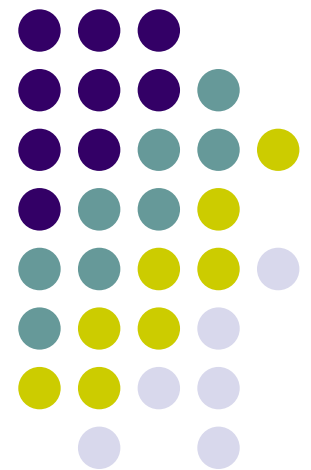


# Emergency Food and the Social Safety Net

An Introduction to Citizen  
Advocacy.



# The Process Called Advocacy



CHANGE

Advocacy

Need

Policy

Strategy

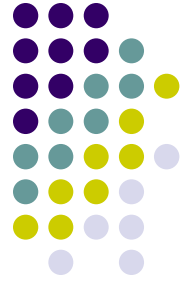


## Somewhere...

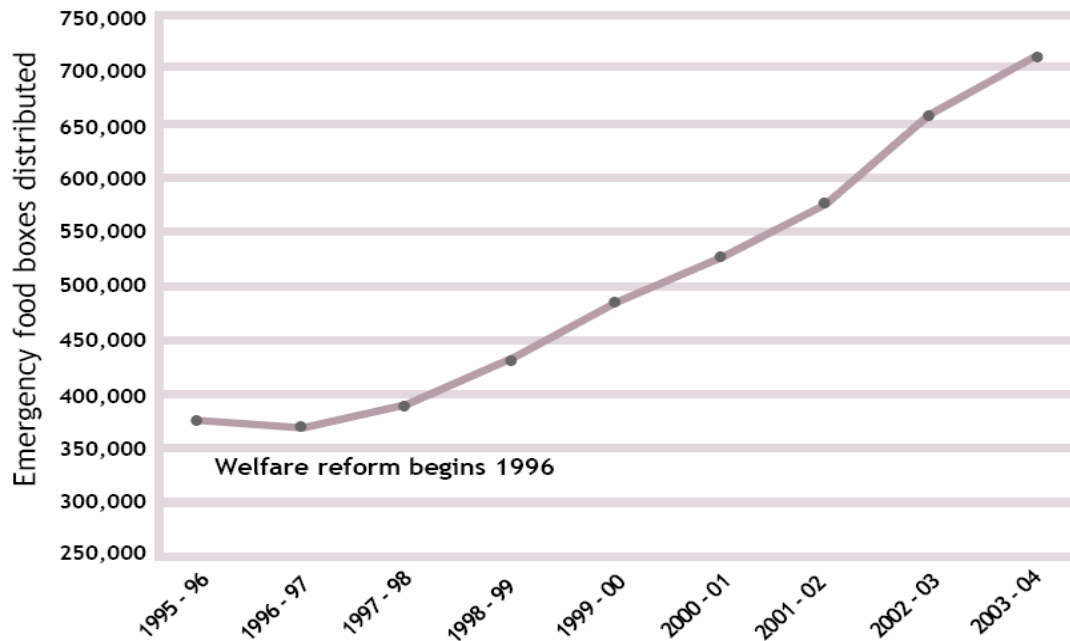
- Everyone has a decent job that pays enough money to buy everything people need to get by.
- The things people need are affordable and accessible.
- In an emergency, or if you can't work, there's always something helpful to fall back on.
- The Cubs win a World Series every now and then.

# In Reality

- Oregon consistently ranks as one of the hungriest states in the nation.
- One out of 4 children in Multnomah County lives below the poverty line.
- People increasingly rely on emergency food.



*Food box distribution continues to increase*



Source: Oregon Food Bank, *The State of Hunger Report*, 2004.



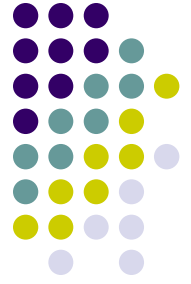
# What's going on?

Economics as  
an explanation.

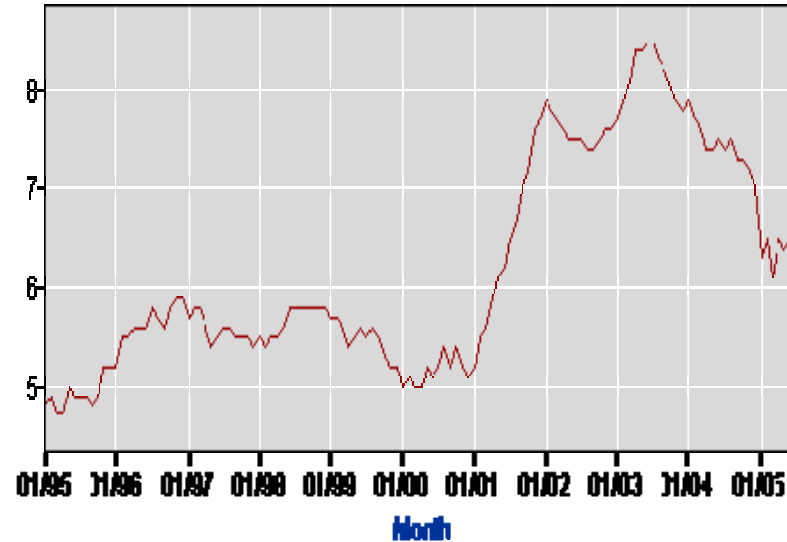
- Incomes getting lower
  - Low wages
  - Fewer Benefits
  - Unemployment
- Costs getting higher
  - Housing
  - Health Care
  - Child Care
  - Taxes
  - Food
  - Etc.

# Income

# Unemployment



Oregon's **unemployment rate**



Source: U.S.  
Department of  
Labor: Bureau of  
Labor Statistics,  
2005

# Income



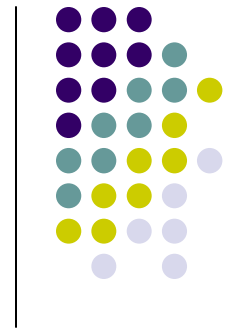
## Shortage of Family Wage Jobs

- The typical Oregonian household has **less actual income than they did in 1988-1989.**<sup>1</sup>
- Of the households receiving emergency food assistance from the Oregon Food Bank Network, 43% had at least one working member.<sup>2</sup>
- About 1 in 5 Oregonian households make enough to live above the poverty line but less than a basic family budget.

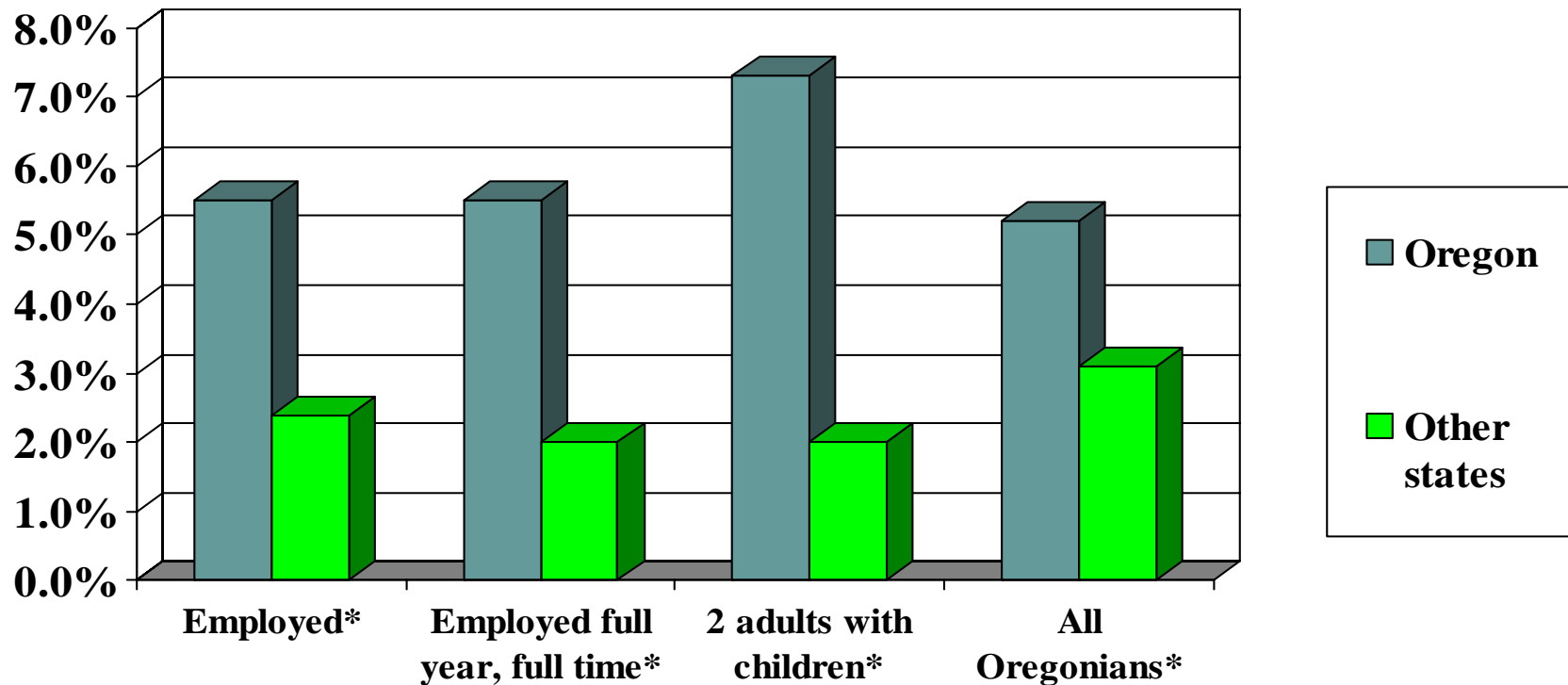
1. Source: Oregon Center for Public Policy, *In the Shadows of the Recovery: The State of Working Oregon 2004*

2. Source: *Profiles of Hunger and Poverty in Oregon and Clark County, WA*, Oregon Food Bank, 2004.

# Income



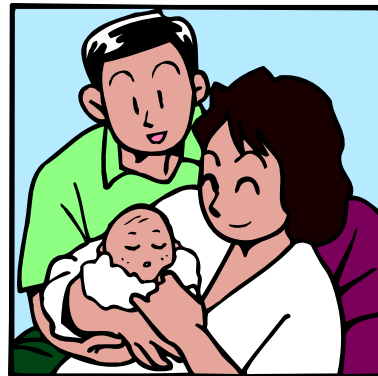
## Low-wage jobs mean high hunger rates among the employed.



Source: "Food Insecurity and Hunger in Oregon: A New Look," Mark Edwards and Bruce Weber, OSU, 2003.



**While good jobs have gotten fewer, the cost of living has increased.**



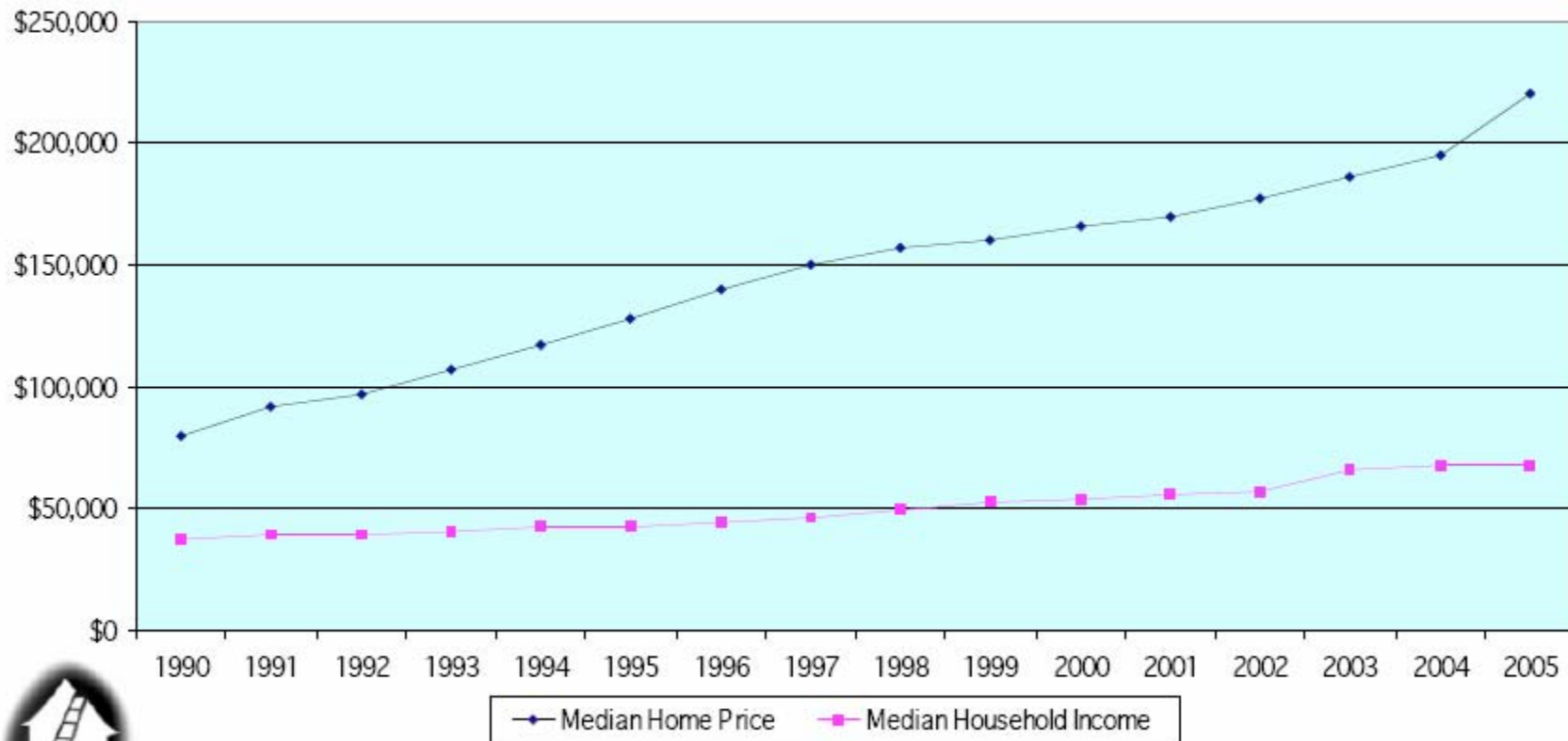
# Costs

## Housing

### Housing Prices vs. Household Income: Portland metro area 1991 - 2000



Changes in Housing Prices vs. Household Income in the Portland Metro Region  
1990-2005



Source: Community  
Development Network, 2005.

# Costs Health Care



- **Prescription drug costs are rising faster than wages.<sup>1</sup>**
- **All health care costs are increasing faster than wages.<sup>2</sup>**
- **More people lack health insurance.<sup>3</sup>**



1. U.S. Action. "Impossible Choices." Oct. 2000.

2. Oregon AFL-CIO Cost Study

3. The Oregonian, October 16<sup>th</sup>, 2005.

# Costs



## Portland Child Care: 7<sup>th</sup> Most Expensive

### Most expensive

- Manhattan: \$1057.83
- Boston: \$977.44
- Manchester: \$799.17
- Washington, DC: \$799.17
- New London (CT): \$748.22
- Philadelphia: \$740.22
- **Portland: \$737.00**
- Milwaukee (WI): \$673.98
- San Francisco: \$665.10
- Chicago: \$657.12

### Least expensive

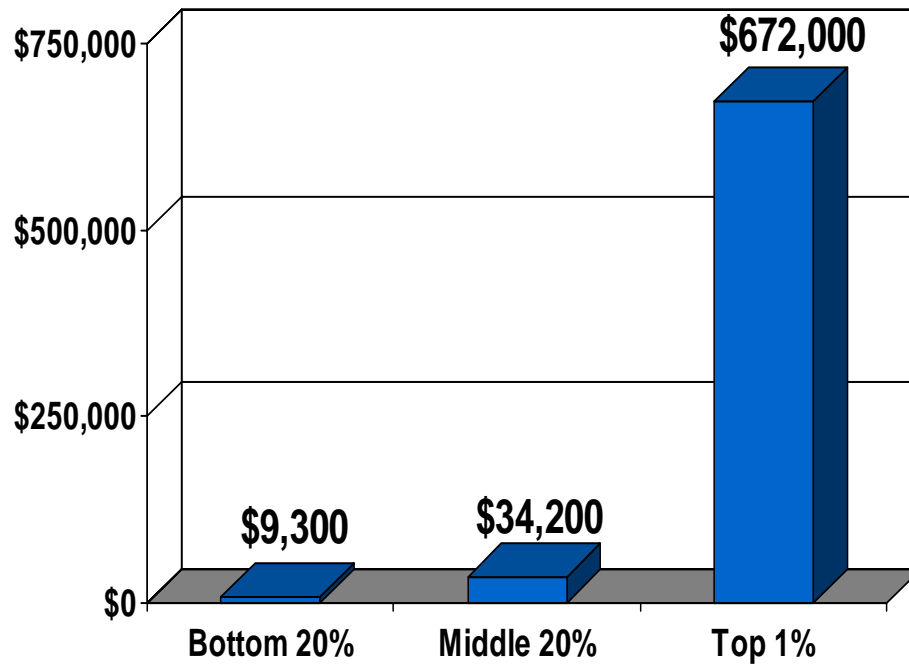
- Baton Rouge: \$339.44
- Mobile: \$346.67
- Winter Haven (FL): \$347.00
- Jackson (MS): \$362.92
- Macon (GA): \$364.00
- Billings: \$373.33
- New Orleans: \$374.11
- Jacksonville (FL): \$375.56
- Casper (WY): \$376.00
- Little Rock: \$379.00

Source: Runzheimer International, January 2004 analysis of prices in more than 140 metro areas nationwide. Cost based on average monthly fee for a 3 year old in a for-profit daycare center, 5 days/week, 8 hrs/day

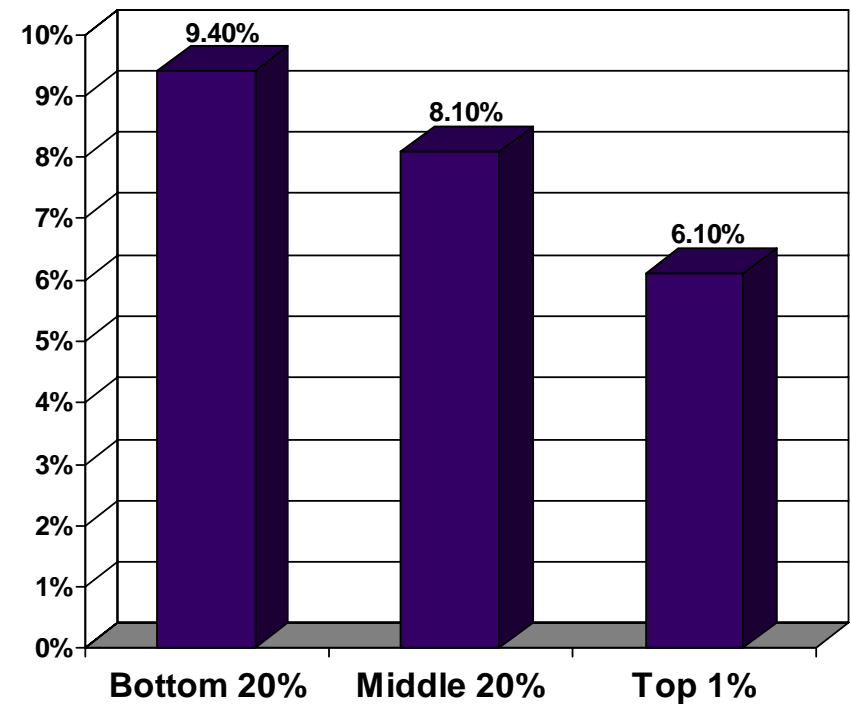
# Costs Taxes



Average income



Average State and Local Tax Liability\*

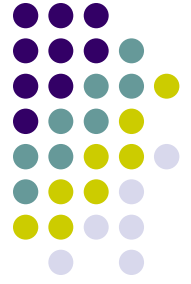


\* figures account for federal deduction of state/local taxes

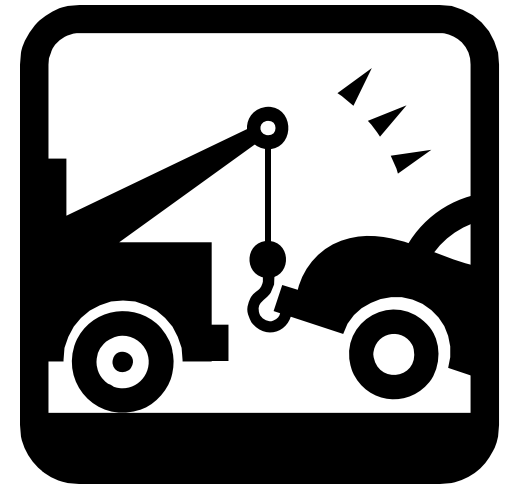
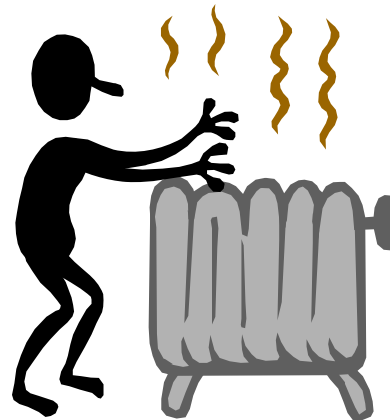
Source: "Who Pays," Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy, January 2003

# Costs

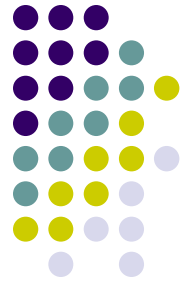
## Other Costs



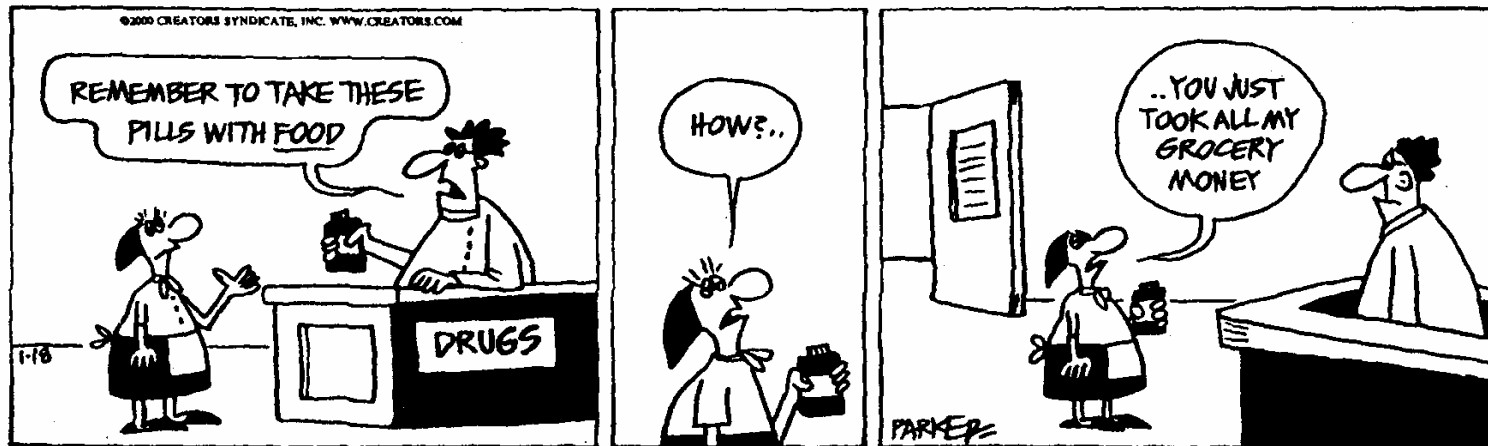
- Food
- Transportation
- Heat/Utilities
- Interest on Debts
- Emergencies
- Other?



# Higher costs and lower incomes are forcing people to make tough choices.

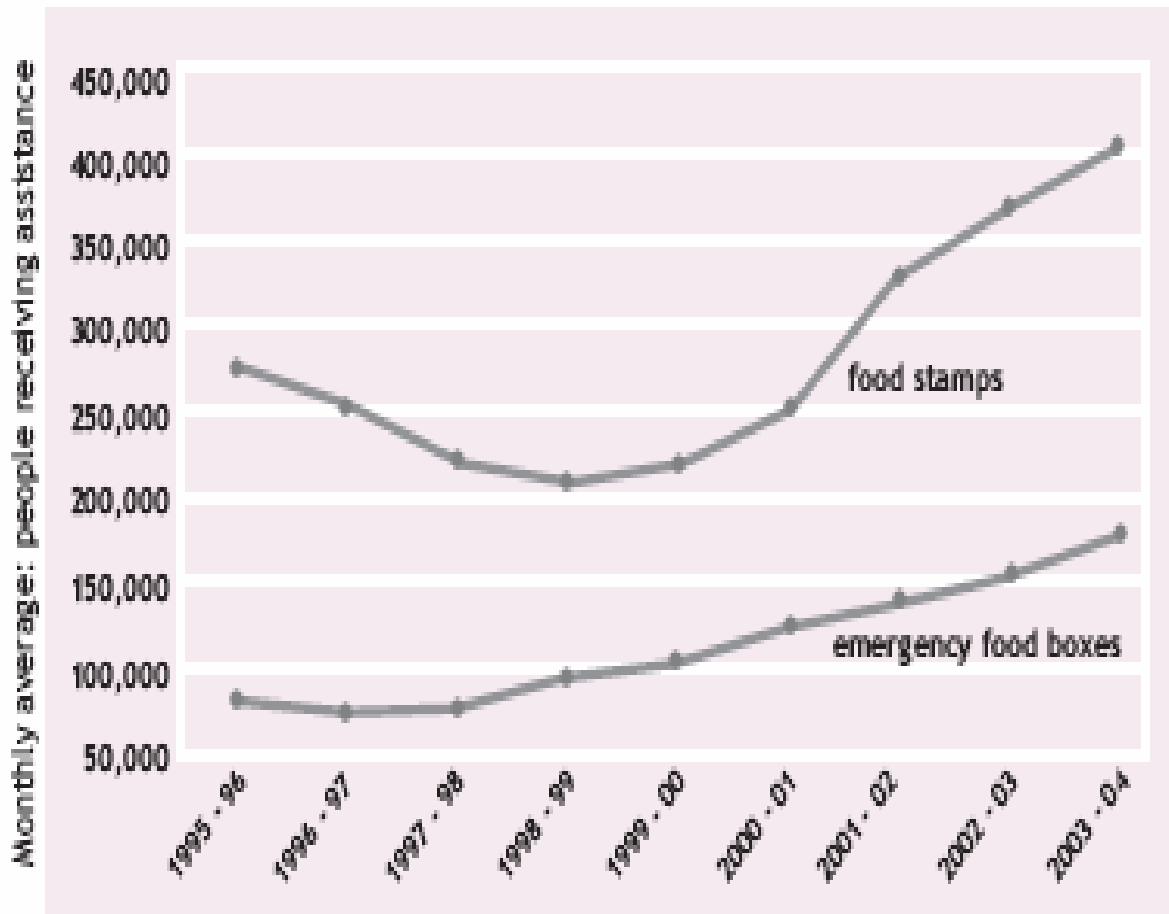


WIZARD OF ID

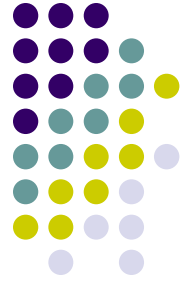


What do people do when they need help?

# More and more people are choosing to get emergency food and/or food stamps.

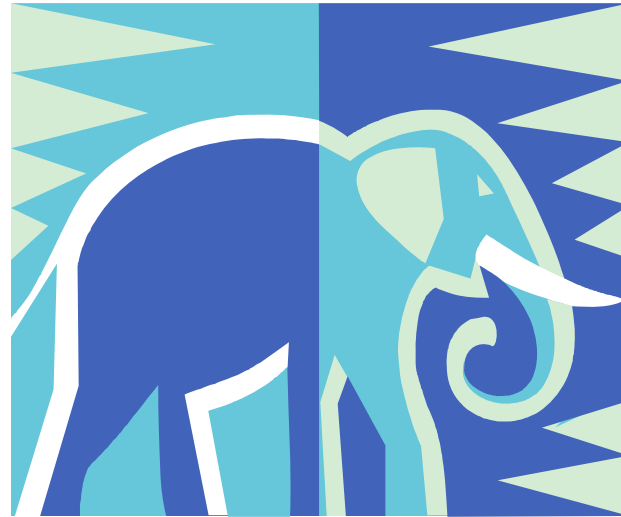
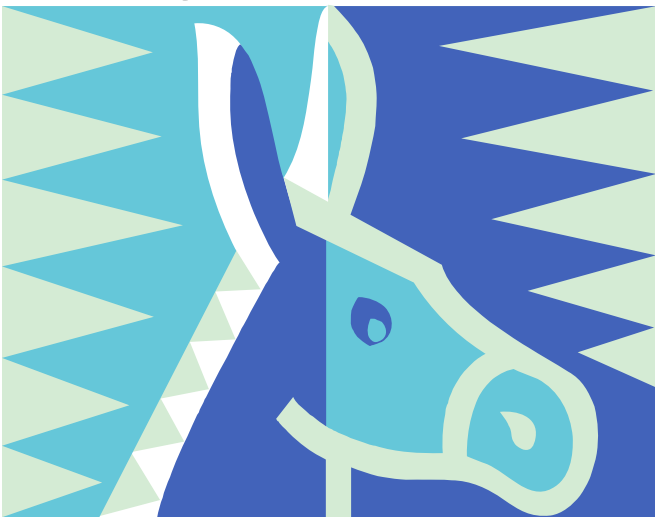


Source: Oregon Food Bank, *The State of Hunger Report*, 2004.

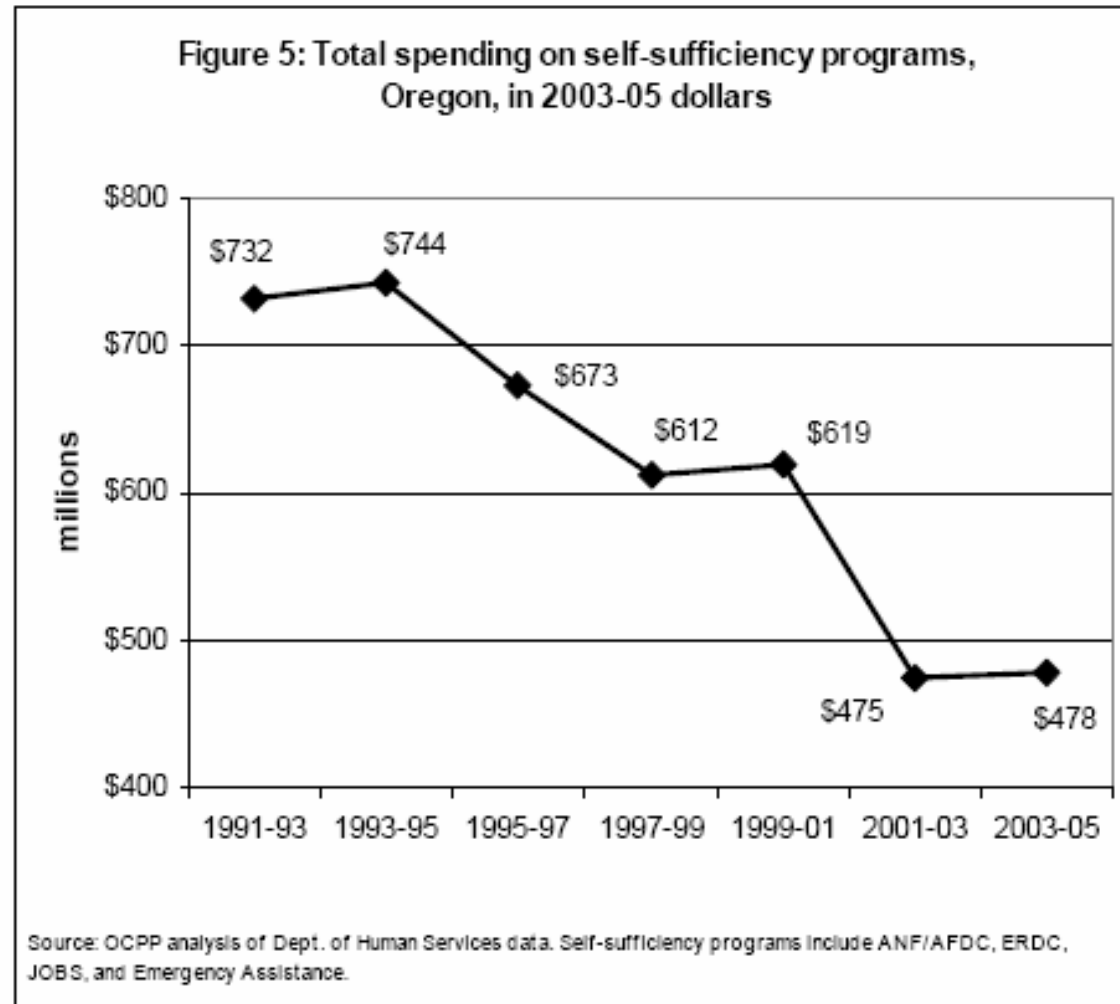
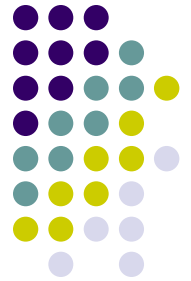


# Hunger Explained, Part II

- A political explanation
  - Some policies/programs affect incomes. Others affect costs.
  - Government varies in terms of who runs it and who pays for it (the state? the federal government? the city? etc.).



# Many programs in Oregon are getting smaller...



# Government Programs: Income

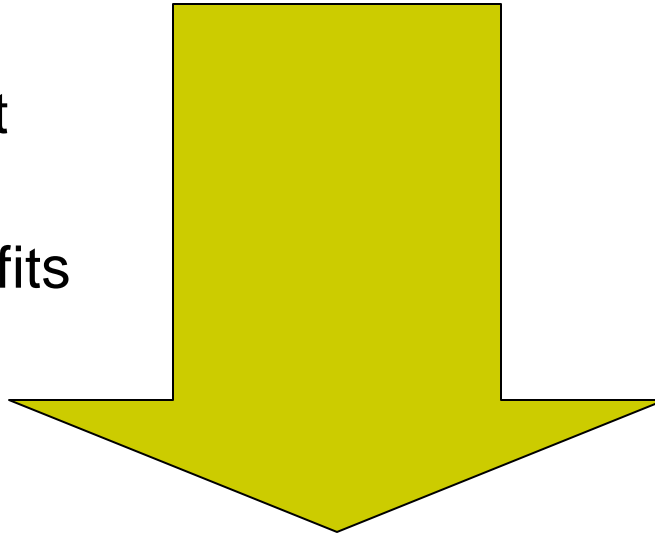


- Income Programs

- Welfare (TANF)
  - Declining rolls
- Social Security
- Social Security Disability Insurance
- Unemployment insurance
- Veterans benefits

- Income Policies

- Minimum Wage
  - Oregon's is high: \$7.25/hour.
- Unionization Policy





# Government addressing costs

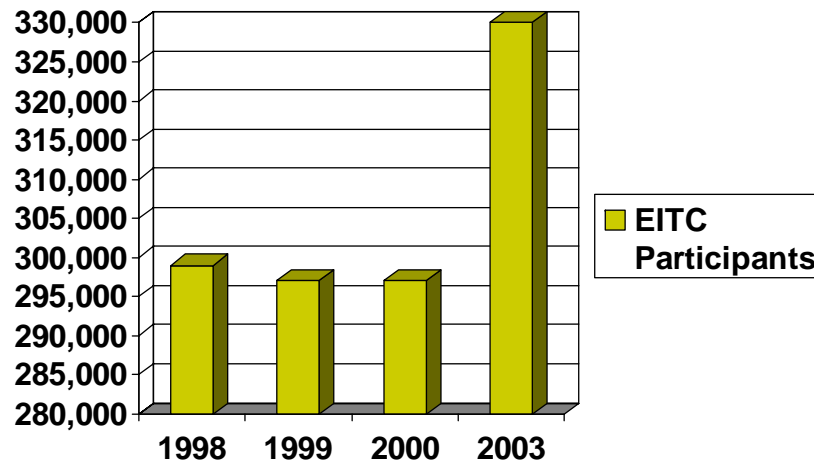
- Taxes

- Earned Income Tax Credit
- Oregon EIC
- Child care tax credit

- Housing

- Public Housing
- Section 8 vouchers
- Rental Assistance

EITC Returns, 1998-2003



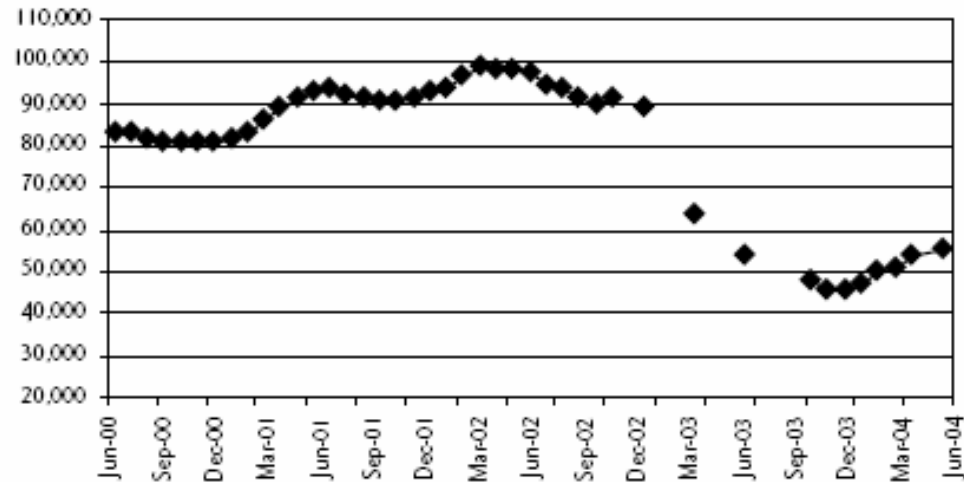
Source: National Center for Children in Poverty, 2005



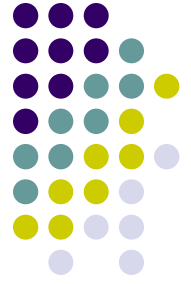
# Health Care

- Programs
  - Medicare
  - Oregon Health Plan
  - Declining rolls

Size of Oregon Health Plan Caseload, 2000-2004.



Source: OCPP analysts of Oregon Dept. of Human Services data.

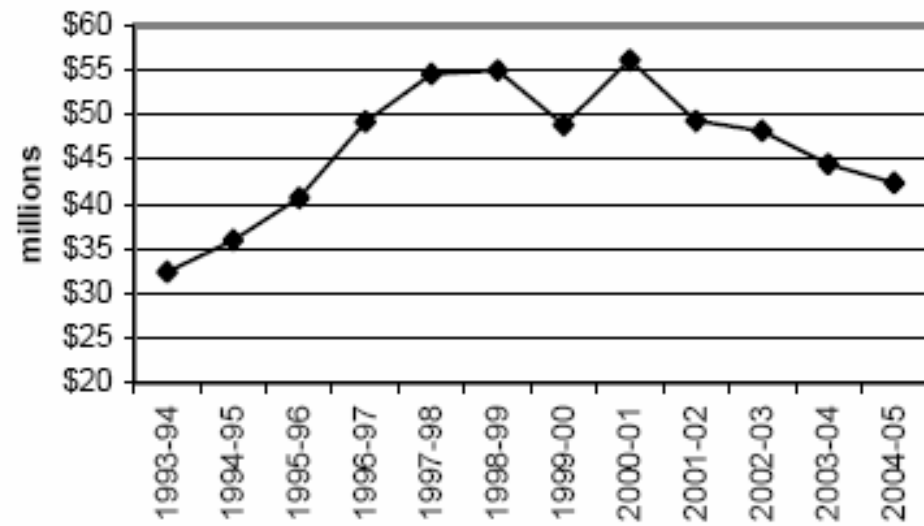


# Child care

-Child care subsidies (TANF, ERDC)

-Head Start child care

Figure 8: Total spending on the Employment Related Day Care program, in 2004-05 dollars, Oregon



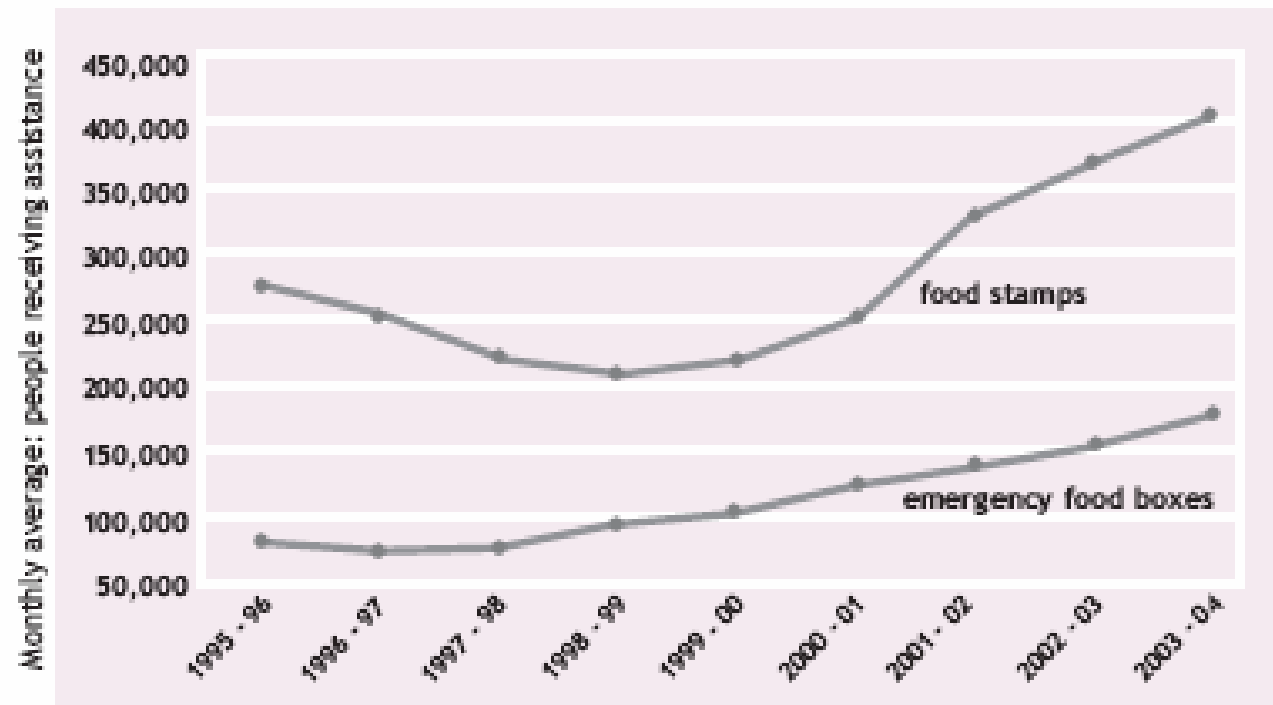
Source: OCPP analysis of Oregon Dept. of Human Services data. Inflation adjustment with US CPI-U.



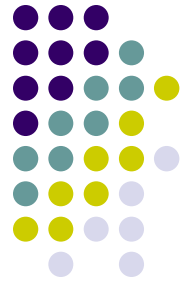
# Food: The Silver Lining

- Food Stamps

Food Stamp and Emergency Food Box Recipients, 1995-2004



Source:  
Oregon Food  
Bank, 2004



# More Food Programs

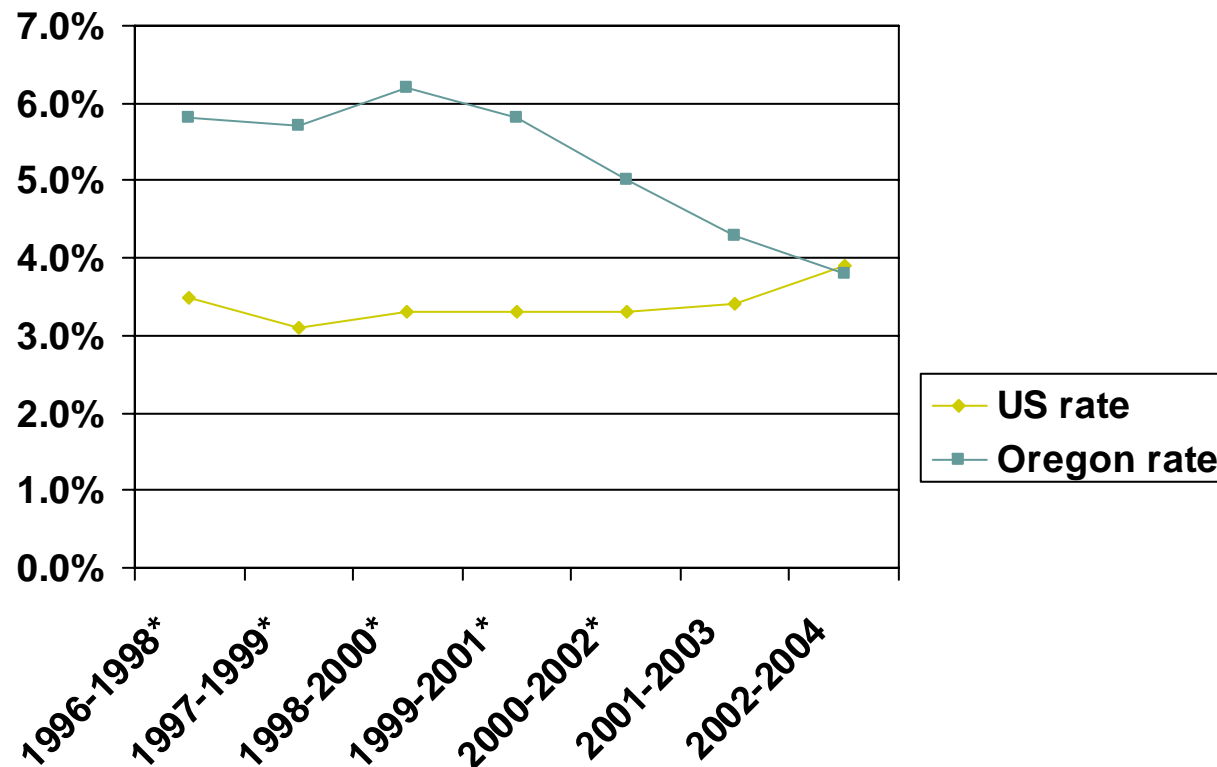
- National School Lunch Program
- School Breakfast
  - Ranked first in the nation in participation
- Child and Adult Care Food Program
- WIC
  - Participation up 34 % in last 10 years

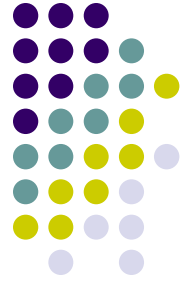
Source: Food Research  
and Action Council, 2005.



# The Result: Less Hunger

Oregon's Hunger Rate vs. the U.S. Rate, 1995-2004

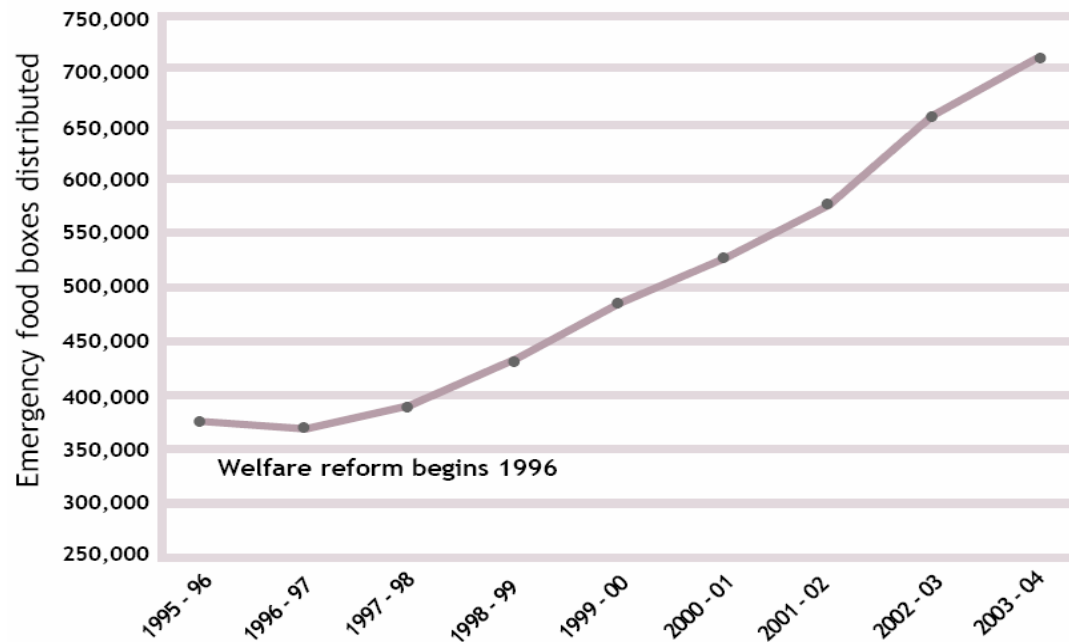




# And yet...

- Despite improvements in government food relief programs, there is still considerable demand for emergency food relief services.

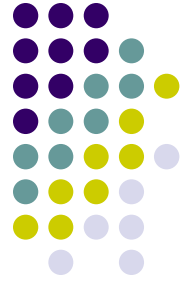
*Food box distribution continues to increase*





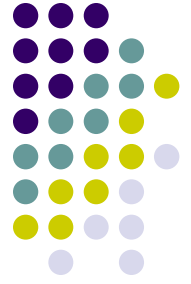
## In Conclusion...

- Pressure on low-income people's budgets has increased from all sides- lower wages, higher costs, and less support from some government programs.
- Fewer people in Oregon are hungry, but increased pressure on family budgets has driven more people to obtain emergency services.
- What do we do when service providers can't keep up with demand?



# So what to do then...

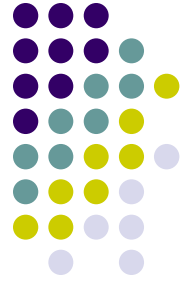
- It's important to remember that all these changes in the economy and our government are **CHOICES**.
  - For example, somebody, somewhere made the choice to cut back on some service. Somebody decided to move some factory overseas. Somebody decided to lower wages.
  - Choices are always shaped and constrained by circumstances, but **CHOICES THEY REMAIN**.
  - So how do we get people to make the choices we want?



# Enter Advocacy

- Advocacy is an end and a means.
  - Taking action
    - To advocate means to speak out on someone's behalf.
  - Trying to make changes.
    - Changes in the policies and practices of institutions.
    - Mostly, people talk about changes in government, because it's something we, the voters, have some control over.

# Anti-hunger advocacy addresses a need in the greater community.

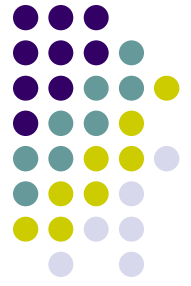


- Incomes issues

- Wages
- Benefits
- Stability

- Costs issues

- Housing
- Health Care
- Child Care
- Taxes
- Food
- Etc.

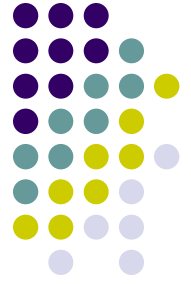


## How to address needs? Policy.

Policies can change:

- For-profit institutions (businesses)
  - i.e. unions getting more benefits
- Non-profit institutions (service providers, etc.)
  - i.e. food pantry allowing you to choose food
- Governmental institutions
  - i.e. minimum wage laws, etc...

# Strategies



## **Advocacy is a strategy, too**

Who's going to make these changes? How are you going to convince them to do it?

- Education and raising awareness
- Working with DHS to make changes
- Making legislative visits
- Giving public testimony
- Voter registration
- Write-ins and call-ins

# The Process Called Advocacy



CHANGE

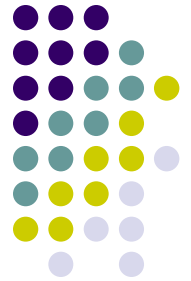
Advocacy

Need

Policy

Strategy

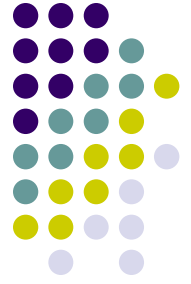
# The CAN: Getting at the Bigger Picture



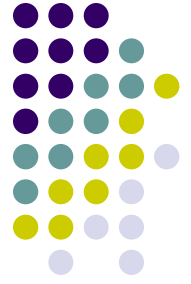
- It's important to see that nobody's alone
  - Once you start putting a lot of people's life stories together, some trends emerge.
  - A lot of the things that happen to people are a part of a bigger picture- or changes in institutions.



# Anti-hunger advocacy is about trends.



- An anti-hunger advocate represents people who are a part of a trend
  - Not everybody can or wants to advocate.
  - When you advocate, you're not just doing it for yourself- you're doing it for everyone whose experiences are similar to yours.

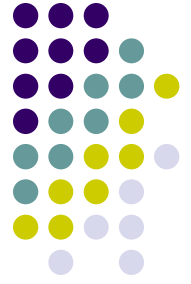


# Your story is important

- It's the most important thing an advocate has
  - Representing a group can mean representing yourself, too, in a way.
  - In fact, advocacy makes your experiences important on a whole new level.



# Anti-hunger advocacy is a balance



- It's important to find that balance between representing yourself and your community- because we have to do both.

