

Year In Review, 2008

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Prosperity Planner

In July, Worksystems Inc. released an important study, The Self-Sufficiency Standard for Oregon 2008, and launched an interactive tool, the Prosperity Planner. This new on-line tool helps individuals to answer some important questions about their economic security and to develop strategies to achieve their career and wage goals.

As Sam is the Chair of the Worksystems Governing Board, this launch represents the culmination of nearly two years of work to make substantial gains in his central goal of moving people into "living-wage" jobs through skill development. This is work that Sam and his colleagues and community partners began by trying to better understand what it really means to be economically independent.

The Self Sufficiency Standard study and the Prosperity Planner offer the opportunity to reframe how we measure and evaluate poverty and provide the foundation to ensure we are making a difference for the people and the economy of our region.

This progress comes at a crucial time.

During these past couple of years, we've seen a rising trend in regional poverty and a growing disparity between rich and poor. Over this time, we discovered that:

- 1 in 5 full time workers in our region lives in a low-income household
- 1 in 10 lives in poverty, and
- The "working poor" make up 21% of our workforce.

The self-sufficiency standard report identifies real costs in each of Oregon's 36 counties and uses those costs to establish the adequate wage in those regions for 70 different family configurations. As a result, the study will be a critical resource in assessing how Portland is fairing in its efforts to help low-paid working families with skill development and career supports.

We sought this information in order to provide tools to help individuals access the resources they need to move up the economic ladder. The Prosperity Planner is intended to do just that.

For an individual, the Prosperity Planner tool will help with budgeting, finding resources & work supports and planning a career path.

For workforce development staff and program managers, the Prosperity Planner will help with career counseling and evaluating the impact of programs on customer's skill and wage progress.

For policy makers, the study and the Prosperity Planner's ability to track customer progress in a uniform manner will help measure state and regional progress towards closing the wage-gap for working families. It will also guide training and education investments toward jobs that lead to self-sufficiency as well as provide baseline data to drive workforce development strategies and funding decisions

COMMUNITY PARTNERS

- [Worksystems, Inc.](#)
- [Use the Prosperity Planner](#)
- [Outline: Prosperity Planner](#)

MEDIA MENTIONS

[Portland Tribune: Minimum Wage – Not Enough](#)

July 13, 2008

Jim Redden

[Hillsboro Argus: Federal Poverty Standard Too Low](#)

July 11, 2008

Kurt Eckert