

# Working Oregonians at risk for hunger

Oregon's rate of hungry households is higher than the nation's.

BY PETER WONG  
Statesman Journal

Got a job? Does your household have at least one adult who works full time during the year? Are there two wage earners?

Does your household have two parents with children?

In most of the nation, chances are that if you are

## To learn more

To see the full report by Oregon State University researchers, "Food Insecurity and Hunger in Oregon: A New Look," see this story at [Statesman Journal.com](http://StatesmanJournal.com), as well as the recent report by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, "Household Food Security in the United States, 2002." Marion-Polk Food Share can be reached at (503) 581-3855.

in one of those categories, you are less worried about going hungry.

But Oregonians in those categories are more likely

to worry about going hungry or actually be hungry, according to a study by two Oregon State University researchers, who presented their findings Tuesday to the Oregon Progress.

"Almost any way you cut this, the rates in Oregon appear to be higher than the national rates, although some are fairly insignificant," said Bruce Weber, an OSU Extension economist and professor of agricultural and resource economics.

The study was conducted by Weber and Mark Edwards, an associate profes-

sor of sociology, after four U.S. Department of Agriculture reports — dating back to 1999 — that ranked Oregon at or near the top in hunger despite its middle ranking in poverty.

"When I went into this study, I thought it was going to be a question of Oregon having more groups that are vulnerable to hunger — such as more people who are unemployed or in other high-risk categories," Edwards said.

"Instead, what we found was that most of the statistically significant differ-

ences were among groups that have low risks of hunger."

The findings are no mystery to Marion-Polk Food Share, which reported more than 4,400 families monthly seeking emergency food — one-third more than in the same quarter a year ago. Executive director Margaret Grant said in October alone, the organization got 5,192 requests for help.

"If you have two people working in a family and they are not able to take care of themselves, that's a

different picture than we saw about 10 years ago," Grant said. "But we are seeing it now."

Weber and Edwards plan a second phase of the study to explore some of the causes of Oregon's high hunger rates.

The Progress Board is headed by Gov. Ted Kulongoski who was absent Tuesday. He has made fighting hunger a top priority.

Kim Thomas of the Oregon Food Bank said the causes of hunger are easier