

## 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 2010, approximately 14 percent (approximately 227,241) of Washington's children under 18 lived below the poverty level in 2008. 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. 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.

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 384,056 in school year 2004-2005 to 433,017 in school year 2008-2009. This is an increase of over 11 percent. The largest increase in National School Lunch program occurred between the 2007-2008 and 2008-2009 school years when the number of eligible students went from 400,760 to 433,017.

Perhaps even more indicative of poverty is the increase in Washington's unemployment rate. That rate has increased in the past five years from 4.9 in 2006 to 9.4 in 2010. According to Greg Weeks, LMEA Director, Employment Security Department, State of Washington,

"The period for which we have poverty estimates corresponds to the expansionary period in our labor market just prior to the current recession. The annual employment rates for the state rose from 5.4 percent to 8.9 percent between 2008 and 2009. It is not surprising that the number of residents in poverty would trend downward during an expansionary period, when the labor market is very strong (often below 5 percent unemployment). As the number of unemployed rose to an historically high level, the unemployment rate also rose dramatically, and one can expect the number of residents in poverty to rise proportionately."

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 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

## Youth Living in Poverty (continued)

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	2009	2008	2007	2006	2005	% change	% change
						2008-09	2005-2009
Adams	3,256	3,040	2,972	2,841	2,829	7.1	15.1
Asotin	1,633	1,491	1,578	1,517	1,364	9.5	19.7
Benton	14,629	13,770	13,035	12,676	11,481	6.2	27.4
Chelan	7,060	7,047	7,013	6,952	7,232	0.2	-2.4
Clallam	4,088	3,806	3,975	3,811	4,178	7.4	-2.2
Clark	29,801	26,652	25,820	25,429	25,997	11.8	14.6
Columbia	255	232	249	287	302	9.9	-15.6
Cowlitz	8,476	7,618	7,169	7,268	7,393	11.3	14.6
Douglas	4,079	3,874	3,574	3,570	3,528	5.3	15.6
Ferry	582	589	583	695	643	-1.2	-9.5
Franklin	11,482	10,484	9,773	9,420	9,476	9.5	21.2
Garfield	175	140	156	134	161	25.0	8.7
Grant	12,387	11,472	11,150	10,927	11,050	8.0	12.1
Grays Harbor	6,476	6,077	5,973	6,078	6,138	6.6	5.5
Island	2,995	2,591	2,493	2,331	2,654	15.6	12.8
Jefferson	1,320	1,163	1,274	1,237	1,264	13.5	4.4
King	86,719	79,003	76,842	74,306	75,174	9.8	15.4
Kitsap	12,204	11,138	11,046	10,851	10,773	9.6	13.3
Kittitas	1,776	1,627	1,503	1,549	1,666	9.2	6.6
Klickitat	1,605	1,520	1,566	1,579	1,668	5.6	-3.8
Lewis	6,248	5,970	5,701	5,477	5,605	4.7	11.5
Lincoln	985	904	964	890	858	9.0	14.8
Mason	4,313	3,935	3,932	3,849	3,793	9.6	13.7
Okanogan	4,385	3,820	4,058	4,060	3,985	14.8	10.0
Pacific	1,731	1,738	1,764	1,697	1,763	-0.4	-1.8
Pend Oreille	1,027	949	1,017	1,023	991	8.2	3.6
Pierce	54,354	50,515	48,263	46,718	47,569	7.6	14.3
San Juan	559	453	471	471	418	23.4	33.7
Skagit	9,429	8,696	8,731	7,628	8,734	8.4	8.0
Skamania	516	432	517	567	506	19.4	2.0
Snohomish	36,246	32,561	30,403	30,016	30,722	11.3	18.0
Spokane	31,838	30,580	29,165	30,007	28,816	4.1	10.5
Stevens	3,562	3,254	3,371	3,400	3,390	9.5	5.1
Thurston	12,672	11,904	11,519	11,232	10,954	6.5	15.7
Wahkiakum	246	225	229	226	237	9.3	3.8
Walla Walla	4,782	4,575	4,746	4,511	4,800	4.5	-0.4
Whatcom	10,959	10,300	10,025	9,944	10,465	6.4	4.7
Whitman	1,425	1,443	1,465	1,433	1,376	-1.2	3.6
Yakima	36,742	35,172	34,169	33,522	34,103	4.5	7.7
<b>State Average</b>	<b>433,017</b>	<b>400,760</b>	<b>388,254</b>	<b>380,129</b>	<b>384,056</b>	8.0	12.7

Source: Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) (04/10)

**TABLE 27**  
**Poverty Estimates for Washington Counties**  
**Age 0-17**

County	2008 Poverty	2007 Poverty	2006 Poverty	2005 Poverty	2004 Poverty	% Change 2007-08	% Change 2004-08
Adams	1,545	1,509	1,715	1,423	1,236	2.39	25.00
Asofin	1,180	1,042	1,222	1,301	1,123	13.24	5.08
Benton	7,252	6,129	7,400	6,269	6,249	18.32	16.05
Chelan	3,034	3,239	3,378	3,377	3,262	-6.33	-6.99
Clallam	2,712	2,455	2,505	2,625	2,486	10.47	9.09
Clark	14,074	12,827	13,625	16,148	16,547	9.72	-14.95
Columbia	169	151	185	167	148	11.92	14.19
Cowlitz	4,392	4,699	5,094	4,837	4,747	-6.53	-7.48
Douglas	1,745	1,859	1,952	2,029	1,605	-6.13	8.72
Ferry	488	445	466	485	419	9.66	16.47
Franklin	5,560	4,936	6,287	5,011	4,306	12.64	29.12
Garfield	73	76	81	93	82	-3.95	-10.98
Grant	5,797	6,035	6,970	5,847	5,493	-3.94	5.53
Grays Harbor	3,311	3,381	3,689	3,744	3,520	-2.07	-5.94
Island	2,247	2,256	2,028	1,987	1,947	-0.40	15.41
Jefferson	933	817	890	904	831	14.20	12.27
King	40,519	47,820	46,848	41,800	47,581	-15.27	-14.84
Kitsap	6,539	6,389	6,556	6,046	6,974	2.35	-6.24
Kittitas	1,039	1,137	1,215	1,064	1,063	-8.62	-2.26
Klickitat	1,100	1,067	1,221	1,163	1,034	3.09	6.38
Lewis	3,236	3,514	3,606	3,707	3,652	-7.91	-11.39
Lincoln	408	357	449	383	372	14.29	9.68
Mason	2,241	2,051	1,997	2,208	2,095	9.26	6.97
Okanogan	2,712	2,984	2,783	2,751	2,611	-9.12	3.87
Pacific	960	882	1,007	1,030	915	8.84	4.92
Pend Oreille	742	669	710	742	659	10.91	12.59
Pierce	27,405	28,402	27,746	25,203	30,961	-3.51	-11.49
San Juan	332	331	367	351	331	0.30	0.30
Skagit	4,175	4,876	4,620	5,127	4,646	-14.38	-10.14
Skamania	374	386	396	421	386	-3.11	-3.11
Snohomish	17,074	17,018	16,983	17,877	20,710	0.33	-17.56
Spokane	17,485	16,698	17,977	19,143	19,045	4.71	-8.19
Stevens	2,084	2,351	2,182	2,280	2,222	-11.36	-6.21
Thurston	6,108	6,408	7,267	6,929	6,735	-4.68	-9.31
Wahkiakum	151	125	137	129	116	20.80	30.17
Walla Walla	2,797	2,786	2,845	2,804	2,472	0.39	13.15
Whatcom	5,946	6,721	6,044	5,785	6,578	-11.53	-9.61
Whitman	988	939	1,039	1,051	999	5.22	-1.10
Yakima	18,314	19,571	20,740	20,378	18,445	-6.42	-0.71
<b>Statewide Total</b>	<b>217,241</b>	<b>225,338</b>	<b>232,222</b>	<b>224,619</b>	<b>234,603</b>	<b>-3.59</b>	<b>-7.40</b>

Source: US Census Bureau, Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates (04/10)

Model-based Estimates for States, Counties and School Districts