

Youth Living in Poverty

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According to data published by the U.S. Census Bureau, Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates, published December 2008, approximately 15 percent (approximately 225,338) of Washington's children under 18 lived below the poverty level in 2007. While children account for only 1 out of every 4 people in Washington, they account for nearly 1 of every 3 people in poverty.

Washington's poverty rate is below the national average. The U.S. Census Bureau, 2004 and 2005, indicates the 17.6 percent of U.S. children live in poverty. The poverty rate for black children is 33.2 percent (nationally) and for Hispanic children is 28.9 percent, compared to 14.8 percent for white children.

According to the National Center for Children in Poverty, in 2008, 32 percent of Washington's children lived in low-income and poor families (National: 41%). Low-income is defined as income between 100 and 200 percent of the federal poverty level (FPL). Twelve percent of Washington's children lived in "poor" families (Nationally 19%), defined as income below 100 percent of the federal poverty level.

The State of Washington's Children, University of Washington Human Services Policy Center, School of Public Health, Community Medicine, Spring 2002, points out that 73 percent of families living in poverty in Washington are headed by working adults, 61 percent by single adults, and 17 percent by single nonworking parents.

An indicator of children living in poverty is the National School Lunch Program. In Washington State, the number of children eligible for the free and reduced lunch program has increased during the past five years, from 349,515 in school year 2002-2003 to 388,254 in school year 2006-2007. This is an increase of over 11 percent in the past five years (2003-2007).

It is worth noting that in 2008 Washington, along with much of the rest of the nation, experienced the effects of the nationwide recession. The poverty rate for 2007 may not be indicative of the current status of children and families. With increased unemployment comes increased demand for publically funded resources including social services, food and housing, medical and dental care, mental health and others.

In December 2008, the Washington unemployment rate was 7.1 percent, seasonally adjusted. This rate is well above the December 2007 rate of 4.6 percent. This increase in the unemployment rate in one year may indicate an increase in the poverty rate, and represent even more pressure for publically funded resources.

Children and youth living in poverty is widely recognized as an indicator of well being. Poverty is closely linked to inadequate prenatal care, low birth weight, low academic achievement, risky behavior, and emotional problems. In addition to the physical and emotional health issues

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associated with poverty, the Child Trends Data Bank points out that, "... poverty in childhood and adolescence is associated with a higher risk for negative cognitive and academic outcomes, including decreased cognitive abilities and development, less school attendance, lower reading and math test scores, increased distractibility, and higher rates of grade failure and early high school dropout. Poor children are also more likely than other children to have externalizing and other behavior problems, increased aggression, and emotional problems, and are more likely to engage in delinquent behaviors during adolescence".

According to Ruby K. Payne, Ph.D., A Framework for Understanding Poverty, poverty is more than a lack of financial resources. Further, the extent of a person's ability to leave poverty is more dependent upon other resources than it is upon financial resources. Dr. Payne explains that poverty is "the extent to which an individual does without resources." She goes on to identify resources in eight areas: 1) financial, 2) emotional, 3) mental, 4) spiritual, 5) physical, 6) support systems, 7) relationships/role models, and 8) knowledge of hidden rules. This is important in that crime and poverty are so inter-relational. An understanding of the extent of resource deficits in these areas is instrumental to understanding juvenile delinquency and effective prevention, intervention and treatment strategies.

TABLE 26
National School Lunch and Breakfast Program
Applications Received

County	2007	2006	2005	2004	2003	2002	% change	
							2006-07	2002-07
Adams	2,972	2,841	2,829	2,747	2,723	2,593	4.6	14.6
Asotin	1,578	1,517	1,364	1,381	1,400	1,236	4.0	27.7
Benton	13,035	12,676	11,481	10,914	10,396	10,294	2.8	26.6
Chelan	7,013	6,952	7,232	6,387	6,286	5,961	0.9	17.6
Clallam	3,975	3,811	4,178	4,419	3,780	3,652	4.3	8.8
Clark	25,820	25,429	25,997	25,278	24,071	21,940	1.5	17.7
Columbia	249	287	302	275	292	300	-13.2	-17.0
Cowlitz	7,169	7,268	7,393	7,147	7,126	6,630	-1.4	8.1
Douglas	3,574	3,570	3,528	3,328	3,215	3,048	0.1	17.3
Ferry	583	695	643	642	653	628	-16.1	-7.2
Franklin	9,773	9,420	9,476	8,993	8,123	7,637	3.7	28.0
Garfield	156	134	161	162	173	159	16.4	-1.9
Grant	11,150	10,927	11,050	10,468	10,065	9,926	2.0	12.3
Grays Harbor	5,973	6,078	6,138	6,091	6,150	6,041	-1.7	-1.1
Island	2,493	2,331	2,654	2,411	2,607	2,376	6.9	4.9
Jefferson	1,274	1,237	1,264	1,270	1,240	1,228	3.0	3.7
King	76,842	74,306	75,174	74,510	72,253	67,535	3.4	13.8
Kitsap	11,046	10,851	10,773	11,001	10,291	10,341	1.8	6.8
Kittitas	1,503	1,549	1,666	1,651	1,593	1,520	-3.0	-1.1
Klickitat	1,566	1,579	1,668	1,576	1,663	1,565	-0.8	0.1
Lewis	5,701	5,477	5,605	5,469	5,331	5,299	4.1	7.6
Lincoln	964	890	858	793	783	775	8.3	24.4
Mason	3,932	3,849	3,793	3,501	3,901	3,653	2.2	7.6
Okanogan	4,058	4,060	3,985	4,083	3,792	3,922	0.0	3.5
Pacific	1,764	1,697	1,763	1,718	1,490	1,485	3.9	18.8
Pend Oreille	1,017	1,023	991	1,059	1,165	1,233	-0.6	-17.5
Pierce	48,263	46,718	47,569	46,066	47,032	46,192	3.3	4.5
San Juan	471	471	418	461	407	373	0.0	26.3
Skagit	8,731	7,628	8,734	8,408	7,772	7,388	14.5	18.2
Skamania	517	567	506	519	543	507	-8.8	2.0
Snohomish	30,403	30,016	30,722	28,648	28,112	26,129	1.3	16.4
Spokane	29,165	30,007	28,816	28,340	28,492	27,838	-2.8	4.8
Stevens	3,371	3,400	3,390	3,464	3,313	3,503	-0.9	-3.8
Thurston	11,519	11,232	10,954	11,256	10,856	10,848	2.6	6.2
Wahkiakum	229	226	237	223	196	77	1.3	197.4
Walla Walla	4,746	4,511	4,800	4,425	4,202	3,934	5.2	20.6
Whatcom	10,025	9,944	10,465	10,406	10,035	9,391	0.8	6.8
Whitman	1,465	1,433	1,376	1,435	1,452	1,418	2.2	3.3
Yakima	34,169	33,522	34,103	33,666	32,156	30,940	1.9	10.4
State Average	388,254	380,129	384,056	374,591	365,130	349,515	2.1	11.1

Source: Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) (01/08)

TABLE 27
Poverty Estimates for Washington Counties
Age 0-17

County	2007 Poverty	2006 Poverty	2005 Poverty	2004 Poverty	2003 Poverty	% Change 2007-2006	% Change 2003-2007
Adams	1,509	1,715	1,423	1,236	1,239	-12.01	21.79
Asotin	1,042	1,222	1,301	1,123	1,121	-14.73	-7.05
Benton	6,129	7,400	6,269	6,249	6,016	-17.18	1.88
Chelan	3,239	3,378	3,377	3,262	3,227	-4.11	0.37
Clallam	2,455	2,505	2,625	2,486	2,357	-2.00	4.16
Clark	12,827	13,625	16,148	16,547	15,897	-5.86	-19.31
Columbia	151	185	167	148	166	-18.38	-9.04
Cowlitz	4,699	5,094	4,837	4,747	4,656	-7.75	0.92
Douglas	1,859	1,952	2,029	1,605	1,550	-4.76	19.94
Ferry	445	466	485	419	436	-4.51	2.06
Franklin	4,936	6,287	5,011	4,306	4,230	-21.49	16.69
Garfield	76	81	93	82	74	-6.17	2.70
Grant	6,035	6,970	5,847	5,493	5,452	-13.41	10.69
Grays Harbor	3,381	3,689	3,744	3,520	3,516	-8.35	-3.84
Island	2,256	2,028	1,987	1,947	1,924	11.24	17.26
Jefferson	817	890	904	831	883	-8.20	-7.47
King	47,820	46,848	41,800	47,581	45,822	2.07	4.36
Kitsap	6,389	6,556	6,046	6,974	7,101	-2.55	-10.03
Kittitas	1,137	1,215	1,064	1,063	1,016	-6.42	11.91
Klickitat	1,067	1,221	1,163	1,034	1,027	-12.61	3.89
Lewis	3,514	3,606	3,707	3,652	3,487	-2.55	0.77
Lincoln	357	449	383	372	373	-20.49	-4.29
Mason	2,051	1,997	2,208	2,095	2,112	2.70	-2.89
Okanogan	2,984	2,783	2,751	2,611	2,723	7.22	9.59
Pacific	882	1,007	1,030	915	878	-12.41	0.46
Pend Oreille	669	710	742	659	673	-5.77	-0.59
Pierce	28,402	27,746	25,203	30,961	27,947	2.36	1.63
San Juan	331	367	351	331	331	-9.81	0.00
Skagit	4,876	4,620	5,127	4,646	4,526	5.54	7.73
Skamania	386	396	421	386	369	-2.53	4.61
Snohomish	17,018	16,983	17,877	20,710	20,448	0.21	-16.77
Spokane	16,698	17,977	19,143	19,045	18,523	-7.11	-9.85
Stevens	2,351	2,182	2,280	2,222	2,226	7.75	5.62
Thurston	6,408	7,267	6,929	6,735	6,320	-11.82	1.39
Wahkiakum	125	137	129	116	101	-8.76	23.76
Walla Walla	2,786	2,845	2,804	2,472	2,501	-2.07	11.40
Whatcom	6,721	6,044	5,785	6,578	6,618	11.20	1.56
Whitman	939	1,039	1,051	999	1,033	-9.62	-9.10
Yakima	19,571	20,740	20,378	18,445	18,070	-5.64	8.31
Statewide Total	225,338	232,222	224,619	234,603	226,969	-2.96	-0.72

Source: US Census Bureau, Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates (01/08)
Model-based Estimates for States, Counties and School Districts