, Despite Economic Recovery

More Oregonians are having a hard time putting food on the table. Among all states, Oregon recorded the second biggest jump in food insecurity, even as food insecurity declined at the national level. Hunger, a more severe form of food insecurity, also rose in Oregon, while remaining flat nationally. This analysis compares two time periods: 2012-14 with 2009-11.¹

These findings are yet another reminder that despite Oregon's economic upswing, low- and moderate-income Oregonians are finding it increasingly difficult to make ends meet. Lawmakers must enact economic policies that will turn the tide on food insecurity and hunger, such as significantly increasing the state's minimum wage, cracking down on wage theft and making stronger investments in services that help working families make ends meet.

Nearly 1 in 6 Oregon households food insecure

(2012-14 share of Oregon households with food insecurity)



Source: OCCPP analysis of USDA data.

Nearly one in six (16.1 percent) Oregon households were “food insecure” during the three-year period of 2012-14. These families found it hard to put food on the table, often not knowing where their next meal was going to come from.

For some of these families, their food insecurity was so severe it qualified as “hunger.” These families skipped meals or ate too little because they were not able to afford ample food.

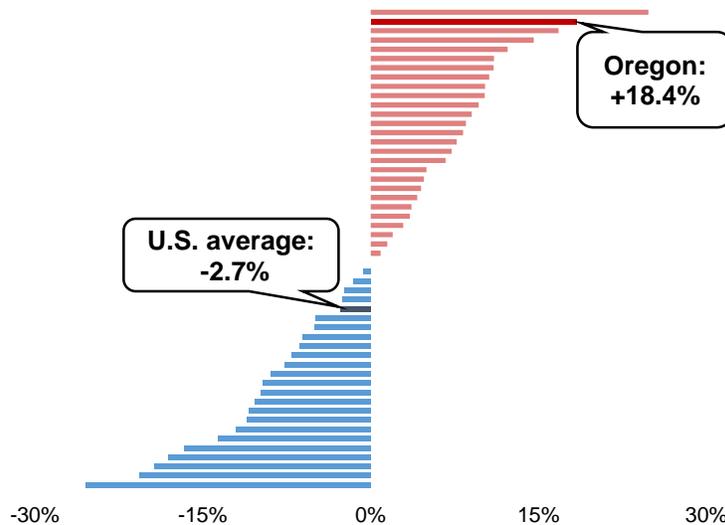
In 2012-14, 6.3 percent of Oregon households experienced hunger.

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A View of the State of Working Oregon is a series of occasional OCCPP fact sheets explaining Oregon's economy from the perspective of working families.

Oregon: second biggest spike in food insecurity

(2009-11 to 2012-14 percent change in low food security by state)



Source: OCPP analysis of USDA data.

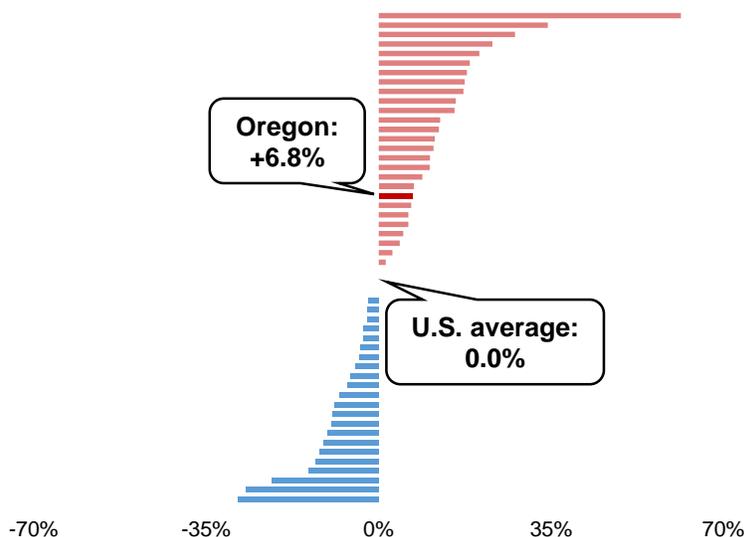
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From early in the economic recovery (2009-11) to more recently (2012-14), food insecurity in Oregon increased 18.4 percent. Over the same time period, food insecurity nationally decreased by 2.7 percent.

The increase in food insecurity in Oregon was the second highest increase among all states and the District of Columbia, exceeded only by Louisiana.

Hunger rises in Oregon; stays flat nationwide

(2009-11 to 2012-14 percent change in very low food security by state)



Source: OCPP analysis of USDA data.

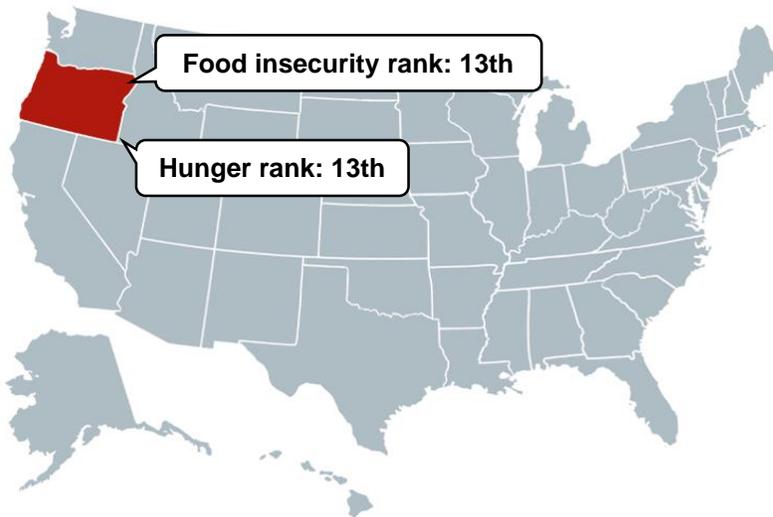
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More Oregonians are going hungry. These families are having to skip meals or eat less overall because they are unable to afford or access enough food.

From early in the economic recovery to more recently, hunger in Oregon increased by 6.8 percent. Over the same time period, hunger nationwide remained flat.

Oregon ranks high in food insecurity and hunger

(2012-14 Oregon food insecurity and hunger rankings among all states and D.C.)



Source: OCPP analysis of USDA data.

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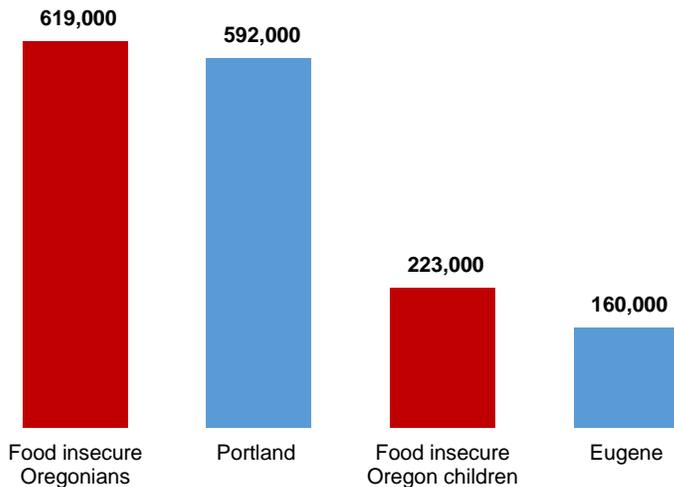
Overall, Oregon ranks higher than most states in terms of food insecurity and hunger.

In 2012-14, Oregon ranked 13th among all states and the District of Columbia in food insecurity. This was up from the state's 2009-11 ranking when Oregon ranked 30th overall.

Oregon also ranked 13th among all states and the District of Columbia in terms of hunger in 2012-14. This was up from its ranking of 16th overall in 2009-11.

More Oregonians are food insecure than live in the state's largest cities

(2013 estimated food insecure Oregonians and Portland and Eugene populations)



Estimates rounded to the nearest thousand.
Source: OCPP analysis of Feeding America and Portland State University Population Research Center data.

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The number of Oregonians struggling to put food on the table exceeds the population of the state's largest cities.

According to estimates by Feeding America, about 619,000 Oregonians were food insecure in 2013. That is more than lived in Portland, Oregon's largest city.²

That same year, Feeding America estimates 223,000 Oregon children were food insecure, more than the 160,000 Oregonians in Eugene, the state's second-largest city.

Lawmakers Must Recommit to Ending Hunger in Oregon

Not long ago, Oregon could boast of making significant strides in the fight to end hunger. In the 1990's, Oregon had one of the highest food insecurity rates among all states. In 2000, Oregon lawmakers expanded eligibility for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP formerly food stamps), thereby ensuring more Oregonians would be able to put food on the table. The result? Food insecurity and hunger declined substantially over the better part of the next decade.³

However, in the period of economic growth following the Great Recession, food insecurity and hunger are once again on the rise.

Lawmakers today must recommit to economic policies that will help end food insecurity and hunger in Oregon. This means significantly increasing Oregon's minimum wage to ensure no one working full-time in Oregon lives in poverty. It means cracking down on wage theft, to ensure that workers get paid the wages they have earned. And it means making stronger investments in services that help working families make ends meet, such as Employment Related Day Care, which reduces the cost of child care for low-income working families.

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The Center is a part of the State Priorities Partnership (www.statepriorities.org) and the Economic Analysis and Research Network (www.earncentral.org).

Endnotes

¹ Unless otherwise noted, all figures in this fact sheet are OCPP analysis of data found in Alisha Coleman-Jensen, Mathew P. Rabbitt, Christian Gregory, and Anita Singh, *Household Food Security in the United States in 2014*, United States Department of Agriculture Economic Research Service, September 2015, available at <http://www.ers.usda.gov/media/1896841/err194.pdf>. The USDA report draws from the food security supplement of the Current Population Survey (CPS). Estimates at the state level are produced using three-year averages to ensure sufficient sample size of the population.

² OCPP analysis of Feeding America and Portland State University Population Research Center data. Feeding America's annual report, *Map the Meal Gap*, provides annual estimates of food insecurity, child food insecurity and other measures at the state and local levels. Their model draws on Current Population Survey, American Community Survey and Bureau of Labor Statistics data to generate these estimates. For more on their methodology see, *Map the Meal Gap 2015: Technical Brief*, Feeding America, 2015, available at <http://www.feedingamerica.org/hunger-in-america/our-research/map-the-meal-gap/2013/2013-map-the-meal-gap-tech-brief.pdf>. To explore the data, see, "Data by County in Each State," Feeding America, 2015, available at <http://www.feedingamerica.org/hunger-in-america/our-research/map-the-meal-gap/data-by-county-in-each-state.html>.

³ Oregon Center for Public Policy, *Rolling Up Our Sleeves: Building an Oregon that Works for Working Families*, December 2008, p. 8, available at <http://www.ocpp.org/media/uploads/pdf/rpt20081216RollingUpOurSleevesSWOfnl.pdf>.