

Youth Living in Poverty

According to data published by the U.S. Census Bureau, Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates, published February 2011, approximately 15 percent (approximately 249,866) of Washington's children under 18 lived below the poverty level in 2009. This represents a 15 percent increase over 2008. The number of children living in poverty in Washington State increased by 11.2 percent from 2005 to 2009. While children account for only 1 out of every 4 people in Washington, they account for nearly 1 of every 3 people in poverty.

In 2010, 37 percent of Washington's children lived in low-income families (compared to 42 percent nationally), and 16 percent lived below the poverty level (nationally, 21 percent) according to the National Center for Children in Poverty.

An indicator of children living in poverty is the National School Lunch and Breakfast Program. In Washington State, the number of children eligible for the free and reduced lunch program has increased during the past five years, from 380,129 in 2006 to 452,076 in 2010. This is an increase of almost 19 percent. The largest increase in National School Lunch program occurred between 2008 and 2009 when the number of eligible students went from 400,760 (2008) to 433,017 (2009).

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 a 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 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	2010	2009	2008	2007	2006	% change 2009-2010	% change 2006-2010
Adams	3,349	3,256	3,040	2,972	2,841	2.9	17.9
Asotin	1,687	1,633	1,491	1,578	1,517	3.3	11.2
Benton	15,492	14,629	13,770	13,035	12,676	5.9	22.2
Chelan	7,323	7,060	7,047	7,013	6,952	3.7	5.3
Clallam	4,113	4,088	3,806	3,975	3,811	0.6	7.9
Clark	31,638	29,801	26,652	25,820	25,429	6.2	24.4
Columbia	271	255	232	249	287	6.3	-5.6
Cowlitz	8,550	8,476	7,618	7,169	7,268	0.9	17.6
Douglas	4,162	4,079	3,874	3,574	3,570	2.0	16.6
Ferry	582	582	589	583	695	0.0	-16.3
Franklin	12,006	11,482	10,484	9,773	9,420	4.6	27.5
Garfield	152	175	140	156	134	-13.1	13.4
Grant	12,860	12,387	11,472	11,150	10,927	3.8	17.7
Grays Harbor	6,430	6,476	6,077	5,973	6,078	-0.7	5.8
Island	3,192	2,995	2,591	2,493	2,331	6.6	36.9
Jefferson	1,355	1,320	1,163	1,274	1,237	2.7	9.5
King	91,648	86,719	79,003	76,842	74,306	5.7	23.3
Kitsap	12,920	12,204	11,138	11,046	10,851	5.9	19.1
Kittitas	2,011	1,776	1,627	1,503	1,549	13.2	29.8
Klickitat	1,580	1,605	1,520	1,566	1,579	-1.6	0.1
Lewis	6,562	6,248	5,970	5,701	5,477	5.0	19.8
Lincoln	989	985	904	964	890	0.4	11.1
Mason	4,520	4,313	3,935	3,932	3,849	4.8	17.4
Okanogan	4,401	4,385	3,820	4,058	4,060	0.4	8.4
Pacific	1,701	1,731	1,738	1,764	1,697	-1.7	0.2
Pend Oreille	947	1,027	949	1,017	1,023	-7.8	-7.4
Pierce	57,292	54,354	50,515	48,263	46,718	5.4	22.6
San Juan	636	559	453	471	471	13.8	35.0
Skagit	9,971	9,429	8,696	8,731	7,628	5.7	30.7
Skamania	553	516	432	517	567	7.2	-2.5
Snohomish	38,291	36,246	32,561	30,403	30,016	5.6	27.6
Spokane	33,181	31,838	30,580	29,165	30,007	4.2	10.6
Stevens	3,464	3,562	3,254	3,371	3,400	-2.8	1.9
Thurston	13,401	12,672	11,904	11,519	11,232	5.8	19.3
Wahkiakum	265	246	225	229	226	7.7	17.3
Walla Walla	4,890	4,782	4,575	4,746	4,511	2.3	8.4
Whatcom	11,056	10,959	10,300	10,025	9,944	0.9	11.2
Whitman	1,504	1,425	1,443	1,465	1,433	5.5	5.0
Yakima	37,131	36,742	35,172	34,169	33,522	1.1	10.8
State Average	452,076	433,017	400,760	388,254	380,129	4.4	18.9

Source: Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) (02/2011)

TABLE 27
Poverty Estimates for Washington Counties
Age 0-17

County	2009 Poverty	2008 Poverty	2007 Poverty	2006 Poverty	2005 Poverty	% Change 2008-09	% Change 2005-09
Adams	1,786	1,545	1,509	1,715	1,423	15.6	25.5
Asotin	1,108	1,180	1,042	1,222	1,301	-6.1	-14.8
Benton	8,011	7,252	6,129	7,400	6,269	10.5	27.8
Chelan	3,432	3,034	3,239	3,378	3,377	13.1	1.6
Clallam	2,859	2,712	2,455	2,505	2,625	5.4	8.9
Clark	18,151	14,074	12,827	13,625	16,148	29.0	12.4
Columbia	169	169	151	185	167	0.0	1.2
Cowlitz	5,640	4,392	4,699	5,094	4,837	28.4	16.6
Douglas	2,172	1,745	1,859	1,952	2,029	24.5	7.0
Ferry	504	488	445	466	485	3.3	3.9
Franklin	6,471	5,560	4,936	6,287	5,011	16.4	29.1
Garfield	84	73	76	81	93	15.1	-9.7
Grant	6,694	5,797	6,035	6,970	5,847	15.5	14.5
Grays Harbor	4,021	3,311	3,381	3,689	3,744	21.4	7.4
Island	1,973	2,247	2,256	2,028	1,987	-12.2	-0.7
Jefferson	1,045	933	817	890	904	12.0	15.6
King	47,085	40,519	47,820	46,848	41,800	16.2	12.6
Kitsap	6,469	6,539	6,389	6,556	6,046	-1.1	7.0
Kittitas	1,277	1,039	1,137	1,215	1,064	22.9	20.0
Klickitat	1,193	1,100	1,067	1,221	1,163	8.5	2.6
Lewis	3,811	3,236	3,514	3,606	3,707	17.8	2.8
Lincoln	453	408	357	449	383	11.0	18.3
Mason	2,729	2,241	2,051	1,997	2,208	21.8	23.6
Okanogan	2,867	2,712	2,984	2,783	2,751	5.7	4.2
Pacific	991	960	882	1,007	1,030	3.2	-3.8
Pend Oreille	852	742	669	710	742	14.8	14.8
Pierce	29,729	27,405	28,402	27,746	25,203	8.5	18.0
San Juan	376	332	331	367	351	13.3	7.1
Skagit	4,704	4,175	4,876	4,620	5,127	12.7	-8.3
Skamania	437	374	386	396	421	16.8	3.8
Snohomish	19,560	17,074	17,018	16,983	17,877	14.6	9.4
Spokane	19,255	17,485	16,698	17,977	19,143	10.1	0.6
Stevens	2,425	2,084	2,351	2,182	2,280	16.4	6.4
Thurston	7,929	6,108	6,408	7,267	6,929	29.8	14.4
Wahkiakum	176	151	125	137	129	16.6	36.4
Walla Walla	2,806	2,797	2,786	2,845	2,804	0.3	0.1
Whatcom	6,678	5,946	6,721	6,044	5,785	12.3	15.4
Whitman	1,088	988	939	1,039	1,051	10.1	3.5
Yakima	22,856	18,314	19,571	20,740	20,378	24.8	12.2
Statewide Total	249,866	217,241	225,338	232,222	224,619	15.0	11.2

Source: US Census Bureau, Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates (02/2011)
Model-based Estimates for States, Counties and School Districts

Adolescent Pregnancy

In 2009, Washington teens 17 years of age and younger had 3,379 pregnancies (live births, abortions and fetal deaths). This equates to a rate of 24 pregnancies per 1000 youth ages 15-17 years. This rate is down over two points from the previous year (26.7 in 2008). Washington's rate for this age group is lower than the national rate. The rate of adolescent pregnancy has shown a steady and significant decline in recent years. The adolescent pregnancy rate in 2000 (ten years ago) was 45.7 per 1000 females ages 15 through 17, whereas in 2009 the rate was 24 for the same age group.

Four of Washington's counties are significantly higher than the state rate. These counties include: Adams (73), Yakima (54.2), Franklin (51.8), and Grant (50.5).

Although the adolescent pregnancy rate in each of these counties decreased (except Adams County) over the previous year, it is significant to note that Adams County had the highest teen pregnancy rate in the State for the past five years.

Children who have children put both generations at risk. Teenage mothers typically have less education and work experience than their peers who did not bear a child. They are more likely to need public assistance to support their children). According to Washington State's Department of Health, "Compared to their peers who have children later, teen parents are:

- *More likely to have children born at a low birth-weight, and who suffer from poor health and development.*
- *More likely to have low family incomes, live in poverty and receive public assistance.*
- *Less likely to fulfill their educational and economic goals.*
- *At increased risk of substance abuse, intimate partner violence, maternal depression and divorce or separation."*

Further, according to the Florida State University Prevention and Early Intervention Center, Teen Parent Child Care Quality Improvement Project, Fact Sheet, (2001), "The prevalence of child abuse among children born to adolescent mothers is greater than in the general population...Children born to mothers age 15 and younger are two times more likely to become an indicated case of child abuse/neglect in the first five years of their lives than are children born to mothers ages 20-21."

The same fact sheet identifies a host of problems often faced by children born to teenage mothers. These problems include:

- *Developmental delays*
- *Behavioral problems in school*
- *School dropout*
- *Incarceration (boys born to teenage mothers are three times more likely to be incarcerated than those born to adult mothers)*
- *Daughters are more likely to become teen parents*

Programs that appear to make a difference in reducing teenage pregnancy include: early childhood education, nurse home-visiting, school-based curricula, abstinence and contraceptive programs, and activities that enhance life options for adolescent girls.
