

Youth Living in Poverty

Nearly 16 million children in the United States – 22% of all children – live in families with incomes below the federal poverty level - \$23,550 a year for a family of four. Research shows that, on average, families need an income of about twice that level to cover basic expenses. Using this standard, 45% of children live in low-income families. Poverty can impede children's ability to learn and contribute to social, emotional, and behavioral problems. Poverty also can contribute to poor health and mental health. Risks are greatest for children who experience poverty when they are youth and/or experience deep and persistent poverty.

According to data published by the U.S. Census Bureau, Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates for Washington Counties, 2013, approximately 18.3 percent (291,840) of Washington's children under age 18 lived below the poverty level in 2013. This represents the fourth consecutive year of increase in youth living in poverty. From 2009 to 2013 the number of youth living in poverty has increased 16.8 percent (249,866 in 2009 to 291,840 in 2013). More than one in five American children lives in poverty, according to the Census.

The National Center for Homeless Education reports that in Washington State during the 2012-2013 school year there were 30,609 homeless youth enrolled in school. This is an 11 percent increase over the 2011-2012 school year when there were 27,390, and an increase of over 17% from the 2010-2011 school year when there were 26,048.

According to Kids Count, child poverty is not simply a function of economics or geography but complex social phenomena, with significant disparities by race. Children who are Native American, Black, or Hispanic have the highest national child poverty rates at 37 percent, 39, and 33 percent, compared to White and Asian children who have lower rates at 14 percent.

According to Kids Count, Washington State in 2013 there were 291,840 children under 18 in poverty (18.3%). The percent of children in poverty by race and ethnic in Washington State was 13 percent White, 14 percent Asian and Pacific Islander, 35 percent American Indian/

Alaska Native (2012), 41 percent Black, 33 percent Hispanic and 19 percent Multiracial.

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 steadily increased during the past five years, from 433,017 in 2009 to 476,211 in 2013. This is an increase of over 10 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).

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".

Juvenile delinquency is driven by the negative consequences of social and economic development. The Washington State Employment Security Department compiles what they term a Distressed Area List. Distressed areas are counties where the averaged three-year unemployment rate is at least 20 percent higher than the statewide average. In 2013 there were 15 Washington Counties listed as distressed areas: Clallam, Clark, Columbia, Cowlitz, Ferry, Grays Harbor, Klickitat, Lewis, Mason, Pacific, Pend Oreille, Skamania, Stevens, Wahkiakum and Yakima. Distressed areas often struggle with resources to provide services to their youth as well.

TABLE 25
National School Lunch and Breakfast Program
Applications Received

County	2013	2012	2011	2010	2009	% change 2012-2013	% change 2009-2013
Adams	3,640	3,372	3,320	3,349	3,256	7.9	11.8
Asofin	1,627	1,677	1,594	1,687	1,633	-3.0	-0.4
Benton	17,617	16,617	15,669	15,492	14,629	6.0	20.4
Chelan	7,594	7,426	7,356	7,323	7,060	2.3	7.6
Clallam	4,400	4,394	4,252	4,113	4,088	0.1	7.6
Clark	30,908	32,175	31,784	31,638	29,801	-3.9	3.7
Columbia	255	287	267	271	255	-11.1	0.0
Cowlitz	8,803	8,983	8,601	8,550	8,476	-2.0	3.9
Douglas	4,466	4,346	4,221	4,162	4,079	2.8	9.5
Ferry	629	596	630	582	582	5.5	8.1
Franklin	13,478	12,929	12,582	12,006	11,482	4.2	17.4
Garfield	162	160	135	152	175	1.3	-7.4
Grant	13,457	13,479	13,113	12,860	12,387	-0.2	8.6
Grays Harbor	7,151	6,798	6,910	6,430	6,476	5.2	10.4
Island	3,367	3,319	3,359	3,192	2,995	1.4	12.4
Jefferson	1,227	1,282	1,392	1,355	1,320	-4.3	-7.0
King	99,880	99,330	96,129	91,648	86,719	0.6	15.2
Kitsap	13,097	13,009	13,010	12,920	12,204	0.7	7.3
Kittitas	2,058	2,080	1,929	2,011	1,776	-1.1	15.9
Klickitat	1,550	1,593	1,620	1,580	1,605	-2.7	-3.4
Lewis	6,844	6,848	6,491	6,562	6,248	-0.1	9.5
Lincoln	918	908	975	989	985	1.1	-6.8
Mason	4,887	4,731	4,469	4,520	4,313	3.3	13.3
Okanogan	4,350	4,338	4,378	4,401	4,385	0.3	-0.8
Pacific	1,816	1,787	1,784	1,701	1,731	1.6	4.9
Pend Oreille	890	943	1,005	947	1,027	-5.6	-13.3
Pierce	61,198	60,681	59,785	57,292	54,354	0.9	12.6
San Juan	652	679	654	636	559	-4.0	16.6
Skagit	9,925	10,711	10,091	9,971	9,429	-7.3	5.3
Skamania	534	527	574	553	516	1.3	3.5
Snohomish	41,135	41,459	40,778	38,291	36,246	-0.8	13.5
Spokane	34,273	34,814	34,128	33,181	31,838	-1.6	7.6
Stevens	3,241	3,402	3,570	3,464	3,562	-4.7	-9.0
Thurston	15,155	15,345	14,539	13,401	12,672	-1.2	19.6
Wahkiakum	225	232	250	265	246	-3.0	-8.5
Walla Walla	4,971	5,088	5,025	4,890	4,782	-2.3	4.0
Whatcom	10,612	11,851	11,243	11,056	10,959	-10.5	-3.2
Whitman	1,517	1,583	1,536	1,504	1,425	-4.2	6.5
Yakima	37,702	37,140	38,131	37,131	36,742	1.5	2.6
State Average	476,211	476,919	467,279	452,076	433,017	-0.1	10.0

Source: Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) (4/30/2014)

TABLE 26
Poverty Estimates for Washington Counties
Age 0-17

County	2013 Poverty	2013 % of 0-17 pop.	2012 Poverty	2011 Poverty	2010 Poverty	2009 Poverty	% Change 2012-2013	% Change 2009-2013
Adams	1,566	23.5	1,760	1,887	1,970	1,786	-11.0	-12.3
Asotin	1,178	25.3	1,065	1,200	1,176	1,108	10.6	6.3
Benton	8,893	17.9	10,037	8,165	8,693	8,011	-11.4	11.0
Chelan	4,063	22.5	4,085	4,314	3,875	3,432	-0.5	18.4
Clallam	3,111	24.1	2,778	2,508	2,936	2,859	12.0	8.8
Clark	19,464	17.1	17,814	19,973	19,511	18,151	9.3	7.2
Columbia	196	25.4	164	172	172	169	19.5	16.0
Cowlitz	5,304	22.5	5,497	6,514	6,895	5,640	-3.5	-6.0
Douglas	2,446	23.3	2,460	2,796	2,234	2,172	-0.6	12.6
Ferry	460	32.2	423	424	409	504	8.7	-8.7
Franklin	6,896	23.6	7,238	9,952	6,666	6,471	-4.7	6.6
Garfield	115	25.3	86	78	90	84	33.7	36.9
Grant	6,734	24.0	7,474	7,702	8,125	6,694	-9.9	0.6
Grays Harbor	4,115	27.4	4,390	4,409	4,384	4,021	-6.3	2.3
Island	2,261	14.9	2,165	2,390	2,332	1,973	4.4	14.6
Jefferson	964	23.3	978	994	958	1,045	-1.4	-7.8
King	66,685	15.4	63,852	59,240	62,481	47,085	4.4	41.6
Kitsap	7,910	14.7	7,688	7,767	8,275	6,469	2.9	22.3
Kittitas	1,375	18.3	1,476	1,571	1,384	1,277	-6.8	7.7
Klickitat	1,062	24.3	1,177	1,157	1,268	1,193	-9.8	-11.0
Lewis	4,254	25.5	4,043	3,922	3,755	3,811	5.2	11.6
Lincoln	437	19.8	466	435	428	453	-6.2	-3.5
Mason	3,155	26.7	2,947	2,590	2,662	2,729	7.1	15.6
Okanogan	2,892	30.0	3,053	3,245	3,021	2,867	-5.3	0.9
Pacific	955	26.9	1,022	1,011	959	991	-6.6	-3.6
Pend Oreille	805	30.4	846	865	798	852	-4.8	-5.5
Pierce	37,525	18.9	34,640	31,742	33,157	29,729	8.3	26.2
San Juan	405	17.8	450	459	496	376	-10.0	7.7
Skagit	5,652	21.0	5,716	6,080	5,562	4,704	-1.1	20.2
Skamania	479	20.3	520	501	475	437	-7.9	9.6
Snohomish	24,854	14.3	22,689	25,868	22,142	19,560	9.5	27.1
Spokane	21,405	19.8	21,168	19,482	18,978	19,255	1.1	11.2
Stevens	2,571	26.4	2,685	2,885	2,751	2,425	-4.2	6.0
Thurston	9,325	16.0	9,384	9,814	8,130	7,929	-0.6	17.6
Wahkiakum	189	26.3	163	183	182	176	16.0	7.4
Walla Walla	2,899	22.2	3,427	3,041	2,894	2,806	-15.4	3.3
Whatcom	7,015	16.7	7,643	7,237	6,796	6,678	-8.2	5.0
Whitman	1,149	16.4	1,248	1,197	1,051	1,088	-7.9	5.6
Yakima	21,076	28.5	23,658	22,940	25,922	22,856	-10.9	-7.8
Statewide Total	291,840	18.3	288,375	286,710	283,993	249,866	1.2	16.8

Source: US Census Bureau, Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates (01/05/2015)

Model-based Estimates for States, Counties and School Districts

TABLE 27
2013 Distressed Areas*

County	Three-Year Average Unemployment Rate (Jan 2010 - Dec 2013) (Not Seasonally Adjusted)	Distressed Area: Unemployment Rate Greater Than or Equal to 9.7% (3-year unemployment rate is at least 20% higher than the statewide average)
Adams	9.0%	
Asotin	8.3%	
Benton	8.3%	
Chelan	7.9%	
Clallam	9.9%	Clallam
Clark	10.8%	Clark
Columbia	10.7%	Columbia
Cowlitz	11.0%	Cowlitz
Douglas	7.5%	
Ferry	13.1%	Ferry
Franklin	9.1%	
Garfield	7.6%	
Grant	9.5%	
Grays Harbor	12.5%	Grays Harbor
Island	8.4%	
Jefferson	9.5%	
King	6.6%	
Kitsap	7.4%	
Kittitas	8.2%	
Klickitat	10.0%	Klickitat
Lewis	13.2%	Lewis
Lincoln	8.0%	
Mason	10.5%	Mason
Okanogan	9.4%	
Pacific	11.5%	Pacific
Pend Oreille	11.9%	Pend Oreille
Pierce	8.9%	
San Juan	6.4%	
Skagit	9.2%	
Skamania	11.4%	Skamania
Snohomish	7.6%	
Spokane	8.6%	
Stevens	11.6%	Stevens
Thurston	7.7%	
Wahkiakum	12.1%	Wahkiakum
Walla Walla	7.3%	
Whatco	7.6%	
Whitman	6.5%	
Yakima	9.7%	Yakima
Washington State	8.1%	

*The Distressed Areas List identifies all counties with a three-year average unemployment rate equal to or greater than 20 percent of the statewide unemployment rate. For the period from January 2011 to December 2013, Washington had a three year average of 8.1 percent unemployment. Fifteen counties are on the distressed list for 2012.

WA State Employment Security Dept. Distressed areas list.