

December 1, 2008

The Definition of Prosperity

/pros-per-i-ty/

- a successful, flourishing, or thriving condition, especially in financial respects
- from Latin “good fortune”
- an economic state of growth with rising profits and full employment
- advance, gain, success, or attainment in anything good or desirable






Prosperity relates to having access to an abundance of resources, while wealth relates to accumulating those resources. All people can attain prosperity whereas wealth for one person or group often means less for another.

The Prosperity Action Team

Comprised of government staff at the cities of Gresham and Portland Multnomah County, the Prosperity Action Team is creating a framework to describe and depict the work currently happening in our community. The Team is reframing the traditional conversation of *reducing poverty* to the long-term goal of *creating prosperity*. Performance measures will be created and tracked to reflect the progress of community initiatives in contributing toward our shared goals.

The Prosperity Index

Based on the work of Oregon Thrives, the Team will be defining prosperity in five areas: housing, food & nutrition, education, jobs & assets, and health & wellness. More information about each of these areas is included in the following pages and also on our website. Levels of sufficiency, adequacy, and poverty will also be defined within each area so we can measure progress toward goals. A Multnomah County Prosperity Index might look something like this.

Multnomah County Prosperity Index				
Prosperity rating on five criteria in September 2008				
	sufficiency			
				adequacy
poverty		poverty	poverty	
HOMES	FOOD/ NUTRITION	ECONOMIC ASSETS	EDUCATION	HEALTH/ WELLNESS
				

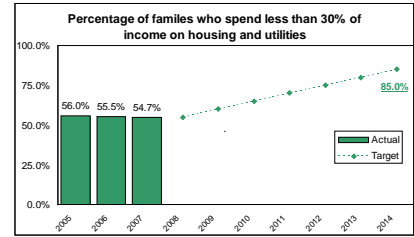
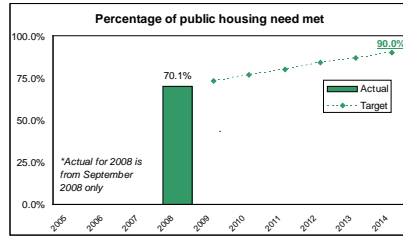
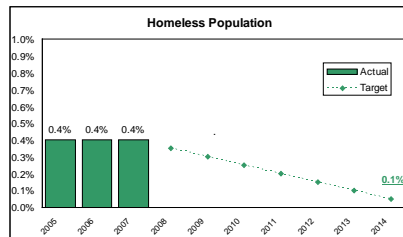
HOUSING

Prosperity in housing means that every person in Multnomah County has access to a safe, stable, and affordable place to live which allows them to enhance their quality of life.

What we know about housing is that

- a large percentage of homeless populations have physical and/or mental health issues or other special needs
- Families who spend more than 30% of income on housing are less able to pay for groceries; medications and childcare.
- Over 15, 800 of our K-12 students were homeless during the 2008 school year. This number nearly doubled since 2004.

Three high-level housing benchmarks are



- Homeless is an important measure because...
- Public housing needs are important to measure because it demonstrates the needs of our most vulnerable in our community including individuals facing physical and mental health challenges.
- Spending less than 30% on housing and utilities is an important measure because...

Housing policy issues include

- developing new housing and preserving existing housing subsidies for low income populations that the market cannot serve
- supporting transitional housing programs for our neighbors that need support and stability before accessing permanent housing
- evaluate housing resources for their long term benefits and impacts on the entire community instead of focusing on short term goals
- prioritize infrastructure and services that promote accessibility; security, stewardship and strong neighborhoods

Some local housing partners include

Housing Authority of Portland, Enterprise Foundation, Opportunity Network, Oregon Housing Alliance, Oregon Department of Human Services Housing and Urban Development Department, Corporation for Supportive Housing, Neighborhood Partnership Fund

For more information about housing prosperity, visit our webpage at www.prosperity.org/housing

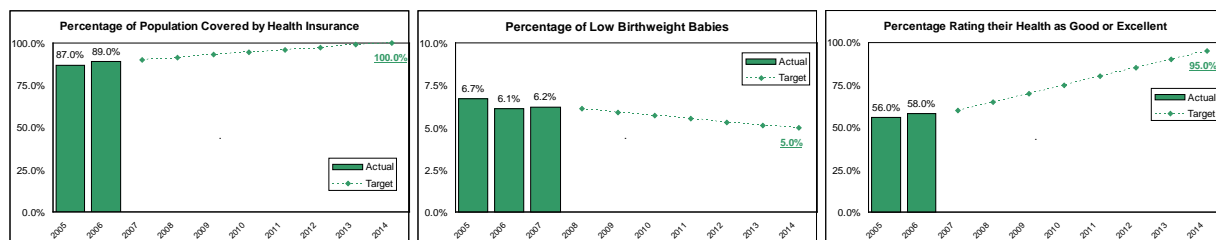
HEALTH AND WELLNESS

Prosperity in health and wellness means that everyone in Multnomah County is physically, mentally, and emotionally equipped to lead a productive life.

What we know about health and wellness is that

- People who are poor have higher than average rates of child and maternal mortality, higher rates of disease, and more limited access to health care.
- Without health care coverage, a family's livelihood is threatened by the cost of health care and potential loss of income during illness.
- People living in poverty are more likely to suffer from chronic illness, have more frequent and severe disease complications, and make more demands on the health care system.

Three high-level health and wellness benchmarks are



Health insurance coverage is important measure because...

Low birth-weight babies are important to measure because...

Self-assessment of health is an important measure because...

Health and wellness policy issues include

- screening clients for eligibility for services using benefits calculators
- adopting an equity framework for planning across health and human service systems
- Oregon Health Fund Board
- water fluoridation feasibility and benefits
- State Children's Health Insurance Program
- cost savings per county of Medicaid/Medicare health care coverage

Some local health and wellness partners include

Safety net clinics, health and hospital systems, provider associations, health and career opportunity programs, area health education centers

For more information about health & wellness prosperity, visit our webpage at www.prosperity.org/health&wellness

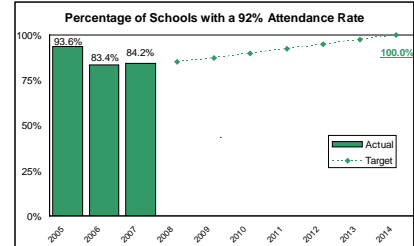
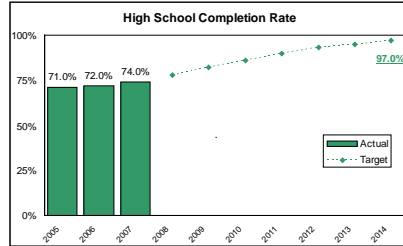
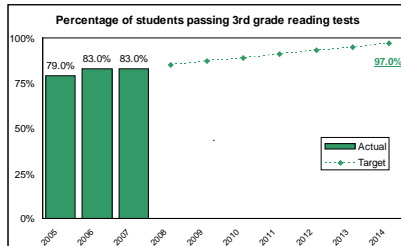
EDUCATION

Prosperity in education means that youth and families have access to supports that promote educational success so that all students have life and job skills to be self sufficient as adults.

What we know about education is that

- 24% of Multnomah County children are living in poverty; 48% of school-age children qualify for Free or Reduced lunch
- Graduation rates are declining in six of Multnomah County's eight school districts
- The population move to East County adds stress to smaller school districts to provide high quality education for a population of youth who face challenges to school success
- Gains students make in early grades are lost as they promote through education systems, as evidenced by declining benchmark testing scores in 8th & 10th grades

Four high-level education benchmarks are



State testing benchmarks are important measure because...

The high school completion rate is important to measure because...

Attendance is an important measure because...

Number and percent of adults with at least a two-year post-secondary education degree ...

Education policy issues include

- Multnomah County School Aged Policy Framework, Adopted February 2003
- Statewide Community Schools initiative is sustained and expanded
- Link educational success with prosperity & healthy economy
- Importance of “non-academic” supports to overall educational and life success
- Tell stories rather than relying on data
- Cite return on investment for prevention activities – if available
- Every school a community school, with commensurate support for all of the services that support the system

Some local education partners include

School Districts, Oregon Department of Education, local community based organizations and school foundations, Leaders Roundtable, WorkSystems Inc.

For more information about housing prosperity, visit our webpage at www.prosperity.org/education

FOOD AND NUTRITION

Prosperity in food & nutrition means that every person in Multnomah County can obtain enough quality food to meet their needs and be healthy.

What we know about food & nutrition is that

- The USDA uses household survey data to measure “food insecure” and “very food insecure” household status. Very food insecure households have a lack of food in the home, skip meals, or serve smaller portions to stretch their food resources. USDA’s November 2008 report on food insecurity indicates that the national average for very food insecure households is 4.1%. Oregon’s 5.5% of very food insecure households gives it the 3rd highest ranking in the nation.
- Nationally, low-income Latino and African-American households are disproportionately represented for food insecurity. Female-headed households with children comprise those households most likely to experience food insecurity.
- Food security and income are highly correlated. One in three food insecure households had at least one full-time wage earner in the household.
- Government and non-profit food and nutrition assistance programs (Food Stamp Program, Free/Reduced School Lunch, WIC) significantly reduce the prevalence of food insecurity.

Three high-level food and nutrition benchmarks are (insert graphs here)

- Food security is important because it means that households have adequate food resources to ensure that their family’s nutritional needs are met.
- Increasing access to affordable, full service grocery stores is critical in ensuring that households maintain food security as well as have the opportunity to purchase fresh, healthy foods.
- Utilizing all available free or low-cost food programs ensures that low-income households will be able to establish and maintain adequate nutrition.

Food and nutrition policy issues include

- Expand on-line application access to government-sponsored food and nutrition benefit programs, including Food Stamps, FRL School Lunch, and WIC
- SUN Schools expand to offer greater school meal program offerings, like after-school snacks and meals
- Greater financial resources to the Oregon Food Bank and Loaves & Fishes would result in greater access to food services by County residents
- Expand community outreach to accommodate increased numbers of participants of Food Stamps, F/R School Lunch, School Snack & Meal Programs, and Summer Food Service

Some local food and nutrition partners include

Oregon Hunger Relief Task Force (OHRTF), Oregon Food Bank (OFB), Coalition for a Livable Future, Interagency Council on Hunger and Homelessness, Portland-Multnomah Food Policy Council, State DHS

For more information about food & nutrition prosperity, visit our webpage at www.prosperity.org/food&nutrition

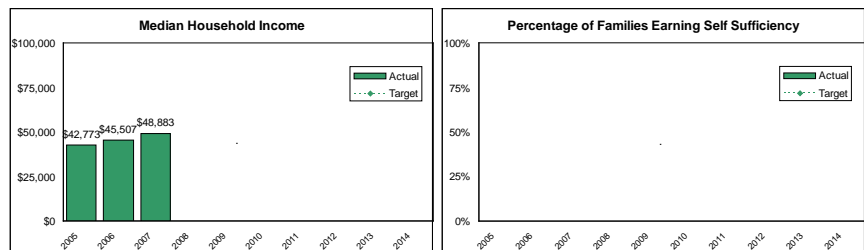
JOBS AND ASSETS

Prosperity in jobs and assets means Multnomah County residents have access to living wage jobs and opportunities to accumulate assets. A continuum of services and supports directly impact their career advancement.

What we know about jobs and assets is that

- A comprehensive approach requires short-term and long-term strategies.
- Short-term tactics include insuring that all households eligible for federal and state Entitlements and Benefits receive them.
- Matched Savings and Development Account programs are one strategy for increasing assets. Research shows that for households to experience lasting prosperity they must have the ability to accumulate financial assets and resources beyond that required for daily living through.
- Current workforce development strategies serve less than a quarter of all people living in poverty. Finding, keeping and advancing in employment is both a short-term and long-term strategy. It requires training and comprehensive supports for those who are in poverty.

Four high-level jobs and assets benchmarks are



Four high-level jobs and assets benchmarks are:

- Number of people unemployed.
- Income is important to measure to know what the percentage of the population is below the poverty level.
- The self-sufficiency wage is an important measure because people who earn a living wage do not rely on entitlements any more.
- The number of people who work full-time but who do not have health insurance indicates people who are at risk of losing employment and remaining in poverty.

Jobs and assets policy issues include

- The 2015 Prosperity Plan and Prosperity Summit
- Prosperity Impact Reports
- Economic/Job Development Wage Goals
- Center for American Policy Recommendations
- GA Restored

Some local jobs and assets partners include
Neighborhood Partnership Fund, Portland Business Alliance, WorkSystems Inc,
Oregon/Portland Progress Board, Oregon Shines

For more information about jobs and assets prosperity,
visit our webpage at www.prosperity.org/jobs&assets