

Washington County Issues of Poverty

Premise # 1: The low-income population is increasing and diversifying.

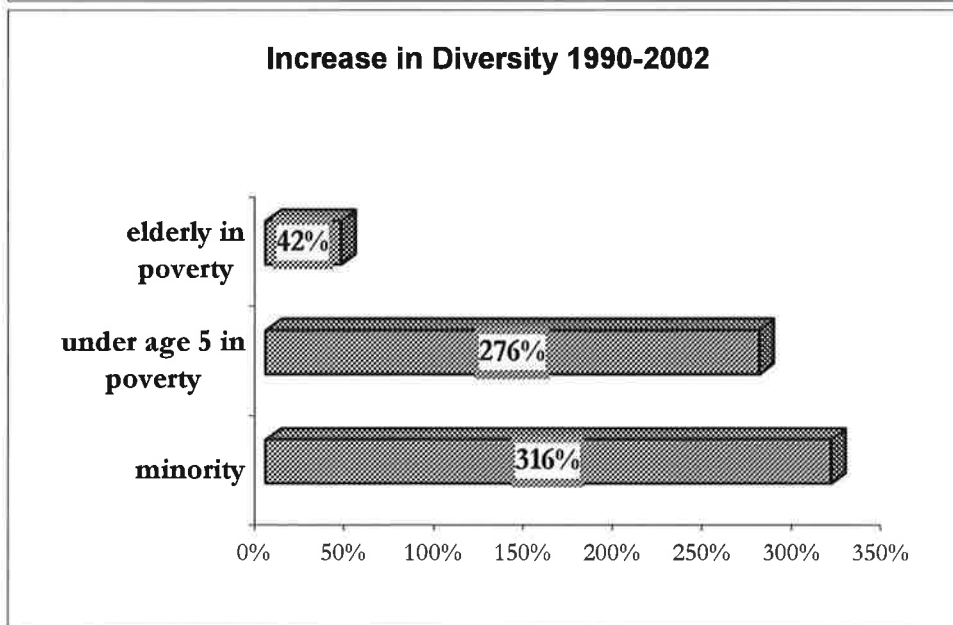
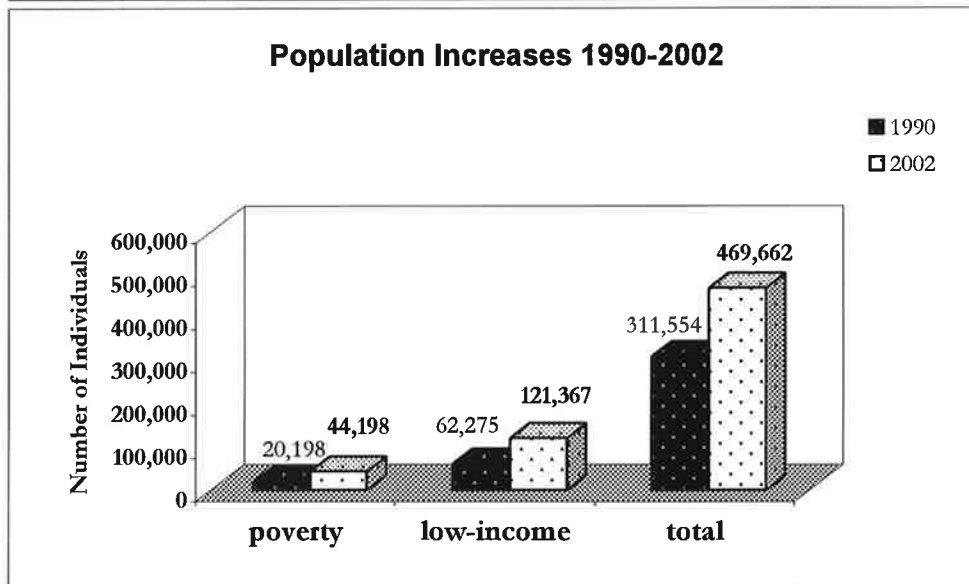
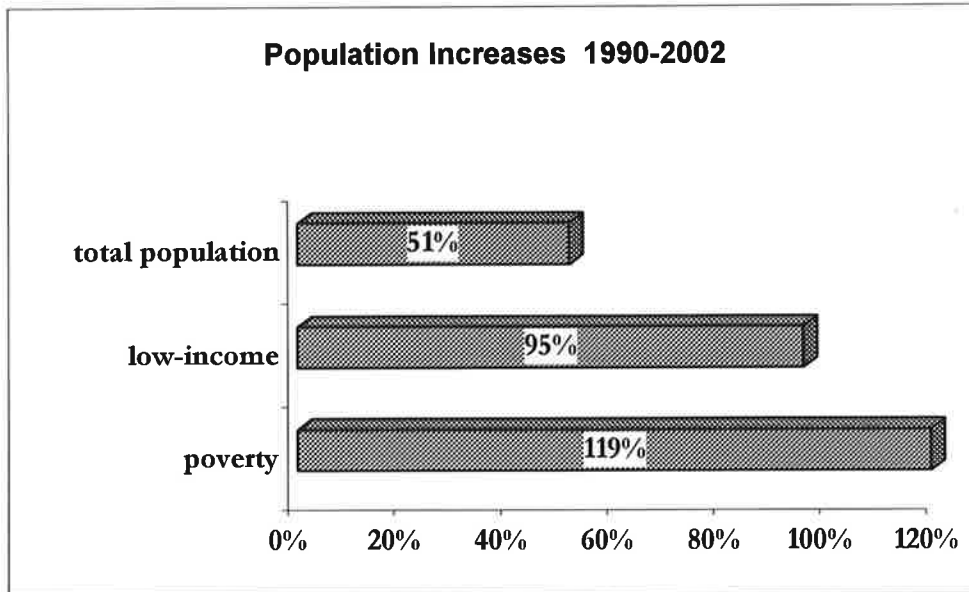
Supporting Data:

- Poverty population increased 119%, from 20,198 to 44,198. ¹
- Percentage of people living in poverty has increased from 6.9% to 9%.¹
- County population increased 51%, from 311,554 to 469,162. ¹
- Low-income population (up to 200% of poverty) increased by 95%, from 62,275 to 121,367.¹
- As of November 2003 the unemployment rate was 6.1%.²
- Minority population has increased 316%, from 31,315 to 99,091.³
- Children under 5 living in poverty have increased 276%, from 2,288 to 8,612, and represent 19% of the poverty population. ¹
- Elderly people over 65 living poverty have increased 42% from 2,065 to 2,940, and represent 7% of the poverty population. ¹
- Types of families requesting Community Action services include: educated and undereducated, single parents, minimum wage workers, people working multiple jobs, professionals hit by the bad economy, large families with young children, those whose needs are not met but don't qualify for services.⁴

Current Community Action Strategies:

- Services focus on promoting self-determination and positioning families for increased income.
- Expand partnerships & collaborations to increase community responsiveness to growing needs.
- Educate community about poverty issues and advocate for changes needed to reduce poverty and poverty conditions.
- Serve more families with Head Start, Energy Assistance and Weatherization; expand services related to housing, homelessness, pregnancy, child care, parenting and high risk children.
- Deliver all services in Spanish and English; perform outreach to diverse populations; increase accessibility.

Premise #1: The Low-income population is increasing and diversifying.



Premise # 2: Low wage jobs by themselves do not lift families out of poverty conditions; but they are an important first step. An increasing number of families experiencing conditions of poverty are working but earning less than \$30,000 annually, leaving them economically insecure.

Supporting Data:

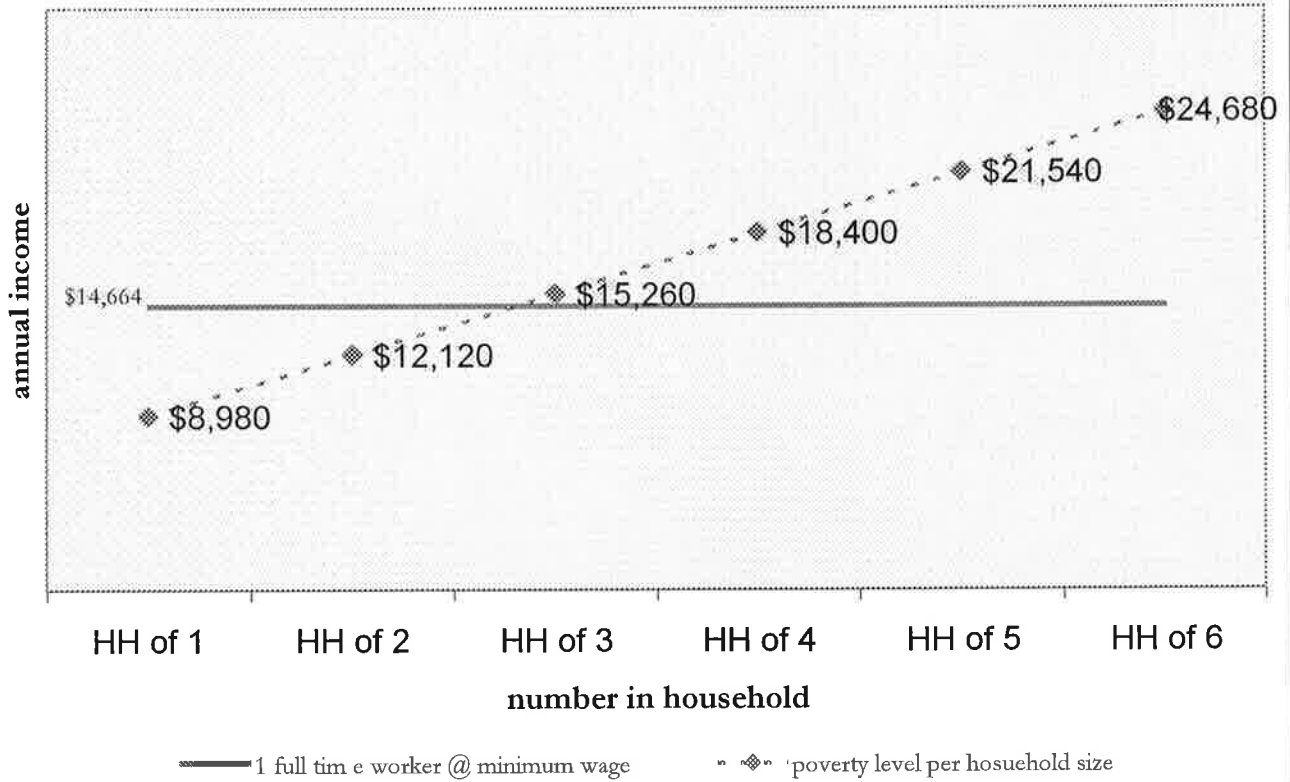
- Poverty level for a family of three is \$15,260 annually, yet a family with one full time worker earning minimum wage has an annual income of \$14,664.⁵
- A family of three needs to earn \$31,803 (over twice the poverty rate) to afford a 2-bedroom apartment at market rate, yet a family with two full time workers earning minimum wage has an annual income of \$29,328.⁶
- In 2001, 154,734 Washington County households filed tax returns; of that group 78,555 had incomes under \$31,150.⁷
- \$31,150 is the income cap for participation in the Oregon Earned Income Credit²⁷
- 24% of Washington County residents are living on less than \$30,000 annually.⁸
- Projections indicate that most job growth in the next ten years will be in service jobs: retail, clerical, cashiers, janitors, food service, customer service.⁹
- 42% (2,628) of families receiving energy assistance from Community Action were working.¹⁰
- 30% of homeless families residing in Community Action's shelter were working.¹¹

Current Community Action Strategies:

- Provide child care to allow families to enter the work force; stable child care contributes to increased job performance and opportunities for advancement.
- Increase the quality of child care, community-wide, through education and training of providers.
- Provide basic needs support to help bridge the gap between income and expense.
- Provide internet based information and referral to increase access to resources for working families.
- Provide adult education to increase competence and opportunity for greater self-sufficiency.

Premise #2: Low wage jobs by themselves do not lift families out of poverty conditions

Poverty Levels Compared to Minimum Wage Earnings



Premise # 3: People living in conditions of poverty are unable to meet their basic needs such as food, shelter, heat, utilities, clothing, transportation, health, and child care. Many residents living at levels above the poverty rate are economically insecure and are making choices between these basic needs. One ordinary, unexpected expense can be catastrophic.

Supporting Data:

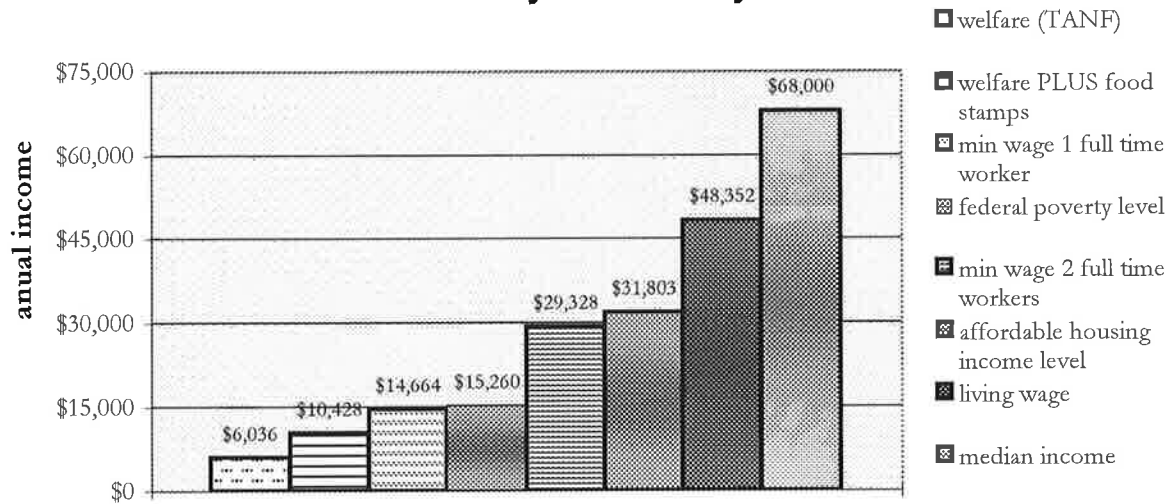
- 6,256 households living below 200% of the poverty level received assistance with their energy bills.¹¹
- On any given night 219 homeless people are seeking or receiving shelter.¹²
- 36% of renters live in housing that is unaffordable, exceeding 30% of their income.⁸
- Prior to the defeat of Measure 30, 56,960 residents do not have health insurance.¹³
- In 2002-2003 9,218 people received food from a food pantry each month.¹⁴
- One out of five low-income people depend upon public assistance, living well below poverty.¹⁵
- Washington County has the highest housing costs in the state.⁶
- Energy costs have increased significantly over the past 3-5 years.
- The average cost of care for a pre-school child is \$6,266/year.¹¹

Current Community Action Strategies:

- Provide emergency assistance for heat, utilities, rent and occasionally other needs and services to stabilize housing.
- Shelter homeless families with children.
- Provide clothing, bus tickets and food boxes.
- Provide health services to Head Start eligible children and connect low-income pregnant women to pre-natal care and other support services.
- Weatherize homes to increase warmth and reduce costs.
- Provide child care and connections to child care.
- Increase access to human and health service resources by providing a comprehensive database of services available.

Premise #3: many residents living at levels above poverty rate are economically insecure

Economic Insecurity for a Family of Three



Premise # 4: Public Assistance for families is not a long-term economic solution because it keeps them in poverty.

Supporting Data:

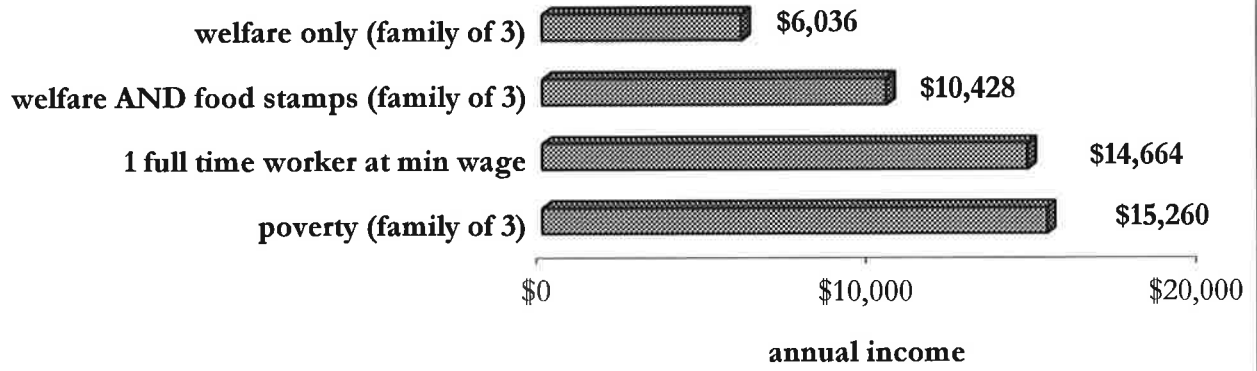
- The poverty level for a family of three is \$15,260 and yet, Temporary Assistance to Needy Families grants (TANF) for a family of three (parent and 2 children) is only \$6,036 (\$503/mo).¹⁶
- A family of three receiving TANF /Welfare and food stamps has an income of \$10,428.¹⁵
- There are approximately 3,923 people receiving TANF and food stamps.¹⁵
- A household that is employed is not eligible for TANF.¹⁵

Current Community Action Strategies:

- Partner with the Department of Human Services to provide Employment Related Day Care (ERDC) to families transitioning from welfare to work.
- Provide emergency and basic needs services to TANF families to reduce the conditions of poverty or prevent destitution.
- Advocate for state and federal welfare policy that better supports families on TANF as they transition from welfare to work.

Premise #4: Public Assistance keeps families in poverty

Public Assistance to Poverty Level



Premise # 5: The job market requires greater skills than ever before to earn a family wage. Lack of education, and lack of family-wage jobs, limit earning potential.

Supporting Data:

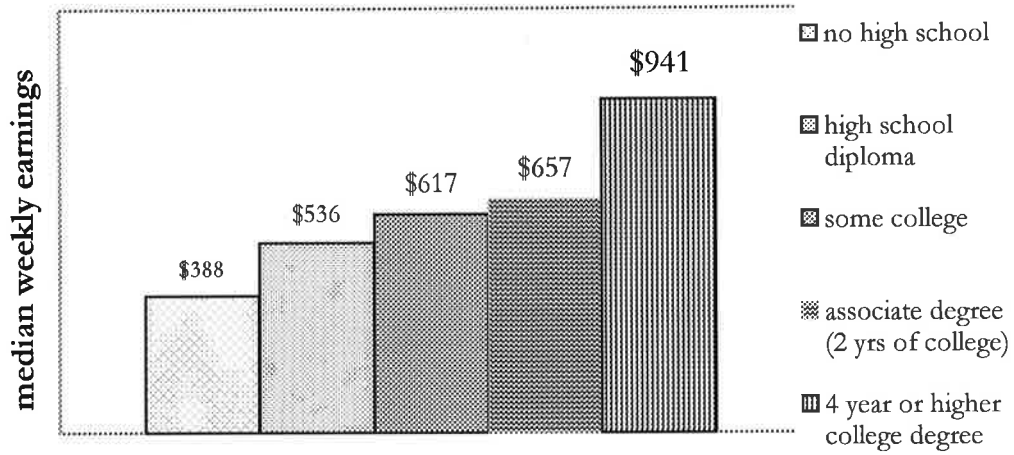
- Call for a “statewide strategy to upgrade skills and increase number of citizens who speak 2 languages”.¹⁷
- “Most of the low-wage jobs in the hi-tech industries have gone away.”¹⁸
- One in five employers report having difficulty finding job applicants with work ethic, problem solving and critical thinking skills.¹⁹
- Computer software application skills top the list of skills that will be in greater demand in the next 5 years.¹⁹
- Less education increases the likelihood of unemployment.⁹
- Oregon jobs in high demand that do not require education beyond high school are: retail, food prep, food server, farm worker, janitor, nursing aide, security guard.⁹
- The two occupational groups in Oregon that are expected to grow most over the next ten years are Health Care and Services.⁹
- Workers with no high school can expect a median income of \$20,167 (\$388/week) and those with high school only may have a median income of \$27,872 (\$536/wk), while those who have some college earn \$32,084 or (\$617/wk). Income increases with additional education.⁹
- Employment sectors projected to see the most growth (2002-2012) are business services, health services, social services, private education, furniture & home furnishings.¹⁹
- From November – December 2003, Trade, Transport & Utilities and the Leisure and Hospitality sectors in Oregon saw the greatest jump in unemployment rates.⁹
- The biggest predictor of school success is family income.²¹

Current Community Action Strategies:

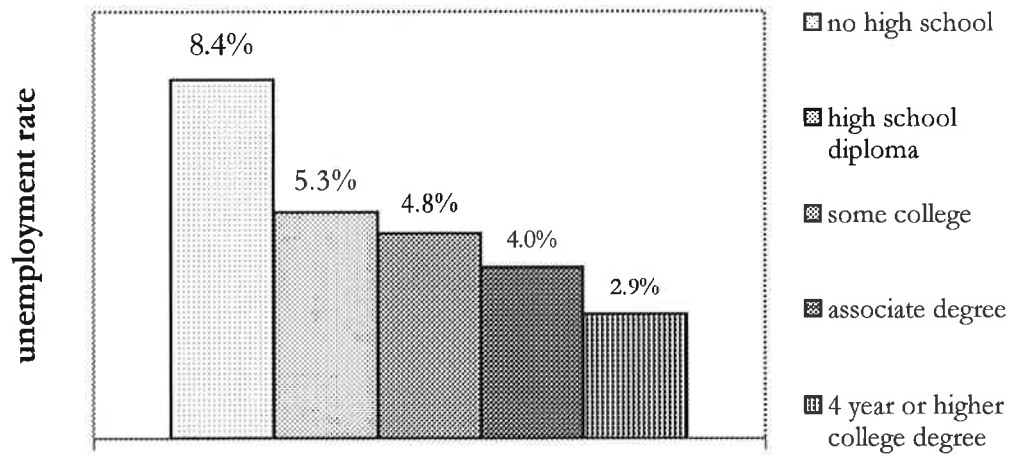
- Prepare children for success in school; involve parents and care givers in reinforcing the importance of education.
- Create computer access for homeless families and Head Start children; provide an address and phone number for job seeking homeless people.
- Stabilize housing so families can concentrate on work search or employment.
- Support homeless kids remaining in school.
- Encourage leadership development through parent involvement on Head Start Policy Council; increase knowledge, skills and self-esteem through adult education.

Premise 5: Lack of education... limits opportunities

The More You Learn, the More You Earn



The More You Learn, the Less Likely You Will be Unemployed



Premise # 6: Lack of access to affordable and adequate housing and health care has reached a crisis.

Supporting Data:

- Affordable housing is defined as paying no more than 30% of income on housing costs.²²
- 36% of renters pay more than over 30% of their income and nearly 16% of renters pay more than 50% of their income for housing costs.⁸
- A family of three needs to earn \$31,803 (over twice the poverty rate) to afford a 2-bedroom apartment at market rate, yet a family with two full time workers earning minimum wage has an annual income of \$29,328.⁶
- A full time worker must earn \$15.29 per hour (222% of minimum wage) to afford a two bedroom market rate unit; market rent for a 2-bedroom apartment is \$795 per month; based on the 30% formula, a minimum wage earner can afford monthly rent of no more than \$359.⁶
- An SSI recipient (receiving \$552 monthly) can afford monthly rent of no more than \$166. Fair market rent for a one-bedroom unit is \$644 per month.⁶
- There is a 6-8 year waiting list for Section 8 housing vouchers.²³
- As of 01/30/2004 there are 178 people on our waiting list for long term rent assistance and 200 clients per month apply for emergency rent assistance.¹¹
- There is a shortage of 25,553 affordable housing units for very low-income households.²⁴
- As of 2002, 56,960 individuals (12.8%) are uninsured.¹³
- The Essential Health Clinic treats an average of 30 patients every week, serving 2400 since the clinic opened in October 2001.¹³
- 15% of clients coming to Community Action for emergency rent assistance reported that medical issues were the cause for needing assistance (FY 2002-03).¹¹
- Health Care costs experienced double-digit (10-18%) increases over the past 6 years.²⁵ “Businesses predict a 17% average increase per year in their health care costs for the next five years.”²⁶

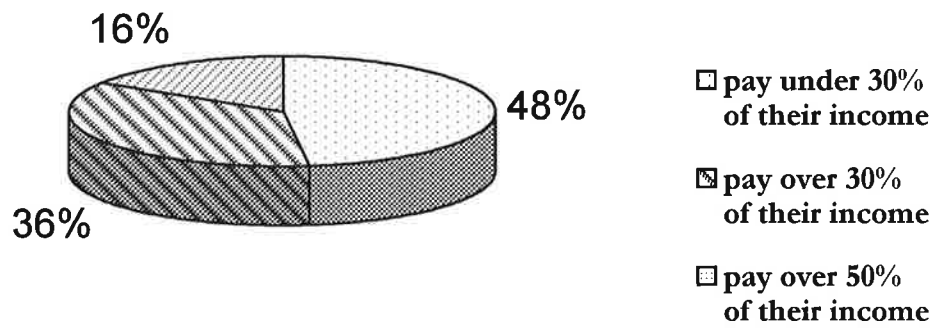
Current Community Action Strategies:

- Provide leadership for greater collaborations to address housing and homeless issues.
- Provide rent assistance to prevent homelessness; provide emergency shelter.
- Advocate and support efforts to build affordable housing; educate the community and policy makers about the need.
- Expand the number of landlords willing to accept low-income and formerly homeless tenants.
- Connect pregnant women participating in Opening Doors to prenatal care and assure that their newborns have health care.
- Pay for health and dental care for Head Start children and provide well child screening; connect their families with a health care “home”.
- Support the Essential Health Clinic.

Premise #6: Lack of access to affordable and adequate housing and health care has reached a crisis

Renters Lack Affordable Housing

defined as no more than 30% of income



APPENDIX

Source Documents

- 1 2002 United States Census Information (Website)
- 2 Oregon Employment Department
- 3 Washington County Housing Study prepared by: Population Research Center, Portland State University, June 2003
- 4 Community Action All-Staff in October, 2003
- 5 United States Department of Health and Human Services
- 6 Out of Reach 2003: America's Housing Wage Climbs, National Low Income Housing Coalition/LIHIS (nlihc.org/oor2003/data)
- 7 Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury
- 8 2000 United States Census Information (Website)
- 9 Oregon Labor Market Information System (Website)
- 10 Community Action Services Statistics (2002-2003)
- 11 Community Action Statistics (2002-2003)
- 12 One Night Shelter Count (2003)
- 13 Washington County Health Department
- 14 Oregon Food Bank
- 15 Oregon Department of Human Services
- 16 United States Department of Health and Human Services
- 17 Governor Kulongoski's Speech to Workforce Summit, GROW Oregon Conference, Oregon Convention Center, October 30, 2003. Website (egov.Oregon.gov/WORKSOURCE/news/govspeech2003-10-30.shtml)
- 18 Joe Cortright, noted economist, powerpoint presentation to Washington County Employees on January 31, 2003 in the Public Services Building. Website (co.washington.or.us/deptmts/fiscal03/econtemp.htm)
- 19 Portrait of the Workforce: An Oregon Employer Perspective, Region 2 Employer Survey. (qualityinfo.org/olmis/publications)
- 20 Vision West - Website (vision-west.org)
- 21 Seattle Pacific University, Washington School Research Center – Website (spu.edu/orgs/research/abbottjoiremanreport)
- 22 United States Department of Housing and Urban Development
- 23 Washington County Housing Department
- 24 Needs Assessment Questionnaire Year 2005 – 2010, Washington County's Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program. Website (co.washington.or.us/cdbg/planning).
- 25 Geoff Brown, Mercer Human Resource Consulting (2004)
- 26 Website – (covertheuninsuredweek.org: Press Release – Businesses Anticipate Future Increases...)
- 27 Oregon Department of Revenue