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**December 27, 2016**

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## **Share of families in poverty despite full-time work rises in Oregon**

A growing number of Oregon families are unable to escape poverty despite having a full-time worker, according to the Oregon Center for Public Policy.

A new study by the research institute finds that the state's share of poor families with at least one full-time worker increased by nearly one-third during several years of economic growth following the end of the Great Recession. In 2015, about 25.9 percent of poor families had at least one parent who worked full time, up from 19.6 percent in 2009.

"If you work and play by the rules, you should be able to provide a decent standard of living for yourself and your kids," said Juan Carlos Ordóñez, the Center's communications director. "But that ideal has become less true, to the detriment of our state."

Last year, seven out of 10 families (70.6 percent) in Oregon living in poverty had at least one parent who worked either full time or part time. Latino families and single-mother households were more likely to live in poverty despite working, according to the Center.

Having a parent who works is the norm for an Oregon child growing up on poverty. In 2015, about three of every four poor Oregon children (75.5 percent) had at least one parent who worked.

Many of these children had a parent who not only worked, but worked full time. The Center calculated that, in 2015, the number of poor Oregon children living in a household with at least one full-time worker (52,500) was about the same as the total number of students attending the University of Oregon and Oregon State University, combined (53,700).

Poverty can harm a child's development, particularly in the early years, the Center noted. The stress caused by poverty during childhood can impact a child's cognitive development, their physical health, and their earnings as an adult.

While praising the Oregon legislature's decision earlier this year to boost the state's minimum wage, Ordóñez said lawmakers need to do more to confront the problem of poverty despite work. That includes increasing the state's Earned Income Tax Credit, increasing access to affordable child care, and tackling the problem of wage theft — when workers don't get paid the wages they have earned.

The Oregon Center for Public Policy ([www.ocpp.org](http://www.ocpp.org)) is a non-partisan, non-profit institute that does in-depth research and analysis on budget, tax and economic issues. The Center's goal is to improve decision making and generate more opportunities for all Oregonians.

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