

Struggling To Get By

The Challenges of Poverty in Kitsap County



KCR 2017 COMMUNITY ACTION NEEDS ASSESSMENT

This assessment presents data collection, analysis, and findings of the needs of low-income Kitsap County residents and the availability of resources to meet those needs.



KITSAP COMMUNITY
Resources

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REPORT ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This 2017 Comprehensive Community Assessment was completed using information compiled from datasets, reports, organizations, and individuals. It is not meant to cover every aspect of life in Kitsap County, but rather provide insight into the current and emerging issues affecting individuals living at the lower spectrum of the economic scale.

Special thanks and appreciation are extended to:

- Nicola Marsden-Haug and Kari Hunter of the Kitsap Health District for their presentation and interpretation of key demographic and community data as well as the compilation of consumer survey results.
- The many individuals and families who completed survey questionnaires as well as the eight Kitsap County foodbanks for their help in distributing and collecting the surveys.
- The community leaders and KCR Board members who shared information, expertise, and community perspectives that were used throughout this assessment.

For online access to the Executive Summary or the full 2017 Community Action Needs Assessment, please visit the Kitsap Community Resources website at www.kcr.org. Please direct any questions regarding the content to Monica Bernhard, mbernhard@kcr.org.

With appreciation,

The KCR Community Assessment Team

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A LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Friends,

As you may know, Kitsap Community Resources (KCR) recently celebrated its 50th anniversary as your local Community Action Agency. We are devoted to addressing the needs of low-income Kitsap County residents and working alongside our many community partners to build systems that help people exit poverty.

Comprehensive community assessments such as this one are completed by KCR every three years and are designed to highlight all relevant aspects of life in our county, specifically as they pertain to the needs and desires of our low-income neighbors. Ours is a dynamic organization, and throughout the years we worked hard to strengthen the safety net, create new initiatives based on unmet needs of the community, and even discontinue programs that have served their purpose. In keeping with this long history, the 2017 Community Assessment will once again guide our Board of Directors, leadership team, and staff members as we look ahead to align our services with the identified needs of the community.

We know that KCR cannot and should not attempt to be the be-all and end-all for the needs of all low-income Kitsap County residents. Instead, it takes a community to address the far reaching impacts that poverty has on our neighbors. So, in the course of this assessment, we may identify key community needs that KCR can integrate into its existing programs and services; but, at the same time we will also identify priority areas where our agency can bring the public's awareness to an issue and assist by convening community partners that are better suited to meet those specific needs.

So, it is with sincere appreciation for the incredible support our community has offered to KCR over the years and with great anticipation toward the important work yet to come, that we offer this comprehensive community assessment to continue to guide our joint efforts to improve the lives of those still "Struggling to Get By".

In partnership,

Larry Eyer
Executive Director
Kitsap Community Resources



KCR VISION, MISSION, AND VALUES



Our Vision...

"Be a community in which everyone has an opportunity to thrive."

Our Mission...

"We create hope and opportunity for low-income Kitsap County residents by providing resources that promote self-sufficiency and stability."

Our Core Values...

Integrity – We honor commitments in an ethical manner.

Equity – We offer services tailored to the needs of the individual.

Compassion – We genuinely empathize with those we serve.

Excellence – We demonstrate high performance in everything we do.

Diversity – We honor and respect all individuals without bias.

Collaboration – We seek out partnerships and collaboration opportunities in our community.

Teamwork – We support our employees as partners in achieving our mission.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction to the Community Assessment

In the past several years, Kitsap County has experienced an increasingly improving economy. Still, not all members of the community have benefitted from this recovery, as we will see in this report. While many individuals and families were able to exit poverty, far too many people are still looking for work or remain stuck in jobs that do not afford them the ability to get ahead. Unsheltered homelessness has increased and rising rents and extremely low vacancy rates have made it very difficult for low-income households to access and retain their housing. Local food banks have experienced an increase in demand for their services. The scourge of opioid addiction has taken hold across socioeconomic levels and treatment options for individuals with Serious Mental Illness and Substance Use Disorders do not meet the growing need. Even with the implementation of the Affordable Care Act and the resulting decline in the uninsured population, far too many people still find it difficult to access dental care. The purpose of this Community Needs Assessment is to provide the KCR Board of Directors with a broad overview of the state of our community, its citizens, and its service providers and further provide the foundation for the 2017-2020 KCR Strategic Plan.

The Demographics of Kitsap County

The population of Kitsap County increased 13.2% since 2000, to an estimated 262,590 in 2016. The population is increasingly aging, with the median age is rising from 29.3 in 1980 to 41.2 in 2014. At the same time, births to unmarried mothers are statistically increasing and the declining proportion of married adults nationwide may have contributed to substantially higher child poverty rates over the past four decades. The economic recovery appears to be taking hold in our community as evidenced by the median household income slowly increasing, reaching \$61,156 in 2015 and a projection of \$66,569 in 2016.

"So many people are living on the edge. If there is another economic downturn, low-income persons will be the hardest hit and this will push them over the edge."

**Chief Steven Strachan,
Bremerton Police Department**

Kitsap County has a proportionally larger White (non-Hispanic) population (78%) than Washington State (71%). The county's White, non-Hispanic proportion of the population has declined since 2000 when it comprised 83% of the total population. Spanish is the most common spoken language other than English and though it is difficult to count, it is estimated there are 300-400 undocumented immigrants living in Kitsap County. The changing community composition highlights the importance of providing translation services as a component of effective social service delivery. In addition, community leaders emphasized the importance of expanding access to KCR services and programs, especially to underserved minorities and immigrant communities.

Poverty Continues to be a Challenge

There are 24,190 people, representing 10% of the Kitsap County population, living at or below the Federal Poverty Level. The proportion of children under 5 in poverty decreased slightly from 18% to 17% between 2014 and 2015. It is important to note that poverty measures understate the true level of poverty in any community because the U.S. Census Bureau methodology to calculate poverty does not adequately reflect the income necessary to support basic needs, including significantly higher healthcare costs.

Summary of Key Community Domains

Employment, Asset Building and Financial Stability

Building wealth and financial stability is key to exiting poverty. And, accessing the training and education necessary to earn a living wage is critical. While the estimated 2016 unemployment rate in Kitsap County of 5.8% is lower than the state average, unemployment rates are higher for youth ages 16-19 and young adults 20-24, with unemployment rates of 25.3% and 12.2%, respectively. Only 1 in 4 respondents to the KCR consumer survey indicated they were working full time with benefits, while 21% indicated they were unemployed and looking for work.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Education and Opportunity

Head Start and Early Head Start enrollment has declined slightly in recent years, dropping from a combined enrollment of 1,147 enrollees in 2011, to 1,066 enrollees in 2016. Both Bremerton and South Kitsap school districts have seen enrollment increase of 4.9% and 4.0%, respectively as compared to 5 years ago, the other three districts have declined. Overall, public school enrollment across Kitsap County is down .2% from 5 years ago. In discussion, local education leaders emphasized that there seems does not seem to be a sense urgency about getting a college education and that there remains a general question among lower income persons as to whether getting a college degree is worth it.

Health and Well Being

Although the future model of health care coverage is uncertain at this time, the Affordable Care Act has definitely impacted the number of uninsured individuals in Kitsap County. In fact, according to 2015 estimates, only 3.6% of children (age 0-17) in Kitsap County and 6.4% of adults (age 18 to 64) were estimated to be uninsured. This is a dramatic decline from the 2013 estimates, with both estimates dropping from 4.8% and 16.0%, respectively. Access to affordable dental care was identified as both the highest priority need for individuals and families responding to the consumer survey and also the hardest service to access. With Medicaid Expansion, access to mental health care has improved; however, community mental health services are underfunded and the current health care workforce is insufficient to meet the increase in people now eligible for services.

In addition, drug related deaths have statistically increased in Kitsap County to a rate of 13.0 per 100 deaths. The impact of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) is also an area of focus in Kitsap, as it has been reported that an estimated 29% of adults have experienced 3 or more ACEs (Adverse Childhood Experiences) as children. The number of ACEs that one experiences is correlated with a higher likelihood of developing physical and behavioral health disorders later in life. Access to transportation was often cited as a barrier to accessing social services and healthcare services for low-income persons



Family signs up for Christmas Angel Program

Housing and Homelessness

Many people in our county are living with a very high housing cost burden. Housing is generally deemed affordable when a household does not expend more than 30% of its available income on housing costs. In Kitsap County, the 2014 estimates suggest that 25% of home owners and 50% of renters were paying 30% or more of their monthly income on housing costs. There is simply not enough affordable housing available in Kitsap as evidenced by the fact that for every 100 low-income households qualifying for affordable housing, there are only 12 units of affordable housing available. Rents have risen 33% since the beginning of 2014 and vacancy rates are around 4.6%, making it extremely difficult for low income persons to attain or retain permanent housing.

Despite significant improvements in the system of care including implementation of the Housing Solutions Center coordinated entry program and the severe weather shelter system, homelessness continues to grow in Kitsap County. In fact, during the 2017 annual Kitsap County Point-In-Time (PIT) Homeless Count, there were 663 individuals counted, representing an approximate 34% increase over 2015. Of those counted, 205 individuals were unsheltered, which is nearly double the number counted in 2015. Emergency shelters are consistently full. Homelessness among students in our schools is also increasing with a total of 1,134 students were reported as homeless during the 2015-16 school year, a 61% increase from 2013-14. In addition, data suggests there has been a recent increase in domestic violence offenses since 2012.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Food and Nutrition

There are eight Kitsap County food banks serving individuals and families who are experiencing food insecurity. The total number of households served by these foodbanks more than doubled (104% increase) from 2007 to 2016. The utilization of the food stamp program (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) has been relatively stable for the past five years, at a rate of 16.8 per 100 in 2016. The continued need for infant and child nutrition is evidenced by the fact that the percentage of infants who were born in the County and served by the Women Infants and Children nutrition program (WIC) averaged 41% in 2015. In addition, as of October 2015, a total of 13,041 students applied to receive free or reduced lunch during the 2015-16 school year.

Overview of the Community Safety Net

Kitsap County is fortunate to have a strong safety net comprised of providers who are ahead of the curve when it comes to cooperation, coordination, and innovation in addressing community challenges. Major non-profit providers including KCR, Kitsap Mental Health Services, Peninsula Community Health Services as well as government funded and private housing providers such as the Bremerton Housing Authority, Housing Kitsap and Housing Resources Bainbridge, and the Kitsap Public Health District are well complimented by a strong network of area food banks, domestic violence and emergency shelter providers. These organizations work in an increasingly collaborative manner with government organizations including Kitsap County Department of Human Services, the Veterans Administration, Olympic College, local school districts, law enforcement, and municipalities. Kitsap appears to have the appropriate scope of organizations and services in place with expertise needed to address these issues. However, as this report will highlight, in many cases the amount of services are often not sufficient to meet the needs of the community. The success of service providers going forward will be largely contingent on organizational capacity and access to the necessary funding to fully execute their strategies.

Key Community Challenges

In summary, through the review of the above socioeconomic data, the results of the KCR consumer survey, our interviews with 30 community leaders, and three community focus groups, this assessment has identified the following key community challenges:

- The current availability of affordable housing does not meet the needs of the community.
- Homelessness is on the rise and the most promising solutions, including Housing First, require significant community investment and case management training.
- Access to Dental Care for low-income adult residents is limited, though improving.
- Substance Use Disorders are on the rise and treatment is more difficult to access.
- With Medicaid Expansion, access to mental health care has improved; however, the current capacity does not meet the needs of the community.
- The importance of attaining post-secondary education, critical to closing the opportunity gap, is not well understood or valued by many low-income persons.
- Employment is improving but access to living wage jobs is limited.
- Individuals exiting jails and prisons face significant barriers to reintegration into society.
- Certain ethnic populations may not be fully accessing community services.

OVERVIEW OF KCR

History of Community Action Agencies

As part of the Economic Opportunity Act, Kitsap Community Resources (KCR) was established in 1965 to address the social and human challenges faced by those living in poverty in Kitsap County. As a Community Action Partnership agency, KCR has developed a number of programs over the years to meet the specific needs of Kitsap County's low-income population. From early childhood education to housing, energy assistance, and employment and training, KCR's services cover a wide range of needs that successfully achieve the ultimate goal of promoting self-sufficiency and stability.

In 2016, KCR services impacted the lives of more than 17,000 Kitsap County residents. These services were offered through its facilities in Bremerton, Poulsbo, and Silverdale, as well as its recently opened location in Port Orchard. (Note that not all services are available at all sites). The primary services offered by KCR include:

- Housing and Homeless Services
- Energy Assistance and Weatherization
- Head Start, Early Head Start, and Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP)
- Women, Infants and Children's (WIC) nutrition program
- AmeriCorps national and community service
- Financial Education, Business Education, and Employment and Training
- Veterans Assistance
- Food Preparation for meal programs

"KCR is the heart of our community. We count on the services you provide."

**Stacey James,
Kitsap County
Veterans Coordinator**

Purpose of the Community Needs Assessment

KCR's primary purpose with this assessment is to identify unmet needs of the local community and work with public and private partners to address these needs. Every three years KCR works with service providers, local government and the private sector to produce a comprehensive countywide needs assessment for the following purposes:

- Explore and illustrate the dimensions of poverty in Kitsap County,
- Identify unmet needs of low-income residents in our community, and;
- Provide a strategic planning tool for agencies, organizations and individuals seeking to confront poverty in Kitsap County.

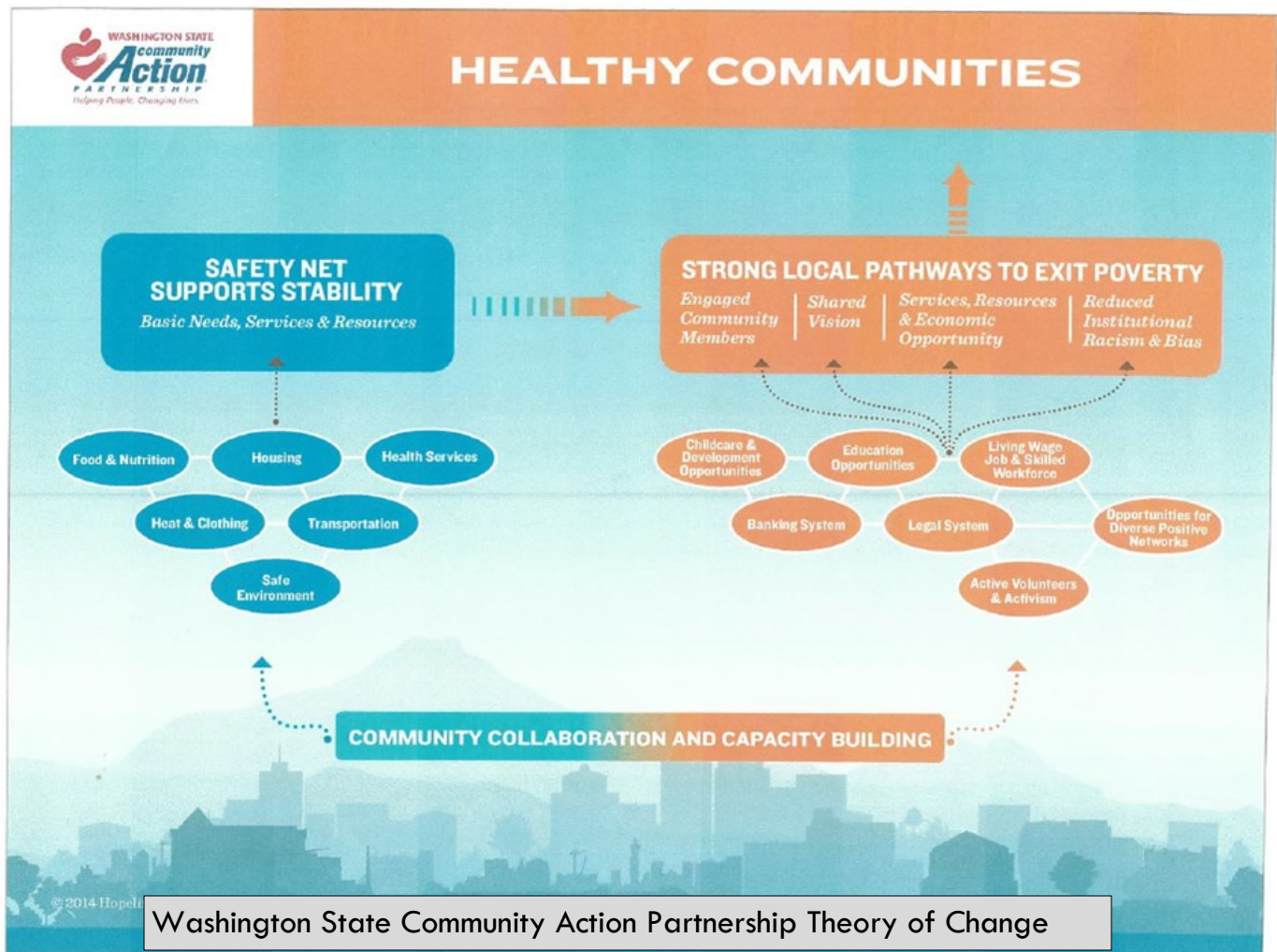
Over the course of our 50 year history, the community assessment process has led KCR to take a lead role in helping to create or support many of the critical safety net programs in our community including establishing several local food banks, forming the first community health center, providing legal services and establishing some of the community's first emergency shelters.

OVERVIEW OF KCR

Overview of Community Action Theory of Change

To demonstrate the goals and objectives of KCR services within the community, we have adopted the Washington State Community Action Partnership Theory of Change, displayed below. As you can see, the heart of community action agency programs and services, including KCR, are designed to help to foster healthy communities. If this is our goal, what then is necessary to bring this about? Asking this question is precisely what distinguishes community action agencies from other service providers. KCR's mission is not simply focused on addressing a single community need; rather, we are here to help support the overall health of the community by promoting both a comprehensive safety net as well as ensuring there are pathways to exit poverty.

Bringing this about requires two primary types of services. First, KCR services help program participants achieve stability through the provision of basic needs including housing and shelter, food, heat, and a safe home environment. With improved stability, the harmful effects of poverty are eased for all family members and the household is now more likely to be in a better position to take steps to move out of poverty. Second, individuals are provided opportunities to make positive changes in their lives and to that end, KCR provides programs that promote stimulating child development and education, access to living wage jobs, budgeting and financial education, and the opportunity to build positive social networks. Most importantly, we recognize that KCR is not alone in this transformation. The key to building healthy communities is through community engagement, collaboration and partnerships.



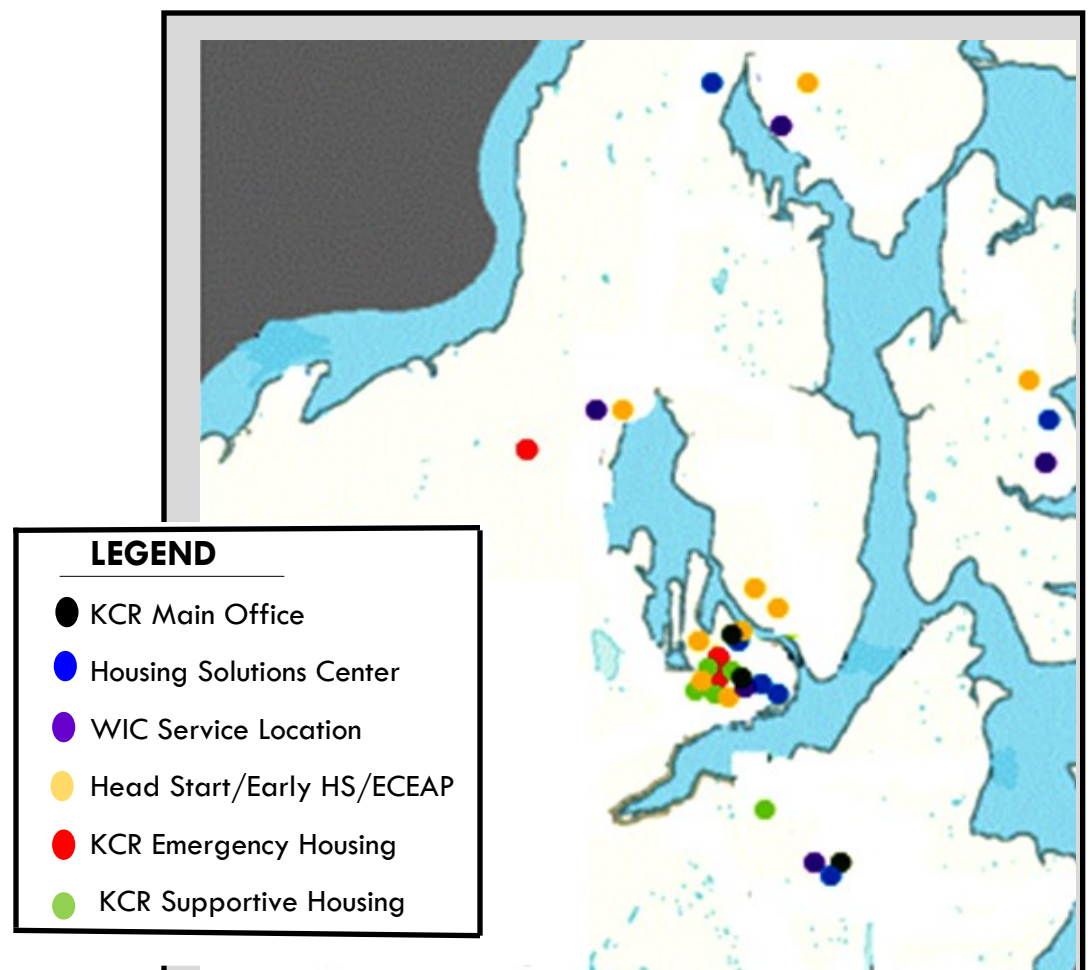
OVERVIEW OF KCR

Kitsap County Geography

Kitsap County is located in the central Puget Sound region of Washington State, directly between the urban areas of Seattle and Tacoma and the wilderness of the Olympic Mountains. The County occupies most of the Kitsap Peninsula and includes both Bainbridge and Blake Islands. The County is bounded by the Puget Sound on the east and north, Hood Canal on the west, and Mason and Pierce counties on the south. It has a land mass of 396 square miles and approximately 250 miles of saltwater shoreline. Kitsap County ranks 36th in size among Washington counties and is the 3rd most densely populated county in the state behind King and Clark counties.

KCR Service Area

KCR offers its services across Kitsap County. Our administrative offices and primary service center is located in Bremerton. We also have a service center in Port Orchard and Head Start/ECEAP program locations in Bremerton, Silverdale, Poulsbo and Bainbridge Island. In other parts of Kitsap County, KCR services are offered through collaborative partnerships with other service providers including North Kitsap Fishline in Poulsbo, Helpline House on Bainbridge Island and Housing Resources Bainbridge. At the present time our services are limited in the Central Kitsap area, other than our Head Start locations. While Silverdale is relatively close to our main center in Bremerton, access to transportation may be a challenge.



VOICES FROM OUR COMMUNITY

Data Collection Methods

This community assessment will present the key findings from a variety of sources. First, KCR partnered with the Kitsap Public Health District to obtain a variety of demographic, poverty, program, and economic data and analysis to provide the underlying framework for the assessment. Second, KCR conducted a comprehensive survey of 396 low-income residents. The surveys were distributed through foodbanks across the county, at KCR housing and energy assistance programs and Head Start locations. Third, we conducted key informant interviews with community leaders from a variety of sectors including elected officials, healthcare, school districts, and other non-profits. And finally, we conducted several focus groups representing consumers and community members. These various data sources informed our process as we prioritized key findings for our report.

Summary of Consumer Survey

A total of 396 respondents from across Kitsap County participated in a survey of consumer needs which were input into Survey Monkey, to enhance data integrity. The Kitsap Public Health District helped design the question structure and analyzed the responses. Not all participants answered all questions. A key component of the survey was identifying which services are considered to be important needs for a household and which services are deemed to be hard to get. According to the survey respondents, dental care, housing, utilities and jobs are the biggest unmet needs in our community. The summary of survey responses is available upon request.



Photography Eugenie Jones

Focus group and key informant interviews

VOICES FROM OUR COMMUNITY

Summary of Key Informant Interviews and Focus Groups

We conducted 30 Key Informant interviews with a variety of community leaders representing the education, business, non-profit, law-enforcement and government sectors. In addition, three focus groups were held in Bremerton and Central Kitsap. The Executive Director and at least one other Division Director met with each interviewee to discuss common questions:

- When you consider the state of our community, what keeps you up at night?
- What do you believe are the top three challenges specifically facing low-income persons in this community?
- What feasible actions do you think service providers, such as KCR, can take to address these challenges?
- Do you think your community has sufficient access to service providers? If not, what are the key barriers preventing this access?
- Do you see any opportunities for greater collaboration between KCR and your organization?

Based on the Key Informant Interviews and Focus Group discussions, there were more than 40 community challenges identified. In general, these challenges could be consolidated into the key areas of affordable housing, homelessness, substance use and abuse, mental health, living wage, jobs, the economy, transportation, education, family challenges, immigration related issues, and criminal justice.

Assessment Reveals Top Community Challenges



COMMUNITY DEMOGRAPHICS

Key Findings in this Section

- Median age is rising from 29.3 in 1980 to 39.1 in 2016.
- Births to unmarried mothers are statistically increasing. The declining proportion of married adults nationwide may have contributed to higher child poverty rates over the past four decades.
- The estimated median household income for Kitsap County has been slowly increasing, reaching a projected \$66,569 in 2016.

Population and Population Change

The total 2016 population of Kitsap County is estimated to be 262,590, which is just under 4% of the total Washington State population. The County population has increased 13.2% since 2000, with an average increase of 0.8% per year. From 2015 to 2016, the population grew 1.7% and since 2000, growth has been due to both natural change (7%; more births than deaths) and to migration into the County (4%).^{1,2,3}



Photography
Eugenie Jones

"We are a greying community and we need to work together to build connections that stop isolation."

**Rob Gelder,
Commissioner,
Kitsap County**

Since 2000, births to Kitsap County resident women have remained relatively stable, with an average of 2,978 per year. On average, a little more than a quarter of births each year are to military women (i.e., women who are military members, married to a military member, or delivered in a federal hospital). In 2014, 28.5% (875) of 3,068 births were to military women.³

COMMUNITY DEMOGRAPHICS

Population by Region: Highest Growth in Unincorporated Areas

There are four incorporated cities, which together comprise 34% of the total population. Port Orchard has been the fastest growing city since 2000, followed by Poulsbo. Unincorporated areas accounted for 47% of Kitsap County's total growth since 2000 but only 37% since 2010.^{1,4}

Population Change over Time, Kitsap County: 2000, 2010, and 2016 ^{1,4}

	Census 2000	Census 2010	Estimate 2016	% of Total 2016	Change since 2000	Change since 2010
Total	231,969	251,133	262,590	100%	13%	3%
Unincorporated	159,896	170,022	174,310	66%	9%	1%
Incorporated	72,073	81,111	88,280	34%	22%	6%
Bainbridge Island	20,308	23,025	23,760	9%	17%	2%
Bremerton	37,259	37,729	40,500	15%	9%	4%
Port Orchard	7,693	11,157	13,810	5%	80%	21%
Poulsbo	6,813	9,200	10,210	4%	50%	8%

Population by Age: Median Age is Rising

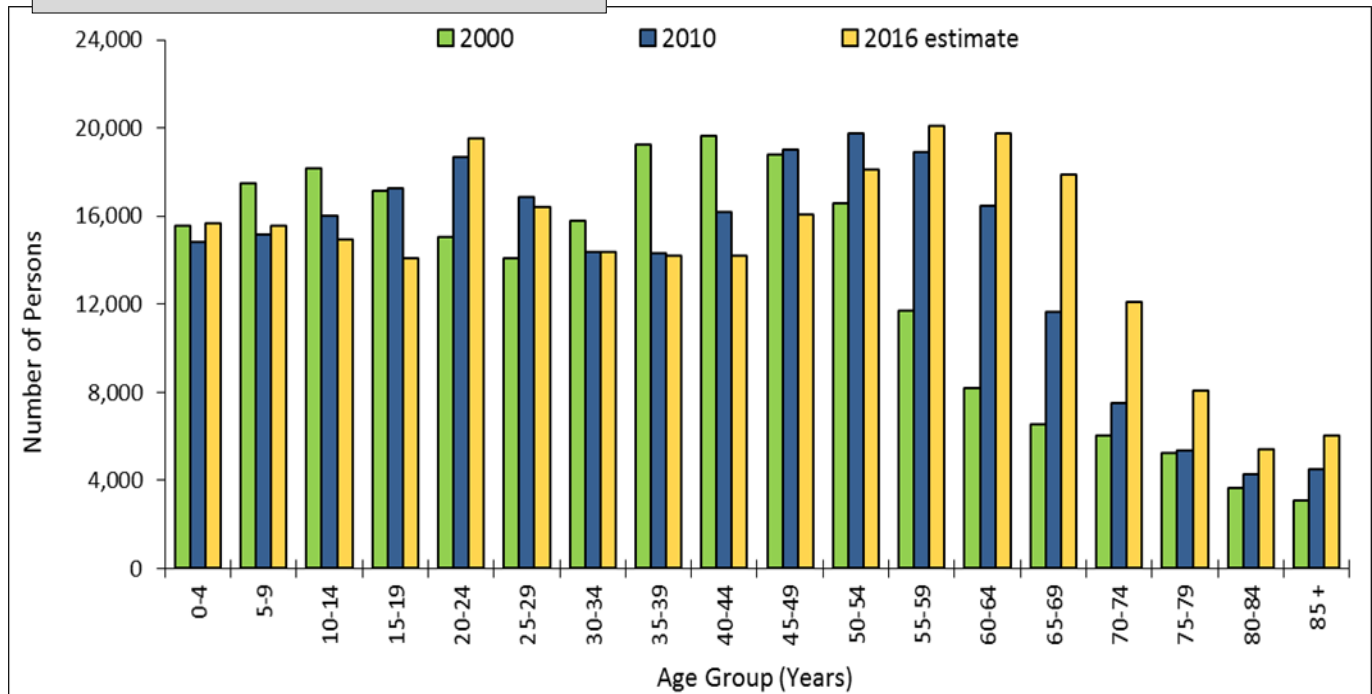
The age distribution in Kitsap County has changed dramatically over the past three decades, with a growing aging population. The median age in 1980 was 29.3 years, but as of 2016 was 39.1 years.¹ The population growth has been predominantly among the older age groups. In particular, the 55-74 year-old age group has more than doubled (115% increase) since 2000, and now represents more than a quarter (27%) of the population.^{1,4}



The 55-74 year-old age group has more than doubled (115%) since 2000.

COMMUNITY DEMOGRAPHICS

Kitsap County Population by Age Group in 2000, 2010 and 2016^{1,4}



The child population in Kitsap County has changed as well throughout the last 16 years, though not as much as the adult population. Persons aged 5-19 years decreased 16% from 2000 to 2016.^{1,4} The following table shows the estimated child population (5-year estimate for 2011-15) by age group in each of the five school districts.⁵

Estimated Child Population by Age Group and Region, Kitsap County: 2011-15⁵

	Bainbridge Island School District	Bremerton School District	Central Kitsap School District	North Kitsap School District	South Kitsap School District
Total population	23,227	45,529	71,337	47,859	66,125
Child population (17 and under)	5,100	8,392	16,520	10,698	14,074
# under 3 years	414	1,705	2,722	1,724	2,244
# at 3 and 4 years	577	1,411	1,470	844	1,518
# at 5 years	75	511	676	425	696
# at 6 to 8 years	1,009	1,562	2,603	1,981	2,167
# at 9 to 11 years	983	945	2,869	1,885	2,650
# at 12 to 17 years	2,042	2,258	6,180	3,839	4,799
% under 3 years	8%	20%	16%	16%	16%
% at 3 and 4 years	11%	17%	9%	8%	11%
% at 5 years	1%	6%	4%	4%	5%
% at 6 to 8 years	20%	19%	16%	19%	15%
% at 9 to 11 years	19%	11%	17%	18%	19%
% at 12 to 17 years	40%	27%	37%	36%	34%



KCR Kitsap Youth In Action team members help Head Start children

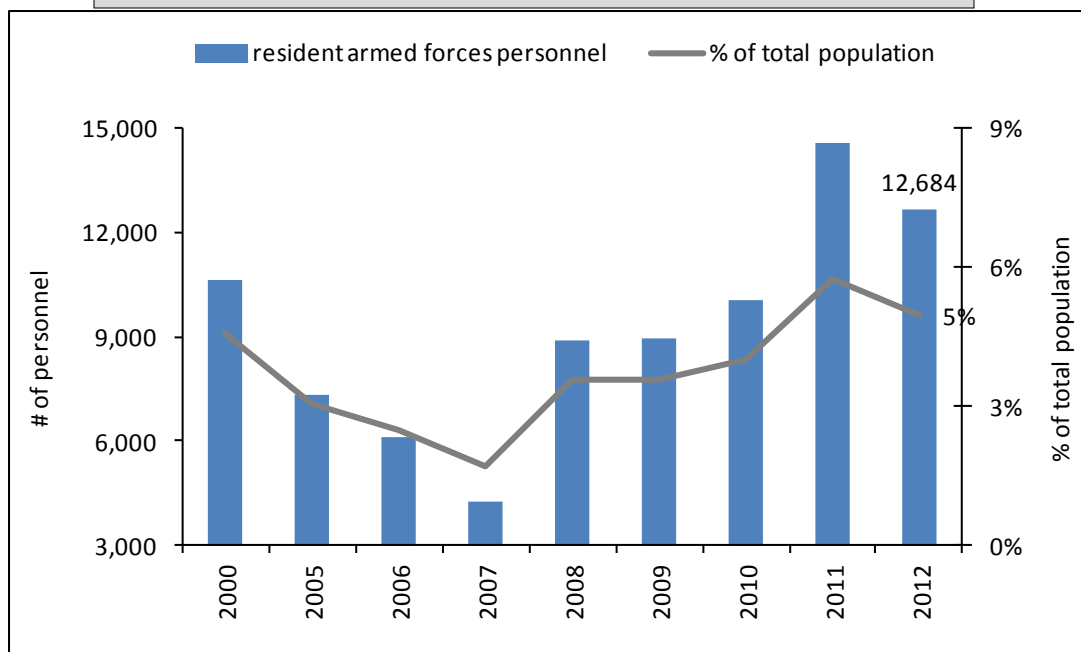
COMMUNITY DEMOGRAPHICS

Military Population: Increased Resident Armed Forces Personnel

Kitsap County is home to Naval Base Kitsap-Bremerton, Puget Sound Naval Shipyard, Bangor Naval Submarine Base, and Bangor Trident Base and therefore has a large military population which accounts for thousands of families in the area. The population of resident armed forces personnel (i.e. active duty military personnel, excluding dependents) in Kitsap County increased 43% from 2008 to 2012.^{4,5} An estimated 12,684 armed forces personnel resided in Kitsap County during 2012, or about 5% of the total population. The U.S. Census Bureau stopped publishing data on resident armed forces as of 2012; no further recent data are available. However, the Navy is the largest employer in the county. In 2013, the Department of Defense employed 14,953 military personnel collectively between Naval Base Kitsap (including Bremerton, Keyport, Bangor and Tenant Commands), Naval Hospital Bremerton, and the Puget Sound Naval Shipyard.⁶ The military population, including the number of active duty personnel and their families, fluctuates dramatically as Navy ships depart and arrive in Bremerton.



Resident Armed Forces Personnel, Kitsap County: 2000 and 2005 to 2012^{4,5}

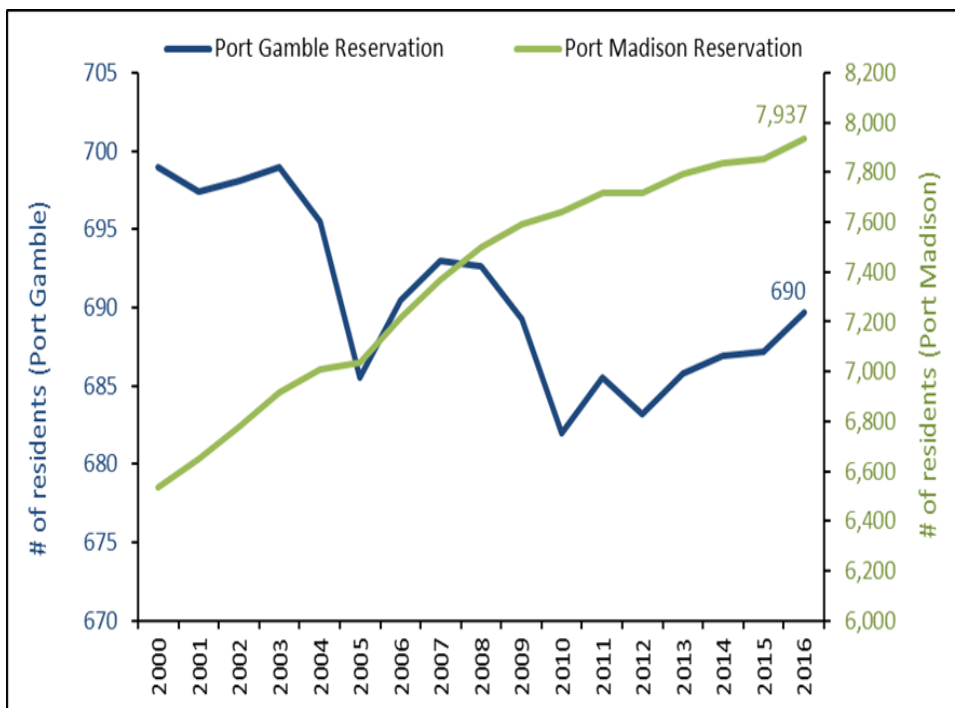


COMMUNITY DEMOGRAPHICS

Tribal Population: Resident Population Unchanged

There are two American Indian Reservations in Kitsap County; the Port Gamble S'Klallam Tribe is associated with the Port Gamble Reservation and the Suquamish Tribe is associated with the Port Madison Reservation. The 2016 estimated resident population on the Pt. Gamble Reservation is 690 and on the Pt. Madison Reservation is 7,937.¹ Since 2000, this represents a 2.4% decline for Port Gamble and a 16.9% increase for Pt. Madison. These estimates may include non-tribal members living on the reservation and are not limited by race. Similarly, these estimates may not capture tribal members living outside the reservations.

Residents Living on American Indian Tribal Reservation, Kitsap County: 2000 to 2016¹

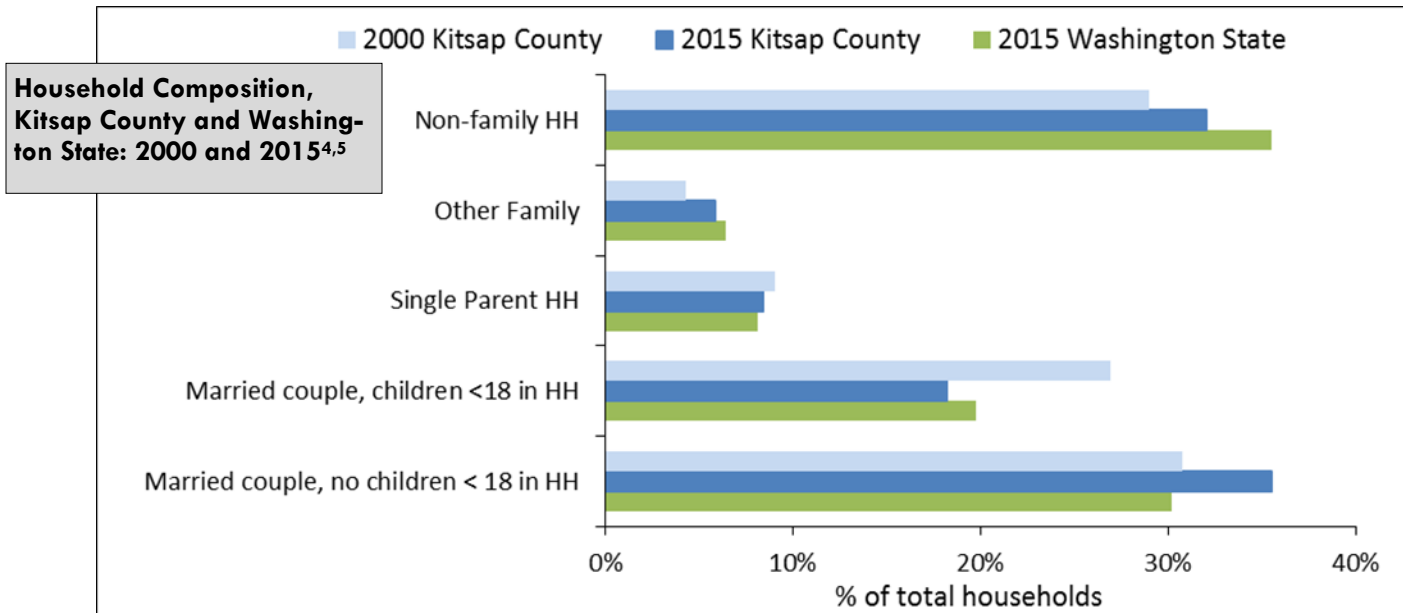


of Port Gamble Residents - # of Port Madison Residents

COMMUNITY DEMOGRAPHICS

Family Structure

From 2000 to 2015, the proportion of all Kitsap County households that were married couple households with children decreased from 27% to 18% while nonfamily households (a person living alone or with an unrelated group of individuals) increased from 29% to 32%.^{4,5}



In Kitsap County, it is estimated that 29.6% of all 98,490 households had one or more children under the age of 18 in 2015.⁵ The number of single parent households is not directly available, but it is estimated that 8.4% of all households were families with their own children (<18 years) in which the householder (male or female)



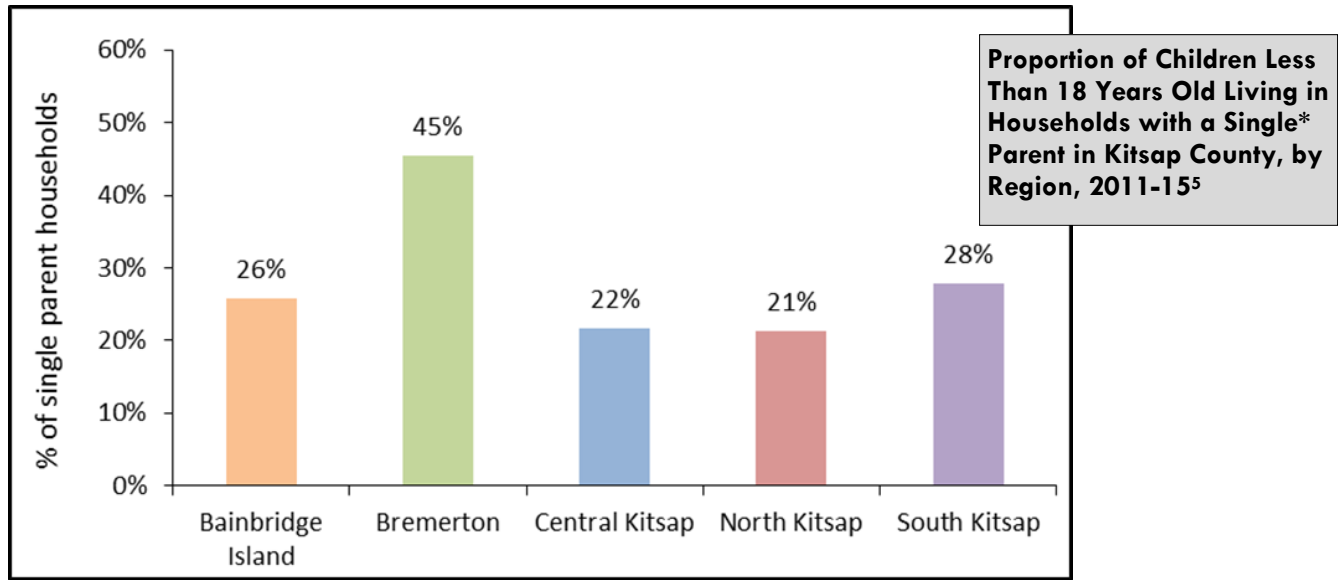
does not have a married spouse present. However, this may or may not include households where an unmarried partner was present; an estimated 7.5% of all households (regardless of whether children were present) had unmarried partners. The number of grandparents living with their grandchildren in 2015 was 3,973, 44% of which are responsible for their own grand children.

While most of the estimated 53,894 children under the age of 18 in the county were living in households with married couples (71%) during 2015, approximately 27% lived in households with unmarried parents.⁵ However, among the 14,748 children living

with unmarried parents, approximately 34% (or 9% of all children) had a parent with an unmarried partner present in the household; thus an estimated 18% of children less than 18 years were living with a single parent (i.e., unmarried parent *without* a partner present). Of these 9,773 children living in single parent homes, the vast majority (70%) were with female householders; thus 13% of children in the county were living with a single mother. Only 6% of children lived with a single father and an estimated 2% resided in non-family households in 2015.

COMMUNITY DEMOGRAPHICS

Household composition differs throughout the county. Bremerton had the highest proportion (46%) of children under the age of 18 living in single parent households as of 2011-15, which is well above the county-wide estimate of 27%. These newest 5-year data estimates for 2011-15 show a slight increase from 21% to 26% for Bremerton as compared to the prior 3-year estimates (2011-13); however, the proportions for the other regions remained essentially at the same levels.⁵



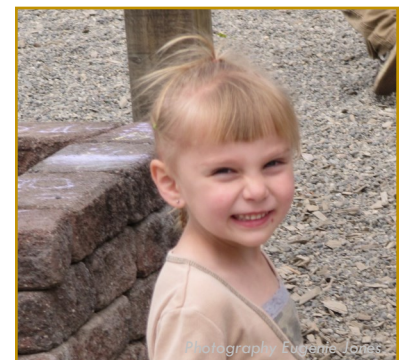
*An unmarried partner of the parent/guardian may or may not be present

Teen Pregnancy Declining

Teen mothers are less likely to get or stay married and more likely to have lower levels of education, to require public assistance, and to live in poverty as compared to their peers who are not mothers. The teen pregnancy rate is the number of births plus the number of induced abortions among 15-17 year old women per 1,000 women age 15-17. The Kitsap County rate has statistically decreased with an annual percent change of 6.6% and have remained significantly lower than Washington State.² Nationally, the rates of teen pregnancy have also been declining. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the reasons for why are not clear, but it appears that teens are less sexually active on the whole and the use of birth control seems to be higher among those who are sexually active.⁷

Births to Unmarried Mothers: Linked to Higher Child Poverty Rates

In Kitsap County, a little over a quarter (27%) of all births were to an unmarried mother.² While it is unknown whether unmarried women are in fact cohabitating with a partner, research has shown that the declining proportion of married adults in the United States has caused substantially higher child poverty rates over the past four decades.⁸ Research found that marriage is likely to raise economic status since the potential earnings and/or reduced child care costs are usually higher than the costs of necessities for the additional person. Births to unmarried mothers have been statistically increasing in both Kitsap County from 2000-2008 at 2.1% per year, but has wavered a bit since then with no statistically significant change detected.²

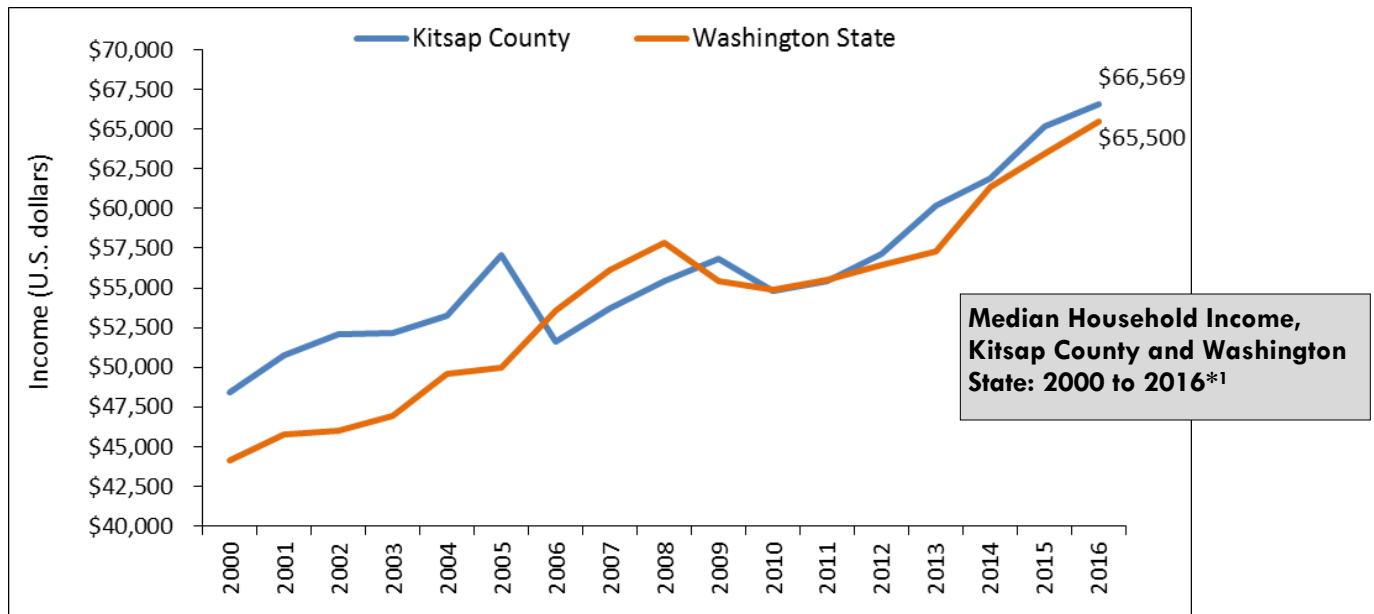


KCR Head Start programs serve more than 400 low-income children each year.

COMMUNITY DEMOGRAPHICS

Household Income

The median household income is the income at which half of resident households have higher incomes and half have lower incomes. The estimated median household income for Kitsap County has been slowly increasing, reaching \$61,156 in 2015 with a projection of \$66,569 in 2016. Since 2010, the county median household income has been very similar to that of Washington State¹, with Kitsap County tending to be marginally higher.



* The 2015 income is a preliminary estimate and 2016 is a projection.

The median household income differs by type of households.⁵ In 2015, the estimated median income for family households in Kitsap County with children under 18 years (\$70,890), is \$13,000 less than of family households with no children (\$84,187). This wider income gap between families with kids versus those without aligns more closely with the 2012 and 2013 estimates, which had differences of approximately \$10,000 as opposed to the 2014 estimates which were within only \$800 of each other. Children living in unmarried parent households experience a substantially lower median income than those living in a married couple household, particularly if the single householder is female.

Median Income by Household Type, Kitsap County: 2015⁵

Household Type	Median Income
Family HH with own children <18	\$ 70,890
Married couple	\$ 82,982
Male householder, no wife present	\$ 50,047
Female householder, no husband present	\$ 29,933
Family HH with no own children <18	\$ 84,187
Non-family HH	\$ 37,142



Photograph: Eugenie Jones

Ethnic Diversity

Issues surrounding immigration are at the forefront of our national and local conversation. The changing composition of our community have compelled service providers to consider the degree to which their staff understands the cultural differences between different ethnic groups and how it may impact approaches to service delivery. Throughout our discussions with local community leaders, the importance of service providers increasing outreach to immigrant organizations was also emphasized. In multiple discussions, KCR was encouraged to increase outreach to immigrant communities in this area through expanded collaboration with the Kitsap Immigration Assistance Center (KIAC), local immigrant organizations, churches and navy groups.

“When you call yourself a community center, you need to be able to interact with any color or culture. Otherwise you are not a community center.”

**Harriette Bryant,
Founder - Our GEMS**

Race/Ethnicity:

Kitsap County has a proportionally larger White (non-Hispanic) population (78%) than Washington State (71%).¹ The County's White, non-Hispanic proportion of the population has declined since 2000 when it comprised 83% of the total population. The distribution of minority groups differs throughout the county. In the Bremerton and Central Kitsap regions, more than 1 in every 4 persons are of a minority race or ethnicity.⁵ Hispanics represent the largest minority population groups in both regions, at 11.8% and 8.2%, respectively. In Central Kitsap, Asians are a very close second largest minority. In both North and South Kitsap, those with two or more races or other race account for the largest minority groups, though Hispanics are the second largest minority within each.

Race/Ethnicity of Total Kitsap Population by District,*
Kitsap County: 2011-13⁵

	Bremerton		Central Kitsap		North Kitsap		South Kitsap	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Total	45,529	100.0%	71,337	100.0%	47,859	100.0%	66,125	100.0%
White	32,325	71.0%	50,498	70.8%	39,103	81.7%	55,496	83.9%
Black	2,305	5.1%	2,687	3.8%	390	0.8%	991	1.5%
American Indian/Alaska Native	633	1.4%	548	0.8%	1,123	2.3%	551	0.8%
Asian	1,837	4.0%	5,661	7.9%	1,634	3.4%	2,008	3.0%
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	421	0.9%	599	0.8%	262	0.5%	584	0.9%
Two or more races or some other race	2,637	5.8%	5,528	7.7%	3,177	6.6%	3,338	5.0%
Hispanic or Latino	5,371	11.8%	5,816	8.2%	2,170	4.5%	3,157	4.8%

*Bainbridge Island is not reported due to numbers too small to report.

COMMUNITY DEMOGRAPHICS

Speakers of Languages Other Than English: Spanish Most Common

As of 2014, Spanish is the language spoken most frequently (2.4%) in Kitsap County after English (92.6%) among residents age 5 and over.⁵ However, an estimated 3.4% of residents age 5 and older speak an Asian or Pacific Island language at home. Among those whose primary spoken language at home is not English, 29.5% speak English less than "very well."⁵ Several community leaders expressed the concern that immigrants may not be accessing services in our community due to a lack of interpreter services. If someone goes to an agency and they don't speak their language, the message to the immigrant community is, "Don't go there... they can't help you."

Guatemalan Families

A population of immigrants from Guatemala has established itself locally in Kitsap County. These immigrants generally do not speak Spanish, but rather a dialect called Mam which is a spoken language only. These families face many challenges in our community. Since translators for Mam are rare, basic communication is often a challenge. Many are undocumented, so parents work 'under the table' jobs with long hours that do not allow as much home time to be spent with their family members, and often require them to rely on friends to help provide child care at odd hours.

In June 2015, the Kitsap Public Health District (KPHD) began "Grupo de Mamas," which provides perinatal and parenting education to Central American indigenous immigrants in a culturally appropriate environment utilizing an adapted evidence-based curriculum. It aims to reduce social isolation, improve maternal health and well-being, promote healthy child growth and development, and avoid healthcare expenses related to preventable disease, unintended pregnancy, or inappropriate use of care. Emphasis is placed on listening to clients to understand their needs and help them build skills to improve their life course. A majority of these immigrants are isolated, have late to no prenatal care, report food insecurity, and cannot read or write.

Assistance available for non-citizens

While it is difficult to get a count on the number of undocumented immigrants, the Kitsap Immigration Assistance Center (KIAC) estimates that there are roughly 300-400 undocumented persons living in our county. In 2014, KIAC started a legal program to help people become citizens and obtain green cards, address domestic violence, and assist victims of crime. Many of the immigrants are small business proprietors and KIAC works with them to help file taxes and obtain a tax ID number so that they can obtain business licenses.



POVERTY

Key Findings in this Section

- There are 24,199 residents, representing 10% of the Kitsap County population, living at or below the Federal Poverty Level.
- The 0-4 year old population was estimated at 14,721 for 2011-2015, with the poverty rate for children in this age group approximated to be 16.8%
- The primary focus for many people living in poverty is driven by survival and focused on subsistence and safety issues such as, “Where will I sleep tonight? What will we eat?”
- The methodology used by the U.S. Census Bureau to calculate poverty does not adequately reflect the income necessary to support basic needs.

“We have many people in our community who are simply not thriving.”

**Kurt Wiest,
Executive Director,
Bremerton Housing Authority**

Overview of Poverty

There are 24,199 individuals, representing 10% of the entire population of Kitsap County who are living in poverty.⁵ The tragedy is only compounded when one considers that there are 5,746 children under the age of 18 included in this statistic.⁵ What does the experience of living in poverty or growing up in poverty have on a person? Why are some families living generation after generation in poverty? And, what does it take for someone to escape poverty once and for all? These are all tough questions and ones that we have yet to fully answer as a community.

Generational Poverty

There is definitely a generational aspect to poverty in which the experience of poverty itself decreases available opportunities for young people who are raised in poverty which in turn increases the likelihood of the cycle repeating itself. Poverty researcher Dr. Donna Beegle explains, “The overriding belief in the United States is that people are making a “choice” to be in poverty. The prevailing view is that education is there if you want it and you can get a good job if you work hard. The reality is that the context into which we were born and grow up shapes our view of what is possible. It selects, reflects, and defines our values, thus creating our worldview. People born into poverty are handed a different description of reality than those born with privilege and resources.”⁹



POVERTY

The central focus for many people living in poverty is driven by survival, as Beagle further clarifies, “The focus on life when you live in poverty is directed towards subsistence and safety issues such as “Where will I sleep tonight? What will we eat? Can we find a way to keep our heat and lights turned on? Whose car got towed? Whose license got suspended for no insurance? Can I trust people outside my inner circle? The major focus is on making it through the day. People are taught to make do with what they have. Education is a luxury that makes no sense when you can’t pay rent or buy food. Good jobs seem far out of reach and you have likely never met someone who has one.”⁹

Even though education is available to all students, the damaging impact of poverty on the learning environment is very real. In our Key Informant Interview, David McVicker, Superintendent of the Central Kitsap School District, described a similar impact on students living in poverty from his district noting, “Single parents without resources are worried about food and housing and they are not as able to be concerned with education and homework.”⁹

Measuring Poverty

How is poverty measured? The Census poverty threshold is based on a sample survey of approximately 100,000 households nationwide. The poverty threshold is often used to determine financial eligibility for many assistance programs including Energy assistance, Head Start, Medicaid, and Free/Reduced school lunches. They are issued each year in the Federal Register by the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).

The data in the following table reflects the level of poverty in our county for the calendar year 2015. In 2015, the federal poverty level was defined as a household income of \$24,250 for a family of four.¹⁰ County-wide during 2015, an estimated 10% of residents were living in poverty⁵ For all age groups, Kitsap County has proportionally fewer people living in poverty than Washington State. Young children and women tend to have disproportionately higher rates of poverty. The poverty rates for children have been increasing since 2000.¹¹ The estimated poverty rate for females in Kitsap County was 10% in 2015.¹¹ Females account for 53% of all county residents living in poverty. This trend of having more females than males is also seen statewide, with females accounting for 54% of all those Washington State living in poverty in 2015.



POVERTY



Photography Eugenie Jones

KCR Head Start classroom

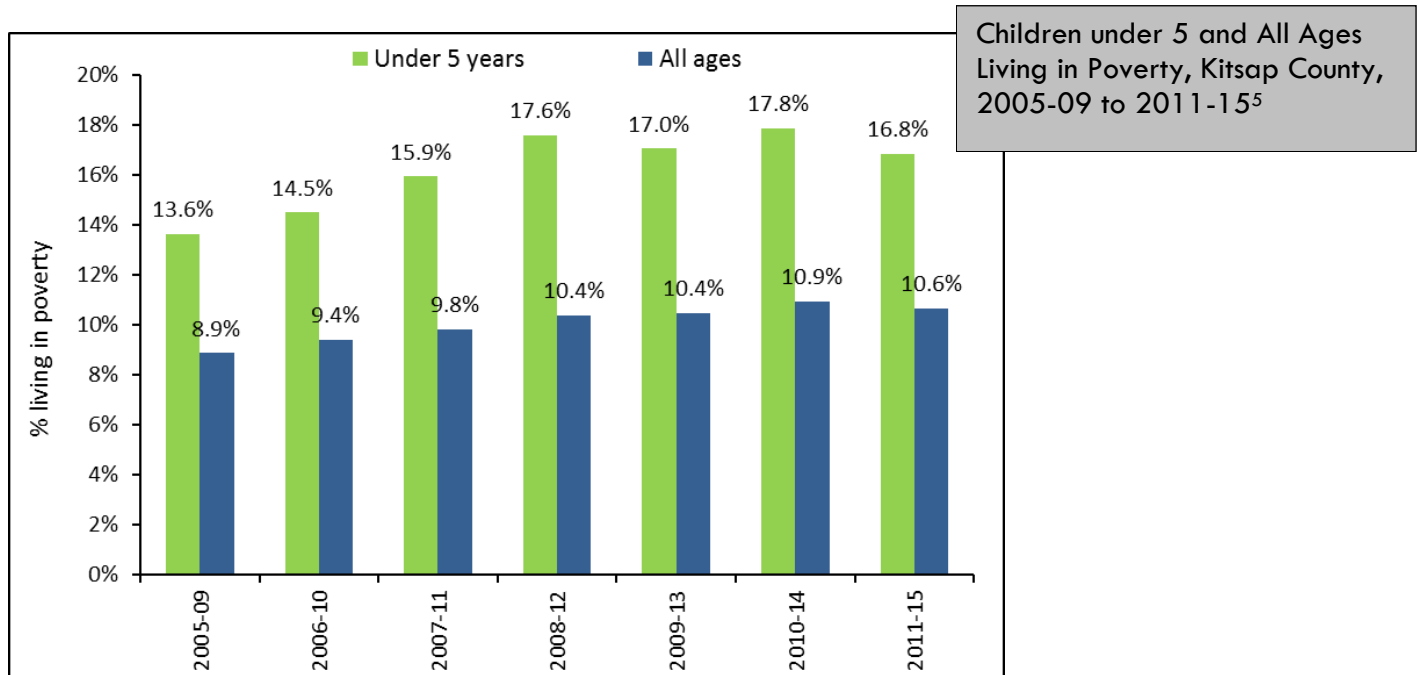
Populations Living in Poverty, Kitsap County, Washington State and the United States, 2014 ⁵

	% of population	# of persons
All Ages		
Kitsap County	10%	24,199
Washington State	12%	857,801
Children under age 5*		
Kitsap County	17%	2,403
Washington State	19%	83,768
School-aged children (age 5-17)		
Kitsap County	9%	3,343
Washington State	15%	174,658
Adults (age 18+)		
Kitsap County	10%	19,291
Washington State	11%	611,725
Females		
Kitsap County	10%	12,877
Washington State	13%	462,806

A Family Faces Hard Decisions

"When my family and I first came to KCR to seek help we were literally at rock bottom. As parents we had to make the choice between paying for a place for the kids to lay their heads or selling our belongings. We were fortunate to find out about the emergency housing program at KCR. I don't cry myself to sleep at night anymore, wondering where my children will sleep or what they will eat. I can cry happy tears because they have a place to call their own! They have their own room to mess up, clean up, play in, and to sleep in. I really want to convey to all of you that what you do at KCR matters. Your genuine kindness and willingness to help families touches lives, helps lives, helps families...it helps create a chance for hope, don't ever stop—I cannot thank you enough."

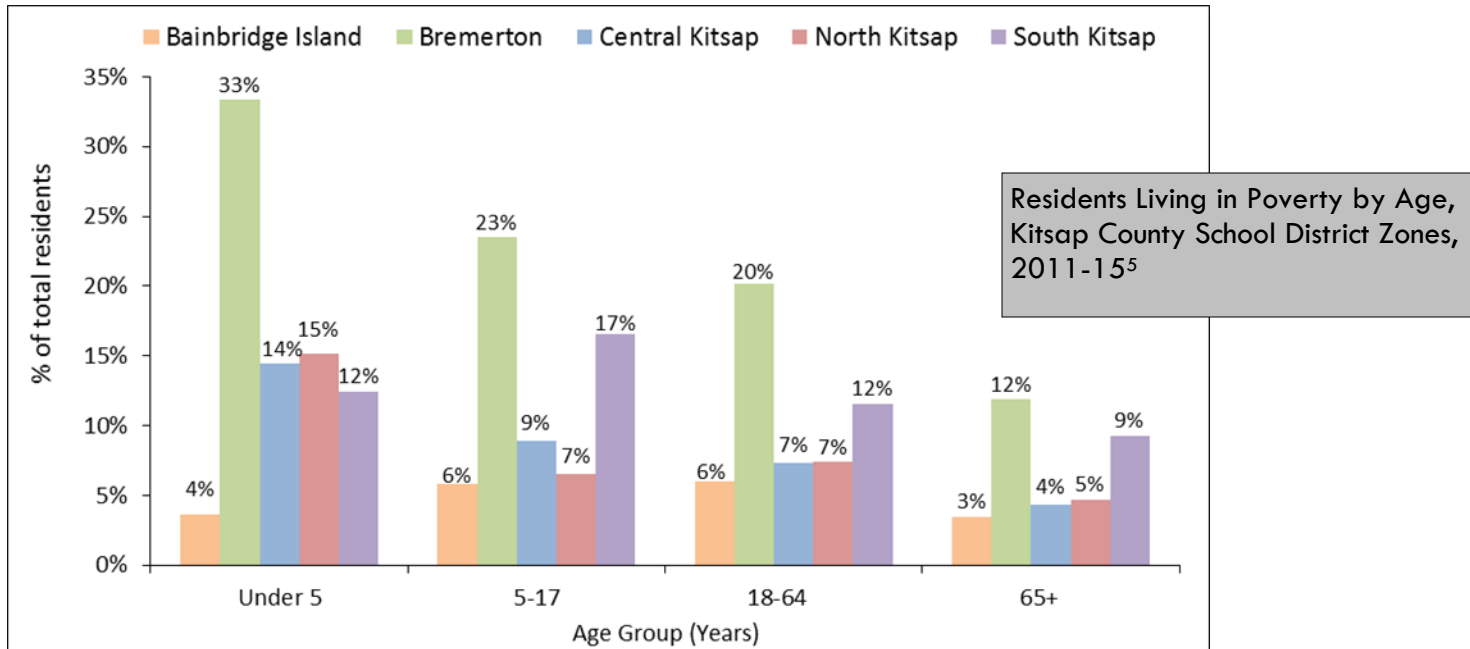
POVERTY



During 2011-15, an estimated 16.5% of families with children under 5 only (i.e., without any other older kids) were living in poverty.⁵ This too shows the increased poverty rates for families with young children when compared to a rate of only 12.1% for families with children as old as 18 years. While the level of poverty varies across the county, there are higher proportions of residents of all ages in the Bremerton district living in poverty as compared to the other regions in Kitsap County. This may explain in part why the vast number of social service providers including homeless shelters, mental health, and employment are located in Bremerton. Recently, however, we have seen a shift in services as the North and South ends of the county have intentionally expanded access to direct services for residents in their area. In 2014, KCR opened a Family Services Center in Port Orchard offering access to housing, employment, veteran's services, energy assistance and Women Infant and Nutrition services to residents of South Kitsap.

POVERTY

A review of the level of poverty children are living in shows that 33% of children age 0-5 years old in the Bremerton area are living below the federal poverty threshold, a much larger proportion than any other district in the County.⁵



The level of poverty also varies by race, as reflected below. For the period 2010-2014, 21% of Black or African Americans and 20% of American Indians and Alaska Natives lived below the Poverty level.

Estimated Percent of Population below the Poverty Level by Race/Ethnicity, 2010-14⁵

Estimated Percent below Poverty Level, 2010-14				
	Kitsap County		WA State	
One race	23,912	10%	857,543	13%
White	19,899	10%	621,886	12%
Black or African American	1,272	21%	61,271	26%
American Indian and Alaska Native	704	20%	25,702	28%
Asian	937	8%	63,387	12%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	274	12%	7,736	19%
Some other race	826	20%	77,561	30%
Two or more races	2,946	19%	58,821	18%
Hispanic or Latino origin (of any race)	2,742	16%	211,780	27%
White alone, not Hispanic or Latino	18,689	10%	506,171	11%

POVERTY

Poverty and Emergency Services

In communities across the nation, first responders are often serving at the front lines when it comes to social services. Kitsap County is no different. Whether it involves assisting a homeless person in the middle of the night, responding to someone with untreated mental health or substance use disorder who continually calls 911, or helping local service providers handle difficult situations in their lobbies, the police and fire departments as well as the Kitsap County Sheriff's Office are integral to the fabric of the county's social service system. And in light of this changing dynamic, law enforcement encouraged social service providers to expand our collaboration and consider them to be a partner in our efforts.

An individual's socio-economic status is also correlated with higher crime victimization. According to the U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics, persons in poor households at or below the Federal Poverty Level (39.8 per 1,000) had more than double the rate of violent victimization as persons in high-income households (16.9 per 1,000). Persons in poor households had a higher rate of violence involving a firearm (3.5 per 1,000) compared to persons above the Federal Poverty Level (0.8–2.5 per 1,000).¹²

Prisoner Re-entry Programs

Often society creates barriers for felons to re-enter society which can result in situations where people cycle in and out of prison. The National Institute of Justice reports, "Returning to the community from jail or prison is a complex transition for most offenders, as well as for their families and communities. Upon reentering society, former offenders are likely to struggle with substance abuse, lack of adequate education and job skills, limited housing options, and mental health issues."¹³ Both Kitsap County Sheriff Gary Simpson and the Kitsap County Prosecutor Tina Robinson echoed the concern that as a community we are not effectively handing people off from jails and prisons and helping them to reintegrate into society. And, further, as a community it is important to help ex-offenders make connections within the community and lift the barriers to re-entry in society.

Therapeutic Courts

Therapeutic courts are a proven model to address systemic problems in the criminal justice arena. In 2014, Kitsap County identified that mental health issues are one of the most serious and pervasive issues in our community. As a result, a county resolution was passed that created a 1/10th of 1% sales tax fund to spend on necessary programs to help those suffering with mental illness. For the past two years, Kitsap County has utilized this funding to develop and maintain programs aimed at providing mental health services. In this model, the Court developed a coordinated response with law enforcement, the jail, mental health and substance abuse service providers, behavioral health outreach programs, court probation officers, prosecutors and defense attorneys. During each contact with the individual, the goal is to provide essential services such as housing,

Receipt of Public Assistance in the Past 12 Months for Households with Children (<18), Kitsap County Regions, 2011-15⁵

	# (%) of households receiving public assistance*	# (%) of children under 18 receiving public assistance*
Bainbridge Island	145 (1.5%)	189 (3%)
Bremerton	1,310 (6.9%)	3,612 (46%)
Central Kitsap	883 (3.4%)	2,812 (17%)
North Kitsap	540 (2.9%)	1,601 (15%)
South Kitsap	1,007 (4.1%)	4,061 (28%)

behavioral health resources, medication and a more stable environment. This model is rooted in the premise that if the individual has help and a stable living situation, the odds of successful treatment are vastly improved.

POVERTY

Assistance and other Social Supports

In 2011-2015, there were 12,275 (23%) children age 0-17 in Kitsap County living in households receiving public assistance (including social security income, case public assistance, or food stamps).⁵ Of these households receiving public assistance, 49% were single parent households.

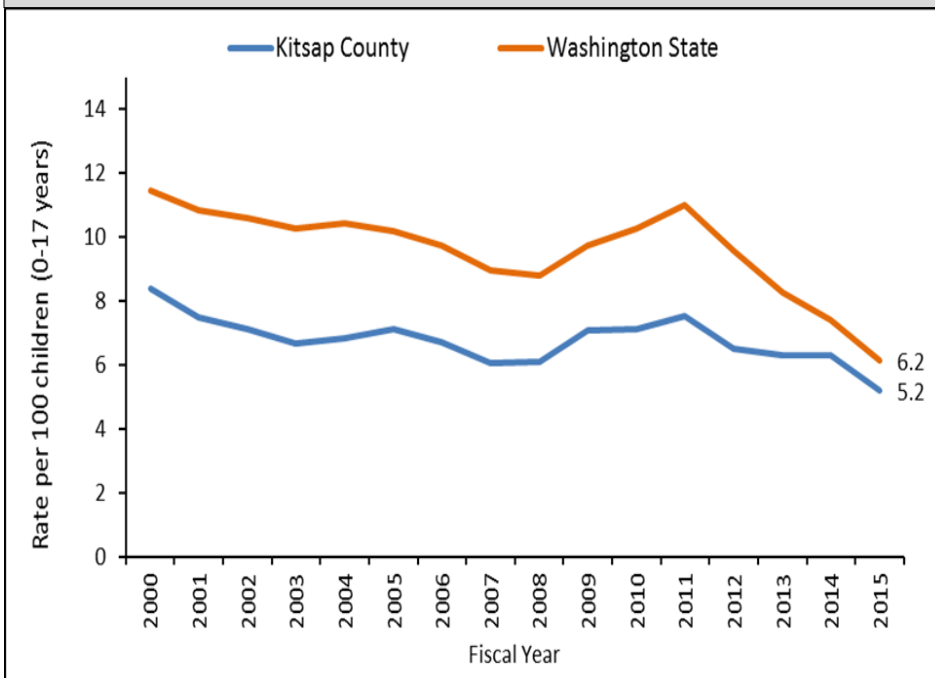
Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)

The federally-funded Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program provides cash assistance to low-income families and aids parents in achieving economic security and self-sufficiency. According to a June

2014 report by the Washington State Department of Social and Health Services, one-quarter of K-12 students on TANF during 2011-12 experienced housing instability, which was associated with higher rates of school change and, for older youth, lower rates of grade progression and on-time graduation.¹⁴

The rate of Kitsap County children participating in TANF has declined by 31% over the past 5 years to only 5.2 per 100 children in 2015. Within the county, Bremerton has consistently retained a substantially higher rate of children receiving TANF than any other sub-county region. Bremerton's rate in 2015 was 13.4 per 100, which was a 32% decline from 5 years ago, but in comparison, it is still 2.4 times greater than the next highest rate of 5.6 per 100 in South Kitsap. The other regions have each had 5-year

Rate of Children Receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, Kitsap County and Washington State, 2000 to 2015¹⁵



averages of less than 5.0 per 100. Their 2015 rates (per 100) were: 3.5 in Central Kitsap, 3.0 in North Kitsap, and 0.6 in Bainbridge Island.

The High Cost of Being Poor

The Coalition on Human Needs notes that the poor and near poor are in a precarious situation when it comes to exiting poverty because, in fact, "it is expensive to be poor."¹⁶ They explain further, that the poor "pay a premium for rent and food because of bad credit and inability to access cheaper markets. When expenses outstrip income, late fees and fines make things worse. And for too many low-income people, predatory loans are a desperate attempt to stave off eviction or loss of a vehicle, leading instead to a trap of debt and poverty."¹⁶

POVERTY

Basic Need Requirements

It is generally recognized that the methodology used by the U.S. Census Bureau to calculate poverty does not adequately reflect the income necessary to support basic needs. According to the Economic Policy Institute, “while the U.S. Census Bureau in the 1960’s developed a methodology for calculating poverty thresholds, that system has not been updated to reflect changes in the economy over the last 50 years, such as significantly higher health care costs. As a result, it often underestimates the actual amount a working family needs to cover essentials.”¹⁷ In an independent study commissioned by Congress, the National Academy of Sciences highlighted several major weaknesses in the current poverty measure¹⁸, to include:

- The measure does not reflect the effects of key government policies that alter the resources available to families such as payroll taxes, which reduce disposable income.
- The measure does not take into account expenses that are necessary to hold a job and earn income such as transportation and child care.
- The measure does not take into account variation in medical costs and the impact of rising health care costs as a share of family budgets.

Highlighting the gap between the Federal poverty thresholds and the costs to provide the basic needs for a household, the Economic Policy Institute provides a basic Family Budget Calculator to estimate the costs to sustain a household in the Bremerton/Silverdale area. By this calculation, a family consisting of a single adult would require approximately \$2,315 in monthly income to address their basic needs while a family consisting of one parents and one children would require up to \$4,234 in monthly income.

Basic Needs Family Budget Calculator, Economic Policy Institute¹⁷

Bremerton-Silverdale, WA MSA	One Adult/ No children	One Parent/One Child
Monthly Housing	\$566	\$951
Monthly Food	\$271	\$399
Monthly Childcare	\$0	\$792
Monthly Transportation	\$480	\$484
Monthly Healthcare	\$281	\$402
Monthly Other Necessities	\$404	\$652
Monthly Taxes	\$313	\$553
Monthly Total	\$2,315	\$4,234
Annual Income	\$27,783	\$50,810
U.S. Poverty Guideline	\$11,880	\$16,020
Basic Needs Gap	\$15,903	\$34,790



EMPLOYMENT, ASSET BUILDING, & FINANCIAL STABILITY

Key Findings in this Section

- Building wealth and financial stability is key to exiting poverty
- The 2016 unemployment rate in Kitsap County of 5.8% is lower than the state average.
- Unemployment rates are higher for youth ages 16-19 and young adults 20-24, with unemployment rates of 25.3% and 12.2%, respectively.
- Only 1 in 4 respondents to the KCR consumer survey indicated they were working full time with benefits, while 21% indicated they were unemployed and looking for work.
- Olympic College offers multiple two and four year degrees designed to align with the local and regional employment opportunities.

“Training for jobs that pay a living wage is what is needed to help lift people out of poverty.”

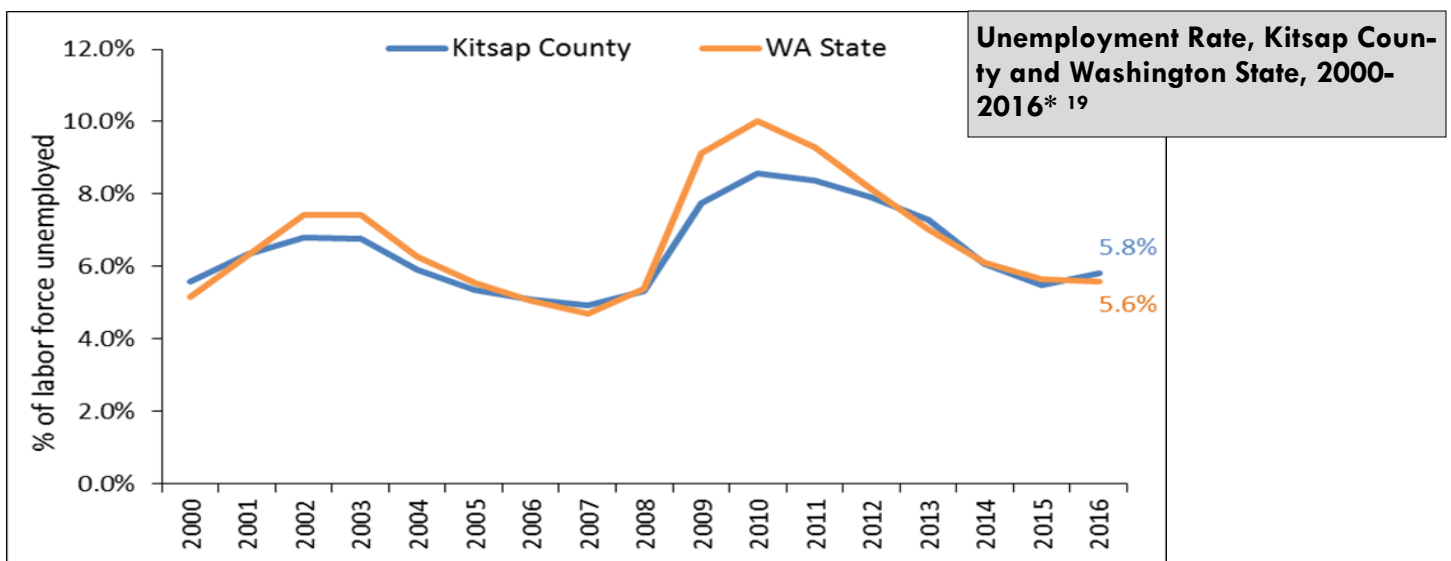
Dr. Aaron Leavell,
Superintendent –
Bremerton School District

Overview of Employment, Asset Building, and Financial Stability

A key factor in an individual's ability to exit poverty is their capacity to both weather a financial crisis and ultimately build personal wealth. Many people living in poverty believe that “without money, their lives are out of control, and they have no power to change their life situations. They associate money with safety, security, and choices for themselves and their families.”⁹ For many low-income individuals and families, the key to exiting poverty is the ability to access well-paying jobs and ultimately closing the opportunity gap. And while the overall unemployment in Kitsap is below the State average, many workers are still under employed and or working in jobs that barely meet basic needs, much less contribute to their long-term financial stability.

Unemployment

Since 2000, the unemployment rate in Kitsap County has tended to be very similar though slightly lower than Washington State, with only a few years in which Kitsap's rate was higher than the state's.¹⁹ In 2016, the estimated county rate (5.8%) was marginally above the state (5.6%). Both the Kitsap and state rates have been declining from their peaks in 2010.



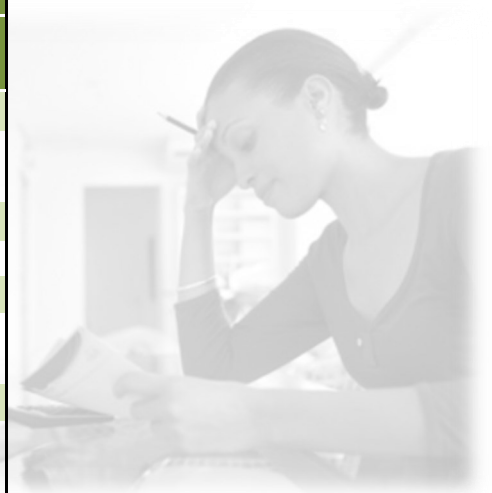
*2016 annual rates are preliminary estimates.

EMPLOYMENT, ASSET BUILDING, and FINANCIAL STABILITY

For those in the labor force, youth and young adults aged 16-19 and 20-24 experienced unemployment rates of 25.3% and 12.2% respectively.⁵

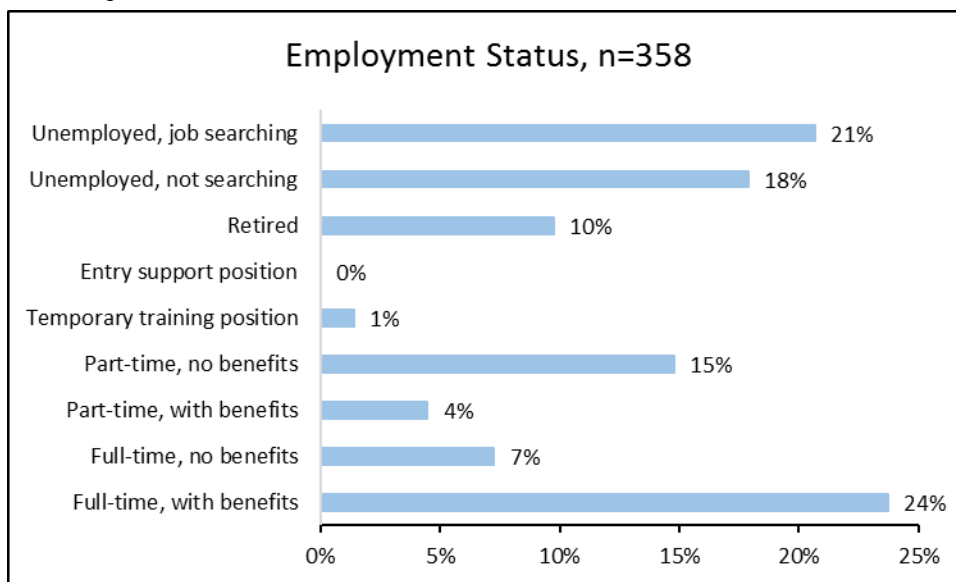
Unemployment Status for Those in the Labor Force, Kitsap County and Washington State, 2011-13⁵

	Kitsap County	WA State
	% unemployed of those in labor force	
Youth and young adults		
Ages 16 to 19	25.3	28.4
Ages 20 to 24	12.2	15.2
Seniors		
Ages 60+	6.4	6.4
Single parents		
Single mom	8.6	10.7
Single dad	9.3	9.3
Education level		
Less than high school graduate	15.3	13.5
High school graduate or GED	9.6	10.0
Some college or Associate's degree	7.3	8.0
Bachelor's degree or higher	4.3	4.2



Consumer Survey

The critical need for employment options was supported by the consumer survey in which 358 respondents indicated they are “unemployed and job searching”, while 18% noted they were “Unemployed and not searching”.



**Survey Question:
Employment Status**

EMPLOYMENT, ASSET BUILDING, and FINANCIAL STABILITY

Economic Outlook

The infrastructure of Kitsap County supports an economy based on public sector Department of Defense jobs, as well as over 10,000 uniform service personnel based here. The key industries in Kitsap County are Maritime, defense, advanced manufacturing, healthcare, tourism and technology. The largest employers in the county, as of May 2015 include Naval Base Kitsap, Harrison Medical Center, Washington State Government, School Districts, Olympic College, Kitsap County, Port Madison Enterprises and Martha and Mary Health Services.²⁰ There is also a regional retail hub attracting shoppers from Kitsap County as well as the surrounding rural counties: Clallam, Jefferson and Mason counties. Overall, the employment prospects look good. According to the Employment Security Department, “The unemployment rate will continue to remain low as confidence in the labor market conditions grow and new opportunities begin to appear.”²¹

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)

In order to connect the available workforce with job needs across the county, the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) provides funding to provide occupational skills training, career coaching, employment search and work related needs that include tools, transportation, and work clothing. The specific services and support offered is based on each individual’s eligibility, career goals, specific needs, and availability of funds. After over a decade of providing the WIOA Adult program, KCR will also begin offering the WIOA Dislocated Worker program out of their South Kitsap WorkSource Affiliate location in Port Orchard. WIOA Dislocated Worker is a program that provides reemployment services to individuals who meet the requirements for WIOA Adult but also meet one of the six categories of dislocated workers. Previously, if a job seeker in Kitsap County was eligible for the Dislocated Worker program, they could only access the program out of the main WorkSource office in east Bremerton, which can be difficult for someone who is unemployed and reliant on public transportation.



Entrepreneurship: The Business Education Support and Training Program

The Business Entrepreneur Support and Training (BEST) program works with entrepreneurs who are ready to start a new business or improve an existing one. In general, the program supports potential entrepreneurs in Kitsap County, but in every class there are participants who travel from as far away as Port Townsend, Belfair and Shelton. The program is administered by KCR and is committed to providing business training and network of supportive community services and volunteer business professionals to enterprising individuals, including those with limited financial resources to gain self-sufficiency through small business ownership. The program has operated in Kitsap County since 2000, and over 1000 aspiring entrepreneurs have completed the course. In 2016, 75 participants graduated from the 8-week training program and supported 48 new business start-ups. Additionally, 81 existing businesses were provided counseling and training and over 38 of these businesses experienced growth. This program is especially valuable to individuals who may have a felony background as other employment opportunities are often limited. In addition, it is not uncommon for people to attend who are already employed, but seeking opportunities to expand their income to help cover rising housing costs.²¹

EMPLOYMENT, ASSET BUILDING, and FINANCIAL STABILITY

High School Preparation for Employment

Several school districts have initiated programs that are focused on improving the outcomes for students and increasing access to two-year and four-year degree programs. A few examples of these innovative programs include:

CK School District provides internships or job shadowing opportunities to students learn about the types of positions that may be available in the workplace. The goal in the CK School District is to have every student participate as an intern or in job shadowing to help them understand their connection to the world and how they can contribute to helping others.

The Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) program is in place in three middle schools and two high schools in the Bremerton and South Kitsap School District, and soon to be started in Central Kitsap as well. The goal of the program is closing the achievement gap by preparing students for post-secondary opportunities (college or other) through regular mentorship by community leaders. A large portion of participants will be the first in their families to attend college and many are from low-income or minority families.



Our GEMS, or Girls Empowered Through Mentoring and Service, has been in place since 2008, expressly for the purpose of uplifting, educating and empowering young women in the community. The program is part academic education, part leadership training, and part etiquette class and serves girls ages 12-21 from diverse backgrounds. In the program, adults work with small groups of girls where they learn skills that will help them deal with challenges they may face.

Graduate Kitsap The Graduate Kitsap and Mason (GKM) Working Group focuses on building a culture of attending college and increasing the number of Kitsap and Mason students who complete a post-secondary degree (2-year or 4-year) or certificate. Partners include higher education, business, K-12, labor, faith communities, and youth and social service organizations.

Higher Education Opportunities – Olympic College Degree programs

Olympic College offers multiple four year degrees designed to align with the local and regional employment opportunities. Their four year programs include Bachelor of Applied Science degrees in the fields of Information Systems, Nursing, Organizational Leadership and Technical Management. There are over 65 AA programs that range from welding to Pre-Law, Music, Mathematics, Anthropology, Administrative Office support, Computer Science, Early Childhood Education, and Engineering. Olympic College also has partnerships with Brandman University, Old Dominion University, Washington State University, Western Governors University, and Western Washington University, where students are able to earn four-year degrees.

EMPLOYMENT, ASSET BUILDING, and FINANCIAL STABILITY

Asset Building Coalition

Virtually everyone living in poverty, by definition, has little if any savings, making them extremely vulnerable to unexpected life events such as job loss, health crisis, and auto repairs. In addition, even if they wanted to save money, many low income residents do not have a bank accounts due to poor credit history. As a result, they operate on a cash basis and pay for costly money orders to pay their bills.

Recognizing the importance of building wealth as a necessary gateway to exiting poverty, or at least living with greater financial stability, the Asset Building Coalition of Kitsap is dedicated to assisting Kitsap County residents achieve this stability through financial education, access to bank accounts, job training, home ownership opportunities and access to higher education. The Kitsap “Bank On” program is a group of key government agencies, community organizations, and financial institutions that work together to offer free or low cost checking and savings accounts to help individuals save money and get ahead; even if they have been turned down for an account in the past. In addition, the Asset Building Coalition partners together to offer financial resource event and education classes throughout the county. These classes include such topics as understanding credit reports, being a good renter, what to know before buying a car, and applying for financial aid, among others.



Families attend a financial resources fair

Legal Assistance

It is not uncommon for people living in poverty to be faced with legal challenges for which they are not financially equipped to address. For example, when tenants are facing an eviction for non-payment of rent or need assistance with family law matters or immigration issues, paying for legal help is often out of the question. Kitsap Legal Services (KLS) offers advice clinics in which individuals receive free attorney consultations for answers to legal questions, document review, and guidance. Clinics are held in Bremerton, Suquamish, Bainbridge Island, and Port Orchard. Every Friday morning low-income tenants may meet with attorneys at the Kitsap County Superior Court. KLS also offers legal advice for eligible low income tenants facing eviction by helping them respond to eviction paperwork, negotiation with landlords, representation of eligible tenants at eviction (show cause) hearings, and referrals for other resources in the community.

EDUCATION AND OPPORTUNITY

Key Findings in this Section

- Head Start and Early Head Start enrollment has declined slightly in recent years, dropping from a combined enrollment of 1,147 enrollees in 2011, to 1,066 enrollees in 2016.
- Overall, public school enrollment across Kitsap County is down .2% from 5 years ago.
- There a perceived lack of urgency about getting a college education and a general question among lower income persons as to whether college is worth it.

Overview of Education and Opportunity

Ensuring access to education is critical to exiting poverty. In discussion with local education leaders, the importance of preschool was especially emphasized as was the need for more programs like Head Start, Early Head Start and ECEAP that focus not only on the children but the parents as well. Building a solid educational foundation early is vital as David McVicker, Superintendent of Central Kitsap School District explains, “Third grade is the point when predictions about children’s lives can be made.”⁹ But, it doesn’t end there. Several community leaders also shared a concern that the importance of getting a college education isn’t emphasized enough in lower income households and as a result, the opportunity gap is widening. Dr. David Mitchell, President of Olympic College reflected, “There isn’t the sense of urgency around getting a college education that I think is warranted. There seems to be this question among some young people as to whether college is even worth it. I believe both of these stem from misinformation or lack of information.”²⁵ The challenge put forth from several community leaders to local service providers is the need to send the same message to students, “How can we help you get that degree?”

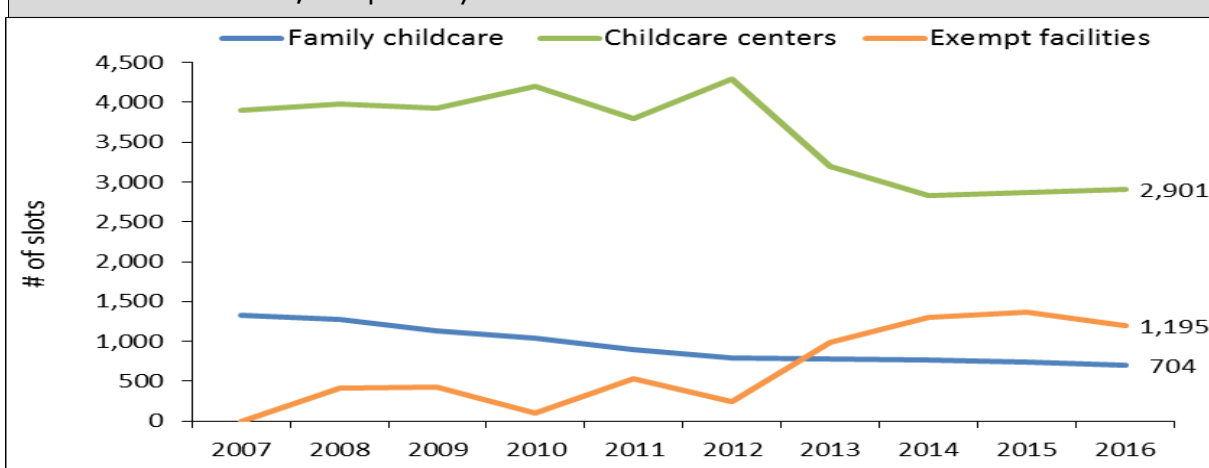
“We have a moral imperative as a community to have a collective impact that inspires the importance of education.”

**David McVicker, Superintendent,
Central Kitsap School District**

Childcare Programs

The number of family childcare providers has been declining over the past decade, while the number of childcare centers has remained relatively stable until dropping in 2013. Both 2013 and 2014 saw increases in the number of exempt (school age only) childcare providers and the number of total childcare slots by provider type is displayed below. Overall, the total number of childcare slots has declined 8% from 2007 to 2016, which equates to a loss of 424 slots. While the total has decreased, there has been considerable growth in exempt facility slots, which have nearly tripled between 2008 (413) to 2016 (1,195).²²

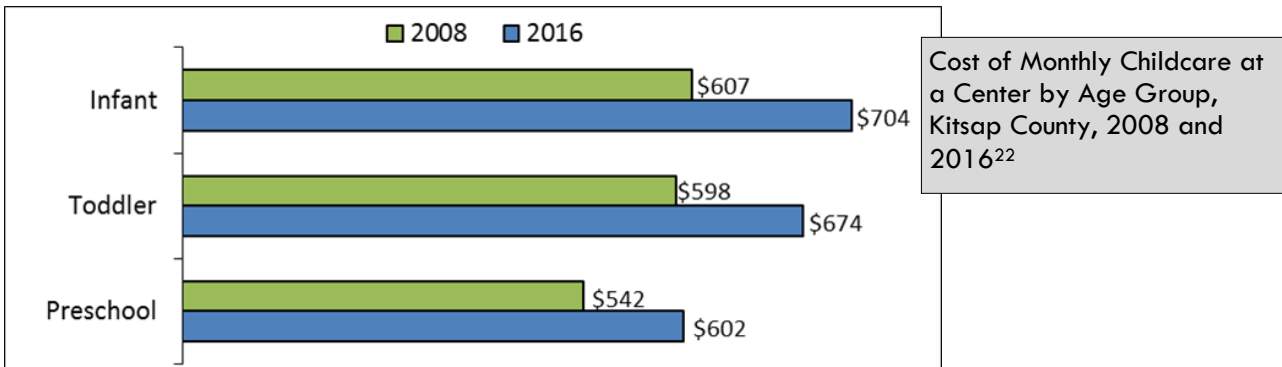
Childcare Provider Slots, Kitsap County: 2007 to 2016²²



EDUCATION AND OPPORTUNITY

Childcare Cost

Low-income families can access subsidized childcare through the Working Connections Child Care (WCCC) program administered by DSHS. WCCC helps low-income families (at or below 200% of the federal poverty level) pay for child care while adults work, look for work, or attend training. The program also provides child-care subsidy for families using unlicensed family, friends, or neighbor care if the provider is willing to undergo a criminal background check. According to Child Care Aware of Washington, 58% of children statewide in childcare were using subsidies in FY2016, and 57% in Kitsap County. Even with subsidized care and/or working parents, the cost childcare can often be too much for families to pay.²²



Pre-K Readiness

County-wide, the total cumulative enrollment in the Head Start/Early Head Start (HS/EHS) programs grew from 2008 to 2011, but has declined since then.²³ During the 2015-16 school year there were a total of 1,066 people enrolled within Kitsap County programs.²³ This included 1,041 children and 25 pregnant women. Overall, 59% of all enrollees were in Head Start programs, versus 41% in Early Head Start programs.

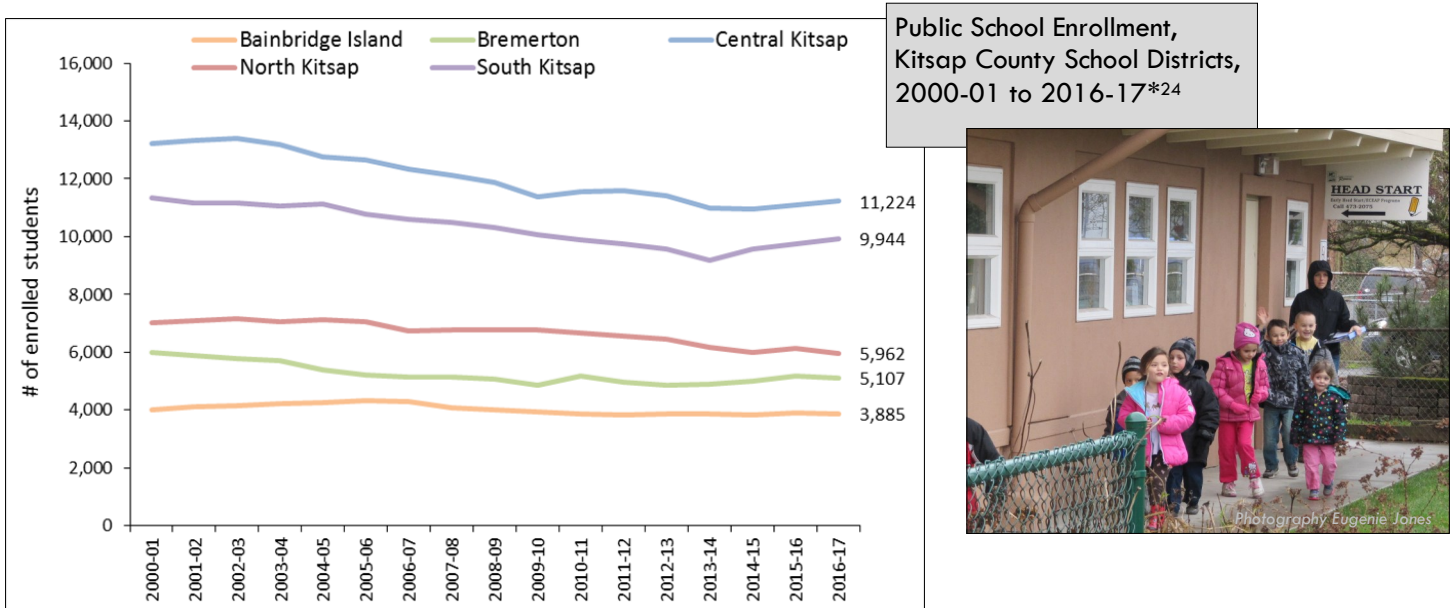
Total Cumulative Enrollment in Kitsap County Head Start/
Early Head Start Programs, 2010-11 to 2014-15²³

	Early Head Start						
	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Kitsap Community Resources	112	119	105	102	98	108	107
Olympic Educational Service District	158	229	229	221	225	237	249
Port Gamble S'Klallam Tribe	34	35	37	33	34	32	42
Suquamish Tribe	41	40	48	45	44	42	44
Kitsap County Total	345	423	419	401	401	419	442
	Head Start						
	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Kitsap Community Resources	336	346	305	314	268	303	318
Olympic Educational Service District	262	303	272	292	262	239	235
Port Gamble S'Klallam Tribe	34	37	37	37	28	29	35
Suquamish Tribe	37	38	40	37	36	39	36
Kitsap County Total	669	724	654	680	594	610	624

EDUCATION AND OPPORTUNITY

Public School Enrollment

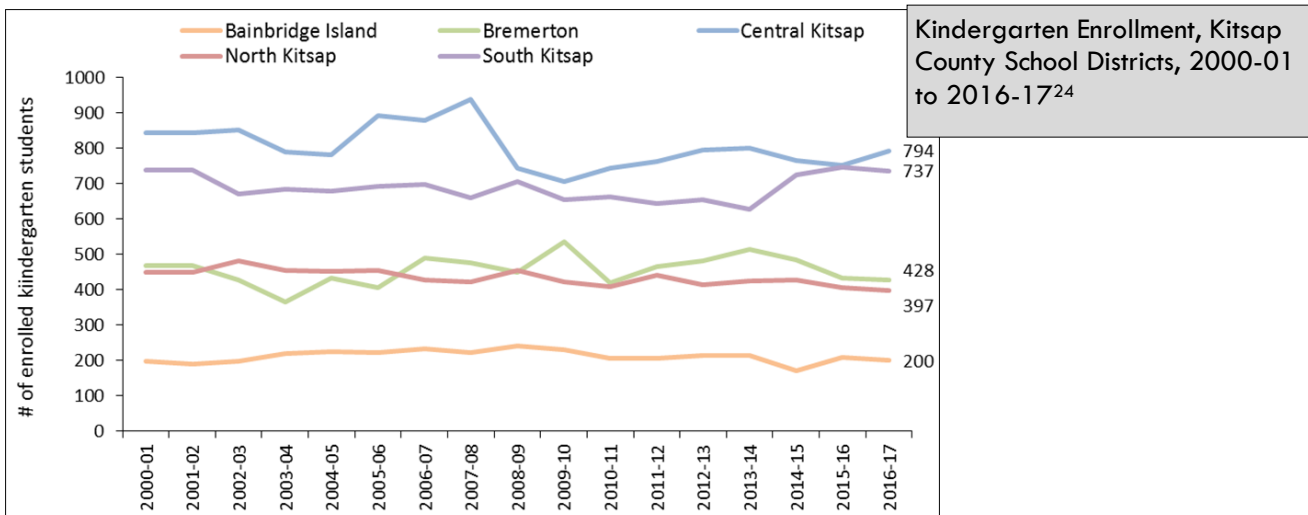
Four of the five school districts in Kitsap County are part of the Olympic Educational Service District 114 (Bremerton, Central Kitsap, North Kitsap, and South Kitsap); the Bainbridge Island School District is part of the Puget Sound Educational Service District #121. Both Bremerton and South Kitsap districts have seen enrollment increase 4.9% and 4.0%, respectively as compared to 5 years ago, whereas the other three districts have declined.²⁴ Cumulatively, public school enrollment across Kitsap County is down 0.2% from 5 years ago. North Kitsap experienced the largest 5-year decrease at 7.6%.



* Data are as of October for each school year

Kindergarten Enrollment and Preparation

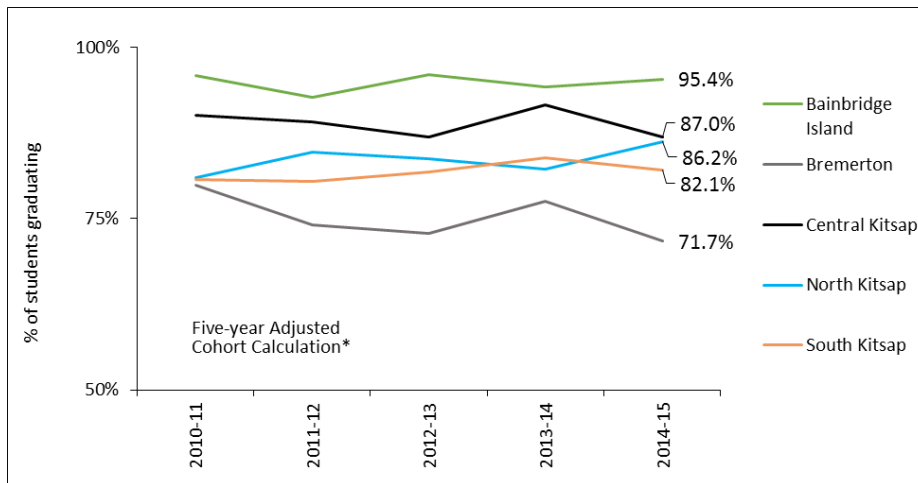
There were 2,556 students enrolled in Kitsap County kindergartens during the 2016-17 school year, which is nearly identical (-0.1% change) to the total enrollment 5 years ago.²⁴ The only district with enrollment growth as compared to 5 years ago is South Kitsap (12.3% increase); all other districts had declines in enrollment during this timeframe. The individual district trends are similar when comparing to 10 years ago, and the overall change since 2007-08 was a 6.0% decrease.



EDUCATION AND OPPORTUNITY

High School Graduation Rates

The Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction defined new methodology for calculating high school graduation rates, as mandated by the Federal Government, and over the timeframe all graduation and dropout rates have remained pretty steady. Even Bremerton, which appears to be changing the most, doesn't have statistically significant change, either because there is insufficient historical data or because there isn't any "real" change over time.

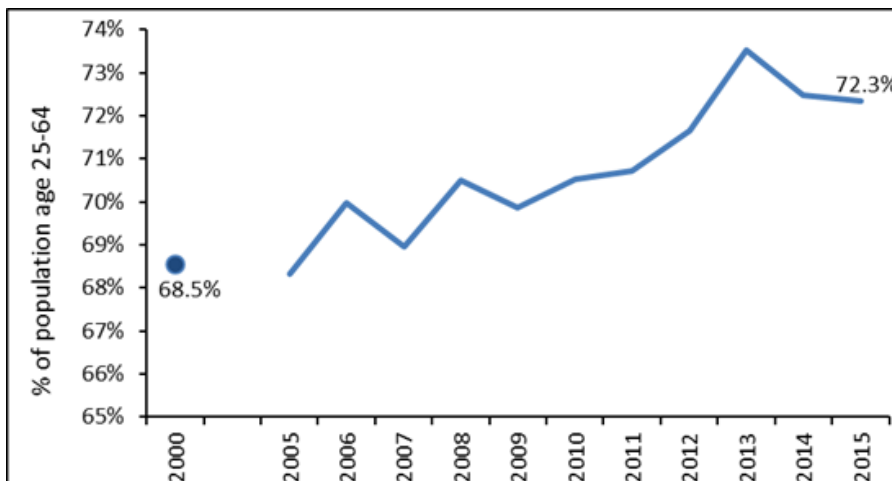


High School Graduation Rates by School District, Kitsap County, 2010-11 to 2014-15²⁵

**Over time, the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction's methodology for calculating graduation rates has changed. The methods are not directly comparable. The Historical Graduation Rate is the percentage of students enrolled in grade 12 in the fall who earn a diploma in the spring.*

Adult Educational Attainment

The proportion of Kitsap County adults age 25 to 64 years who have more than a high school education has been gradually increasing from 2000 to 2015, despite a small decline since 2013.^{3,5} In 2015, there were still more than 7 in 10 adults (72%) who achieved an education level greater than high school. In the consumer survey, in which all respondents were 20-69 years old, just under two-thirds (61%) have more than a high-school education; only 12% had a 4-year college degree or graduate level degree.



Proportion of Adults (Age 25-64) with More than a High School Education, Kitsap County: 2000 and 2005-2015^{4,5}

HEALTH AND WELL BEING

Key Findings in this Section:

- According to 2015 estimates, 11,650 (4.7%) of 246,059 people in Kitsap County were uninsured, which included 3.6% of children (age 0-17 years) and 6.4% of adults (age 18 to 64).
- Thirteen percent of adult consumers surveyed do not have a medical home.
- Access to affordable dental care was identified as both the highest priority need for individuals and families responding to the consumer survey, as well as the hardest service to access.
- The rate of alcohol or drug-related deaths has statistically increased since 200 in Kitsap County.
- In Kitsap County, an estimated 28% of adults have experienced 3 or more Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) as children.
- The Medicaid waiver may potentially fund supportive housing and employment services, which are designed to reduce an individuals overall utilization of Medicaid funded services.

"It's important to make sure that people feel as if they have a connection with somebody in the community...and know that resources are available."

**Leonard Forsman,
Chairman - Suquamish Tribe**

Overview of Health and Well Being

Healthcare has gone through a rapid transformation in recent years with the implementation of the Affordable Care Act. Kitsap County has experienced a significant reduction in the numbers of uninsured residents. Access to dental care for adults continues to expand as well as the integration of primary care and behavioral health to offer patients a medical home where they can receive care for their whole person. In addition, access to Medicaid has not only expanded, but also is serving to transform the delivery of care by incenting models that are focused on the Triple Aim of improving the patient experience of care, improving population health, and reducing the cost of healthcare.²⁶ The community is supported by a strong safety-net of Healthcare providers available to serve low income populations including the Kitsap Public Health District (KPHD), Kitsap Mental Health Services (KMHS), Peninsula Community Health Services (PCHS), and CHI Franciscan (formerly Harrison Medical Center).

Affordable Care Act

The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act was signed into law in 2010 and made it mandatory for all U.S. citizens to have health insurance. However, not all residents are eligible for insurance, including undocumented immigrants and some people who may be exempt from the requirement to have insurance. A key provision of the Affordable Care Act created a new marketplace for each state to offer health benefits to individuals, families and small businesses. The Washington Health Benefit Exchange (created in 2011) created the Washington *Healthplanfinder*, a website on which Washingtonians can find, compare, and enroll in qualified health insurance plans. An in-person assistance network was also developed to make support broadly available for those who need additional assistance. The Kitsap Public Health District is the lead organization for our area's "Navigator" program, which assists Kitsap County residents in the enrollment process. Peninsula Community Health Services (PCHS), which is the Federally Qualified Health Center, has the largest contingent of employed Navigator staff. County-wide, Navigators assisted 7,024 persons with enrolling in health insurance during 2014 and another 2,406 persons in 2015 and 5,100 persons in 2016.²⁷ Still, community leaders noted that signing up for insurance is often complicated and people don't fully understand the meaning of deductibles and what is and is not covered. It was suggested that service providers should consider offering classes on how to maximize the use of health insurance options and their access to care.

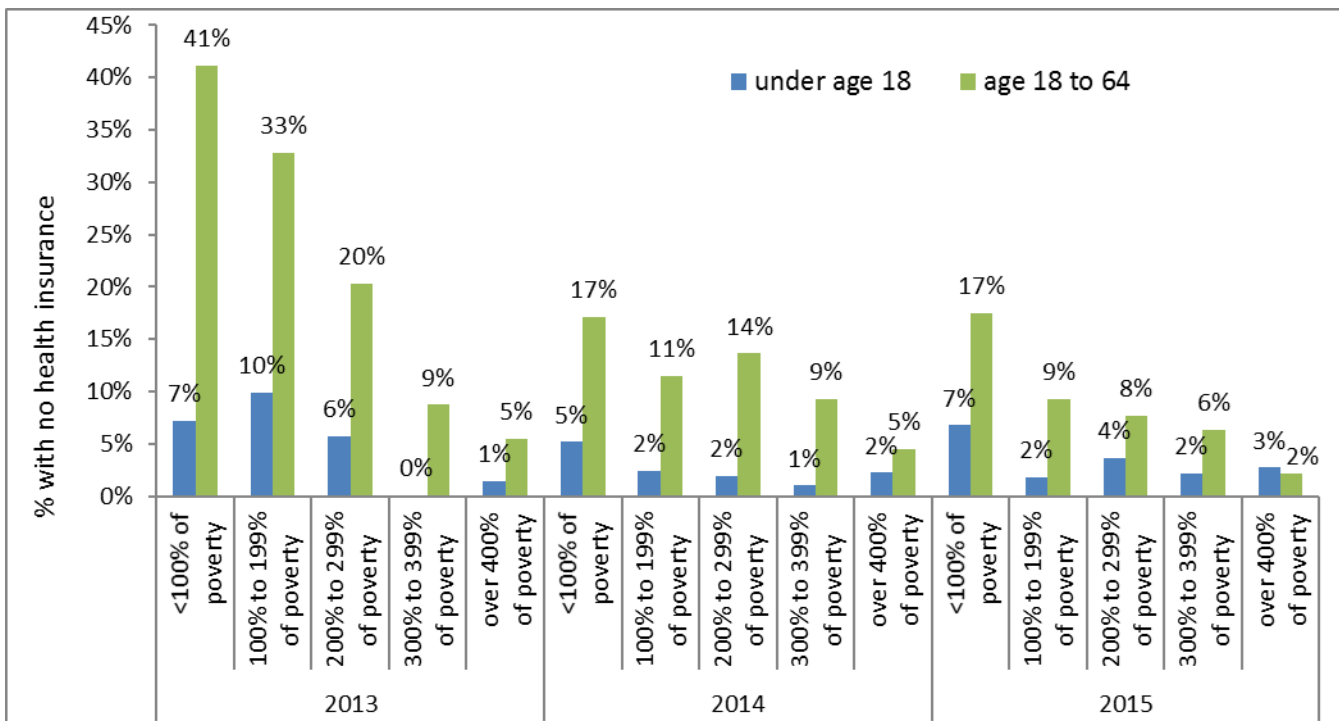
HEALTH AND WELL BEING

Rates of Uninsured

According to 2015 estimates, approximately 11,650 (4.7%) of 246,059 people in Kitsap County were uninsured, which was lower than the Washington State estimate of 6.6% uninsured.⁵ For Kitsap County, this included approximately 3.6% of children (age 0-17) and 6.4% of adults (age 18 to 64). This is a dramatic decline from the 2013 estimates, with both estimates dropping from 4.8% and 16.0%, respectively. Particularly for adults age 18 to 64, as the level of poverty increases, the proportion of individuals without health insurance decreases.⁵ Adults appear to have benefitted the most from the ACA and availability of health insurance, with uninsured rates among adults who are below 100% of the poverty line decreasing from 41% in 2013 to only 17% in 2014 and 2015. Similarly, adults at 100-199% of the poverty line dropped from 33% to only 11% in 2014 and 9% in 2015. Children certainly have also benefited, with reductions in the proportions of uninsured, though they were better off in 2013 than adults, starting from lower levels of uninsured. Still, children below 100%, at 100-199%, and at 200-299% of the poverty line still saw reductions of 28%, 78% and 66% in 2014 as compared to 2013 levels, respectively.



People without Health Insurance by Age and Poverty Level*, Kitsap County, 2013 to 2015⁵



HEALTH AND WELL BEING

Olympic Community of Health (OCH)

The Olympic Community of Health (OCH) is an Accountable Community of Health (ACH), one of nine in the state, designed to be able to address the major health priorities in our region, focusing on health equity and social determinants of health. The OCH is led by leaders from tribal nations and healthcare providers, and social service agencies (including housing providers such as KCR). Together they engage in a collaborative process to identify the greatest areas of health related needs in our community and work together to achieve the highest attainable level of health and well-being for all members of our communities. The OCH is currently focusing its efforts on five regional health priority areas including access to care, aging, behavioral health, chronic disease and early childhood.

Medicaid Waiver

As part of this Medicaid expansion, there is what is known as the “Medicaid Waiver” which gives the Secretary of Health and Human Services authority to approve experimental, pilot, or demonstration projects that promote the objectives of the Medicaid and Children’s Health Insurance programs (CHIP). The purpose of these demonstrations projects offer states additional flexibility to design and improve their programs in areas including:

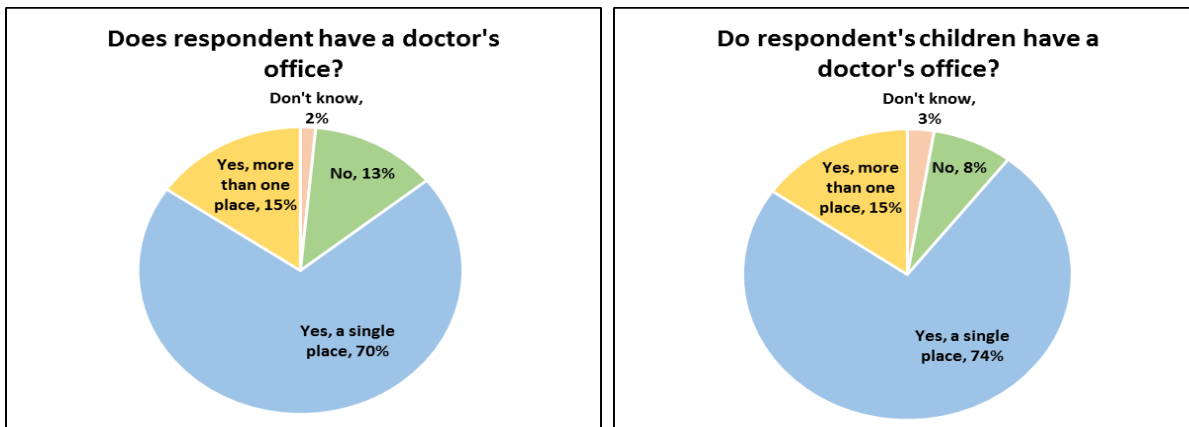
- Expanding eligibility to individuals who are not otherwise Medicaid or CHIP eligible;
- Providing services not typically covered by Medicaid; or,
- Using innovative service delivery systems that improve care, increase efficiency, and reduce costs.

One of the key areas being explored by service providers in Kitsap County is taking advantage of the Medicaid waiver to potentially fund supported housing and employment services, to help high utilizers of healthcare attain greater stability.

Access to Healthcare

In the KCR Consumer Survey, 13% of the respondents reported not having a “medical home” (a particular clinic, doctor’s office, or other place to go when sick or needing advice about health). Of these, only 18% reported that this is due to lack of insurance or inability to afford care. An even greater proportion of parents (74%) now reported having a single place or a particular doctor’s office for their children’s health needs. When asked about their most recent dental visit, 70% of adults responded visiting the dentist within the last year and 86% of parents reported their children visited the dentist within in the past year. The primary reasons cited for adults included “no reason to go” (38%) and “No Insurance/Can’t Afford” (36%). The primary reasons parents cited for their children was “No reason to go” (56%) and “No insurance/Can’t afford” (22%).²⁰

Survey Question: Is there a particular clinic/doctor's office that you and your children usually go to if you are sick or need advice about health?²⁰



HEALTH AND WELL BEING

With respect to accessing affordable care, PCHS reported that new patients are generally able to access an appointment within two weeks, and people who are sick can be seen within 1-2 days. PCHS operates clinics in Bremerton, Port Orchard, Poulsbo and will soon open in Belfair. Access to specialty care is often challenging according to Jennifer Kriedler-Moss, CEO of PCHS who noted that “there are a limited number of private practices that accept our patients.”³¹ She also explained that there are only two pain specialty centers in town, and that they often have to send pain patients as far away as Yakima to receive treatment.

Prenatal Care in the First Trimester

Early prenatal care is an important component of pregnancy. Pre-natal visits provide an opportunity for healthcare providers to educate women about proper nutrition, safe sexual practices, the dangers of smoking and use of alcohol and drugs, and other factors that might affect pregnancy outcomes. Infant mortality rates have been shown to be higher for women who begin prenatal care after the first trimester.²⁸ Overall, in Kitsap County, nearly 8 in every 10 (78%) civilian women began prenatal care in the first trimester during 2015.² However, the rates of prenatal care initiation differ substantially among women who are low-income (as assessed by having a Medicaid-paid delivery) versus women of higher income status.

The Nurse Family Partnership (NFP), administered by the Kitsap Public Health District, provides intensive home visiting and the goal is to catch women before the end of the first trimester to help provide education and ensure adequate housing. Unfortunately, some who need the services don't screen in and our society has a culture where these types of services aren't always accessed. Several community leaders suggested that a cross-agency group be created with representation of KCR, KPHD, CHI Franciscan that works together to change the culture around accepting help with parenting skills and home health. Of those responding to the consumer survey, 78% of women who have had a baby within the past five years reported accessing prenatal care in their first trimesters.

Access to Dental Care

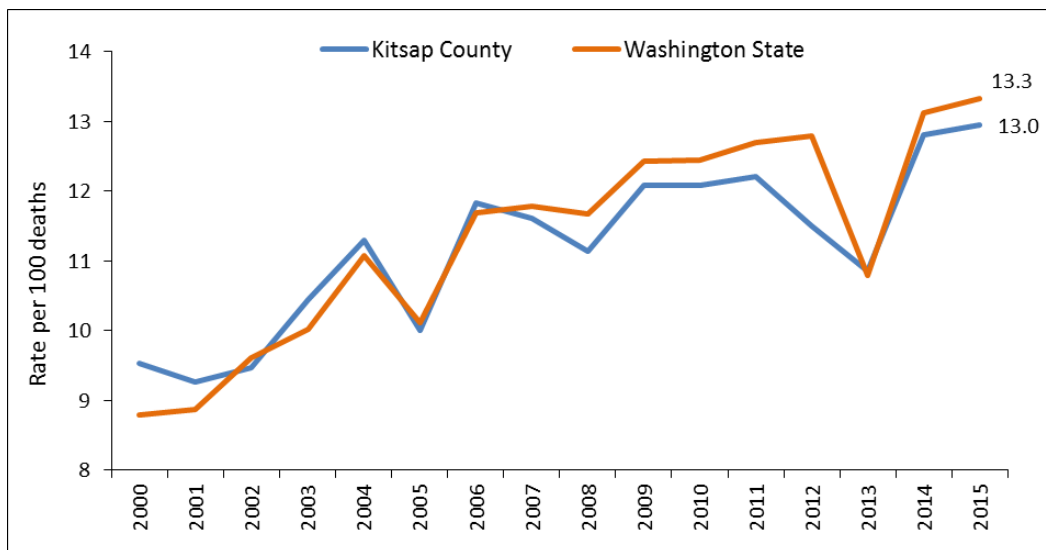
In our consumer survey, access to affordable dental care was identified by respondents as both the highest priority need for individuals and families responding to the consumer survey but also the hardest service to access. Even though Medicaid now covers adult dental care, this hasn't always been the case, and many residents may not be aware that Peninsula Community Health Services now have clinics in Port Orchard, Bremerton and Belfair. Outside of PCHS, it was pointed out that most dentists don't accept Medicaid. PCHS reported that appointments are generally available within a month, but if the patient is experiencing acute pain, they can often be seen the same day. Today, many of these acute patients go to the emergency room instead where their pain issues may be addressed, but there is no treatment plan offered to address the underlying condition.

PCHS also reports that they are seeing a lot of teens in their dental offices. This has often proven challenging due to the difficulties accessing care without a parental consent. Sadly, when children don't access dental services when they are young, there is very real risk that when a kid loses a permanent tooth, “they forever have a visual reminder of their low-income status”, explains Laura Hyde, Kitsap County Human Services Planner. Also, seniors on Medicare do not have a dental benefit, which makes it very costly for them to access appropriate care.

HEALTH AND WELL BEING

Behavioral Health: Substance Use

The rate of alcohol or drug-related deaths has statistically increased since 2000 in both Kitsap County and Washington State, with trends closely mirroring each other.¹⁵ In 2015, the rates for the county and the state were nearly identical, at 13.0 and 13.3 per 100, respectively. The sub-county rates for Bremerton, Central Kitsap, North Kitsap, and South Kitsap have all had 5-year averages in the 12.1-12.5 per 100 range, which is near the county's -5-year average of 12.1. Bainbridge Island has the lowest rate, with a 5-year average of only 9.0 per 100. In 2015, the regions ranked from highest rate per 100 to lowest as follows: Central Kitsap (14.6), North Kitsap (13.8), Bremerton (13.0), South Kitsap (12.1), and Bainbridge Island (8.3).



Alcohol or Drug-related deaths*, Kitsap County and Washington State: 2000 to 2015.¹⁵



Treatment options are often limited and waiting lists can be long.

*evaluation is based on all contributory causes of death for direct and indirect associations with alcohol and drug abuse

Washington Initiative 502 legalized recreational marijuana use in our state which allowed for small amounts of marijuana related products to be sold and used legally in the state, despite it being illegal nationally. Local law enforcement reports heroin is the most common drug of choice and often drug use starts with developing an addiction to pain medication. Hospital officials report that the level of chemical dependency in Kitsap County has skyrocketed. Of particular concern is the increased use of the more deadly forms of heroin. According to the Kitsap Sun, "Kitsap public health officials are raising the alarm over the emergence of an illegally manufactured pain killer up to 100 times more potent than heroin. The drug, called fentanyl, is used as an anesthetic in medical settings. But over the past two years, counterfeit prescription pills containing Fentanyl have poured into the United States. This adds a troubling twist to the rising opioid epidemic, according to Kitsap Public Health District Health Officer Dr. Susan Turner. Kitsap County Coroner's Office investigated four deaths related to fentanyl in 2015 and one in 2014. Dr. Turner said the drug is so potent that it can be fatal in doses as small as 2 milligrams — equivalent in size to two grains of salt."²⁹ There is also an apprehension that as narcotic prices increase on the street, the community may experience an increase in property and other crimes in order to pay for drugs. Unfortunately, treatment options are often limited and waiting lists can be long.

HEALTH AND WELL BEING

Offering an alternative to in-patient treatment options, Peninsula Community Health Services recently started offering Medical Assisted Treatment options, e.g. Saboxone, Vivitrol. The Kitsap Public Health District also operates a Harm Reduction needle exchange program, which is open 3 ½ days per week. Last year, over one million needles were exchanged in Kitsap.³⁰ In addition, the Olympic Community of Health is developing a regional Opioid Response Plan, which includes recommending an expansion of medication-assisted treatment options including Methadone as well as more Suboxone providers and Vivitrol providers.

Behavioral Health: Mental Illness

Every day, mental health crises occur for someone in our community. With Medicaid expansion and the move to Mental Health Parity for insured persons, access to mental health treatment is now more readily available to assist those in need. As the designated community mental health services provider, Kitsap Mental Health Services (KMHS) serves about 3500 – 4000 adults with Serious Mental Illness (SMI) annually, who meet the State's Access to Care Criteria and meet Medicaid eligibility. The exception would be those situations where the patient's acuity requires involuntary inpatient treatment or other acute crisis response services. In addition, KMHS serves about 1800 – 2500 children and youth with Serious Emotional Disturbances (SED) or SMI annually.³¹

According to Joe Roszak, CEO of KMHS, "In the last three years since Medicaid expansion, access to community mental health services is up over 62% representing a large increase in people seeking and receiving first time services at KMHS. The bad news is community mental health in Washington remains underfunded, and the current health care work force insufficient to meet the increase in people now eligible for services."³⁹ By law, services are voluntary unless a person is at imminent danger of harm to self or others, which is considered to be a very high, legal bar. There are people who choose not to receive treatment for numerous reasons that may include feeling they had bad experience in the past, social stigma, lack of insight into their illness (especially with psychosis), co-occurrence with illegal use of substances and perceived risk in disclosure, dislike of treatment/prescriptions, transportation difficulties, and more. Even with improved access to care, there are people in the community who would benefit by treatment and do not choose to participate. And, for those with serious untreated or insufficiently treated mental illnesses, they may be more likely to be found among homeless.

Patients may have to wait to see a provider due to the workforce shortage, but these delays are not considered to be extreme given the walk-in capacity. However, for individuals requiring inpatient treatment, there may be a shortage of available beds, unless the treatment is involuntary in which case a bed will be (must) be secured. With respect to accessing inpatient treatment for substance use disorder, timing is important and there is a perception among community leaders that not enough services exist.

Co-occurring substance use is assumed to be at least 60% of those with Serious Mental Illness. It can be challenging to identify symptoms that are exclusively mental health or substance use related as they are usually interwoven. In addition, adults with SMI and SUD are more at risk for physical health conditions, and can have complex care needs. Our systems are just beginning to try to address this level of need/complexity, and for persons who are homeless, this can be exacerbated, resulting in poor overall health and in some cases, premature, unnecessary death. In discussions with local law enforcement, we heard that they are looking forward to the planned opening of a 16-bed triage crisis and stabilization center because as of now there is no place to take people in their moment of crisis.

HEALTH AND WELL BEING

Integration of Primary Care with Behavioral Health

KMHS reports that roughly 9 out of 10 people accessing treatment for any mental illness first are first seen in primary care offices. With recent efforts to integrate primary care and behavioral health, primary care providers are encouraged to screen for depression, anxiety, alcohol and drug use. For individuals with a Serious Mental Illness or Substance Use Disorder, they will often be referred to KMHS, but may also receive some mental health services within primary care. Healthcare service providers, such as Peninsula Community Health Services and Kitsap Mental Health Services, are working to fully integrate primary care with behavioral health, which includes treatment for substance use disorder and mental illness. According to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMSHA), "Primary care settings have become a gateway for many individuals with behavioral health and primary care needs. To address these needs, many primary care providers are integrating behavioral health care services into their setting."³²

"In the last three years since Medicaid expansion, access to community mental health services is up 62% representing a large increase in people seeking and receiving services."

Joe Roszak,
Executive Director
Kitsap Mental Health Services

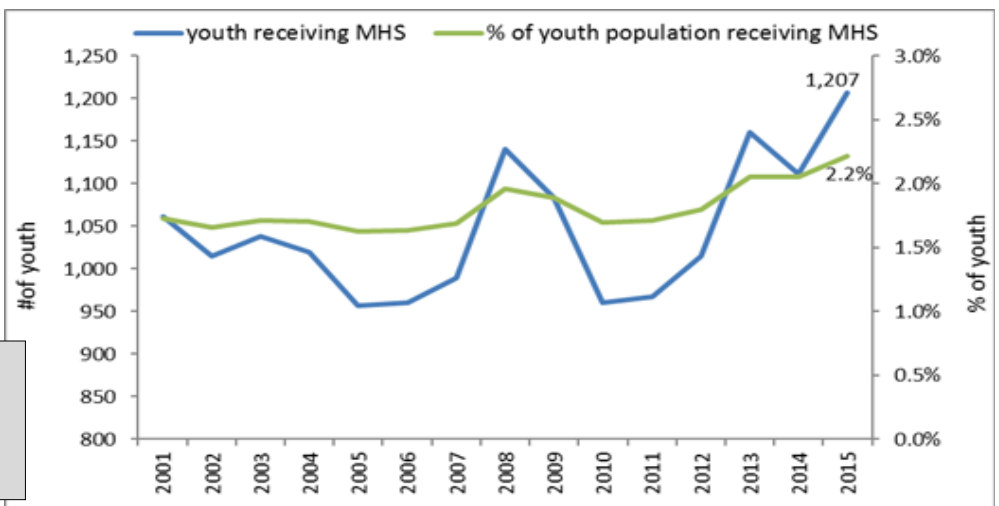
Salish Behavioral Health Organization (BHO)

The Salish Behavioral Health Organization is a consortium of Clallam, Jefferson and Kitsap Counties. The consortium provides planning, contracting and administration to deliver a comprehensive system of community behavioral health services (mental health and substance use) in the three-county area. Program services include: emergency services, including involuntary treatment and crisis respite; inpatient services; medication management; transitional housing; case management; outpatient counseling; day treatment; vocational rehabilitation; and Crisis Clinic (phone line) emergency counseling and referrals. In 2016, the three county area of Clallam, Jefferson and Kitsap were selected to be a pilot site for Health and Recovery through Peer Support Services (HARPS). The HARPS team is led by a KMHS Behavioral Health Professional, co-located at Kitsap Community Resources, and offers services aimed at securing permanent housing, primarily for adults discharging from inpatient psychiatric and chemical dependency facilities.

Behavioral Health in Children

Children with a mentally ill parent have a higher risk for developing mental illnesses than other children, and when both parents are mentally ill, the chance is even greater.³³ Moreover, mental illness of a parent can put stress on the marriage and affect the parenting abilities of the couple. The circumstances a child is raised in can independently influence mental health. An inconsistent, unpredictable family environment also contributes to mental illness in children. According to DSHS, the proportion of Kitsap County children age 0-17 years receiving state-funded mental health services has statistically increased, albeit gradually between 2001 and 2014.³⁴ Throughout this period the rate has averaged 1.8%, though in 2014 it was 2.1%. No specific data are available regarding the type of services provided.

Child Recipients of State-funded Mental Health Services, Kitsap County, 2001 to 2015³⁴



HEALTH AND WELL BEING

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) are experiences children may have during their first 18 years of life: physical, emotional, or sexual abuse; physical or emotional neglect; or exposure to traumatic stressors in the home (substance abuse, mental illness, domestic violence, incarceration of a household member, parental separation or divorce). ACEs are linked to greater risk for an array of poor physical, mental and behavioral health outcomes throughout life. In Kitsap County, an estimated 29% of adults have experienced 3 or more ACEs as children.³⁵ Data from two of the Kitsap Public Health District programs serving low-income pregnant women and first time mothers illustrate that ACEs are quite pervasive among this population, especially when compared to the general population. In 2013-14, more than half (58%) of the Nurse Family Partnership (NFP) clients had 3 or more ACEs and 51% of the Maternity Support Services (MSS) clients had 3 or more ACEs.³⁶ For children and adolescents, having a serious emotional disturbance, which often includes a history of trauma, high ACEs (most kids we see are at least at 5 and above), their risk of substance misuse and abuse is higher.

Kitsap Strong, formed in 2015, is a community initiative whose mission it is to "Improve the overall health and well-being of Kitsap and its residents, through the prevention of ACEs and building of resilience." The effort is funded and supported through a grant from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Kitsap Community Foundation, United Way, The Suquamish Tribe, and Kitsap Public Health District. Kitsap Strong is using a collective impact approach to engage and educate community agencies and leaders about ACEs, resiliency, and encouraging innovative approaches and partnerships to address ACEs in our community. It is the hope of Kitsap Strong to engage agencies across the entire lifespan, i.e., from prenatal care and early childcare providers all the way through hospice care, and to foster new/stronger working relationships between agencies.

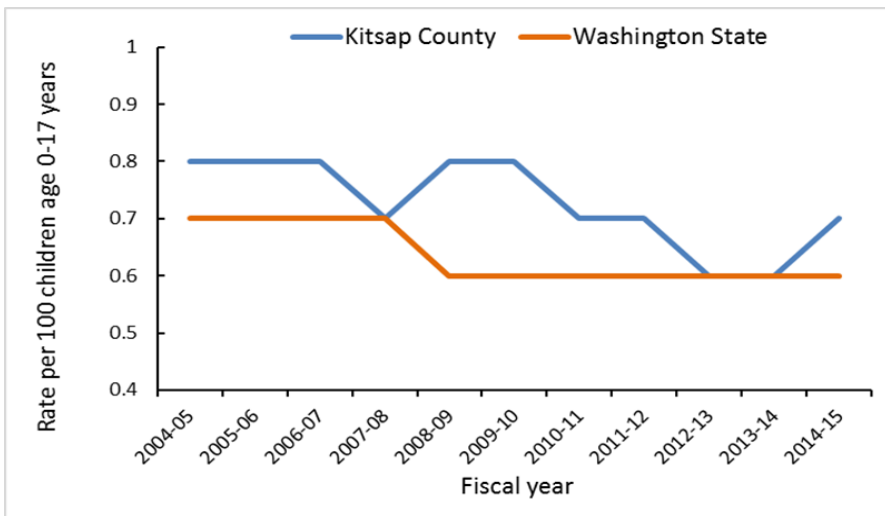
Foster Care

According to the Washington State Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS), between fiscal year 2004-05 and 2014-15, an annual average of 410 Kitsap County children aged 0-17 per year received foster care placement services.³⁷ This represents exclusively out-of-home temporary/short-term placements for children who have been abused, neglected, and/or involved in family conflict. DSHS also funds foster care support services such as clothing, personal incidentals, psychological evaluation and treatment, personal care services, transportation, and payment to foster parents. These support services may be provided to children in their own home or in out-of-home placements. An average of 425 children and adult family members (of all ages) per year received support services between fiscal years 2004-05 and 2013-14.³⁷ Slightly less than one-half of the children receiving foster care services receive placement services, and slightly more than one-half receive support services.

Abuse and Neglect

The rate of accepted referrals for child abuse and neglect in Kitsap County statistically decreased 9% per year from 2000 to 2006 but has remained statistically the same through 2015.¹⁵ The overall County rate has averaged 31.7 per 1,000 in the past 5 years, which is similar to the Washington State average of 33.1 per 1,000. However, within the County, rates of referrals differ by region. Data are tracked by school district zones. Since 2000, Bremerton district has had the highest rate of accepted CPS referrals for child abuse and neglect, staying well above the other districts. During 2015, Bremerton's rate was 56.3 per 1000. Despite this still high rate, it has declined by more than half of what it was in 2000, and by 17% from just five years ago. The other districts have shown decreasing trends from 2000 to 2015, with Central Kitsap also notable for its 49% decline since 2000 and 17% decline in the past five years.

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Rate per 100 Children (Age 0-17) Who Received Foster Care Placement Services, Kitsap County and Washington State, 2004-05 to 2014-15⁴⁴



Photography Eugenie Jones

*Accepted referrals by CPS

Access to Transportation

Kitsap Transit maintains public bus transportation throughout the County and operates foot ferry transportation, worker/driver buses for military facility employees, shuttle services for the elderly and people with special needs, park and ride lots, and a rideshare program. VanLink is another service option that is available to ACCESS-eligible clients (i.e., elderly and disabled). It provides a Kitsap Transit van to social service agencies which have a large number of clients. It allows the agencies themselves to control when and where pick-ups are made, rather than requiring clients to call and request the regular ACCESS vans. Agencies are able to use the vans on a daily basis and other just as needed for events. In addition, Kitsap Transit recently received voter approved funding to build a fast ferry system, offering passenger only service from Bremerton, Kingston and Southworth to Seattle.

Transportation was often cited in community discussions regarding barriers to accessing services for low-income persons. Whether the lack of Sunday bus service or the limited transportation options available in the north end of the county, it can be difficult for some people to access the services they need. It especially affects those with limited transportation options who are seeking to access care outside of Kitsap County. The Peninsula Community Health Services care team reported that they often deal with transportation issues as they try to coordinate transportation to specialty providers, both within and beyond the county.

The “vulnerable free ticket” (free ride) program targets the homeless and more vulnerable people in the community that need public transportation to shelters, food banks and other social service agencies. The Kitsap Transit Authority partners with KCR and the Housing Solutions Center program to distribute and track the free tickets to 27 different agencies and programs serving vulnerable persons in our community.

In addition to Kitsap Transit, the Washington State Ferry System is also a very important infrastructure link for Kitsap residents. In 2014, more than 6.3 million passenger trips were taken on the Seattle-Bainbridge ferry run and more than 2.5 million trips were taken on the Seattle-Bremerton route. In the north part of the county, the boats serving the Edmonds and Kingston run hosted over 4.0 million passenger trips during the year. More than half of all ridership on the Washington State Ferries originates or ends in Kitsap County.³⁸

HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS

Key Findings

- Households experiencing homelessness is rising. The Housing Solutions Center reported serving 1,002 households who were Literally Homeless in 2016, up from 941 households in 2015.
- For every 100 low-income households qualifying for affordable housing, there are only 12 units available.
- The average unit rent increase \$298 since the beginning of 2014, while vacancy rates fell to 4.6%.
- During the 2017 annual Kitsap County Point-In-Time (PIT) Homeless Count, there were 205 homeless individuals identified as living without shelter, which represents a 13% increase over 2016 and nearly double (93%) the count in 2015.
- A total of 1,134 students were reported as homeless during the 2015-16 school year, which represented a 8% increase from 2014-15, and more than triple (365%) the level in 2006-07.
- The Housing First approach recognizes a safe and stable home is the highest priority need for people experiencing homelessness, especially those with multiple barriers to permanent housing.

"We need housing where people can live...especially for those who are low-income, youth transitioning out of foster care, veterans, the chronically homeless...those who are getting left behind."

Stuart Grogan,
Executive Director – Housing Kitsap

Overview of Housing and Homelessness

The lack of affordable housing and the increased prevalence of homelessness in our community were the most frequently cited challenges noted by the individuals we interviewed for this assessment. The existing stock of affordable housing is impacted by rising rents across Kitsap coupled with low vacancy rates. Combined with other economic issues, more and more households are becoming increasingly unstable in their housing and at risk of becoming homeless. Although there have been significant strides in the delivery of homeless services, unfortunately the number of people experiencing homelessness continues to increase. Regional growth may also be making its way to Kitsap County with the advent of the Kitsap Transit Fast Ferry system. In fact, County Commissioner Rob Gelder noted that, "As the population grows we will continue to have growth pressure from the other side of the water." At the same time, we heard from community leaders of the importance of protecting housing options for people who are already here. Explains Our GEMS Founder and community leader Harriet Bryant, "We need to protect our community. We have families here now that need homes."

Housing Affordability

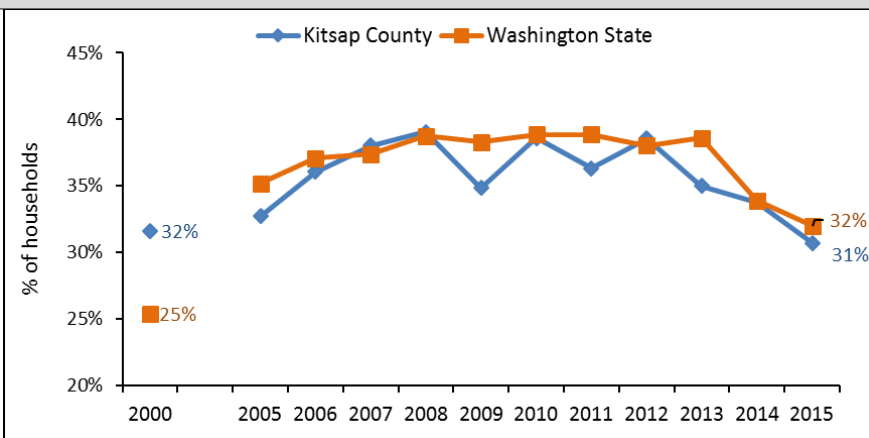
According to The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), families who pay more than 30% of their income for housing are considered cost burdened and may have difficulty affording necessities such as food, clothing, transportation and medical care.³⁹ Under this definition, it is estimated that 31% of Kitsap County residents and 32% of Washington State residents had difficulty affording other necessities during 2015.⁵ Within the county, 2015 estimates show that 24% of home owners and 46% of renters in were paying 30% or more of their monthly income toward housing costs. While the percentage of owners has decreased slightly as compared to 2000 (26%), the percentage of renters has increased since 2000 (42%). However, the estimated percentage of renters has dropped just since last year (50% in 2014).



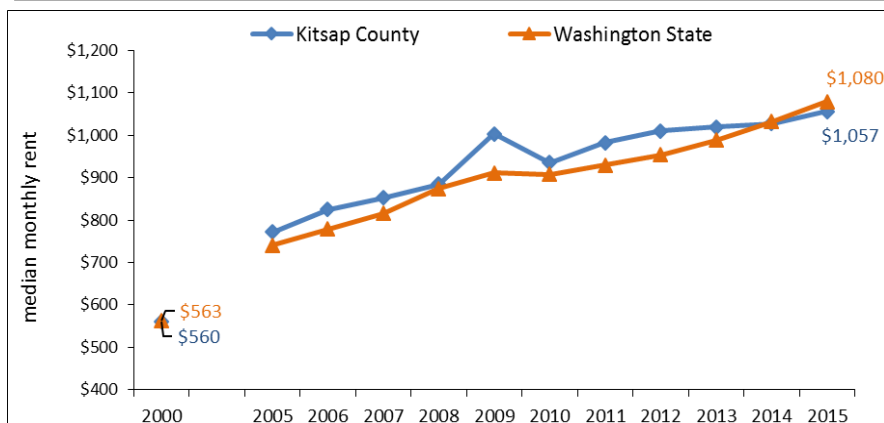
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During 2015, an estimated 32% of 98,490 occupied housing units in Kitsap County were rented.⁵ The median gross rent has nearly doubled (89% increase) from 2000 to 2015.⁵ In 2015, the county-wide median gross rent was \$1,057 per month, which is the second year in a row that the Kitsap median is lower than the state median (\$1,080 per month). Rental costs are a hardship for many in finding stable housing, as illustrated by the parent surveys, in which 19% of respondents in 2013 and 18% in 2016 reported moving in the past six months. In the 2016 survey, 66% reported renting their home, 19% had concerns that rent was too high, and 15% thought the price of utilities services were too high.

Households Paying 30% or More of Income for Housing Costs, Kitsap County and Washington State: 2000 and 2005 to 2015



Median Gross Rent, Kitsap County and Washington State: 2000 and 2005 to 2015

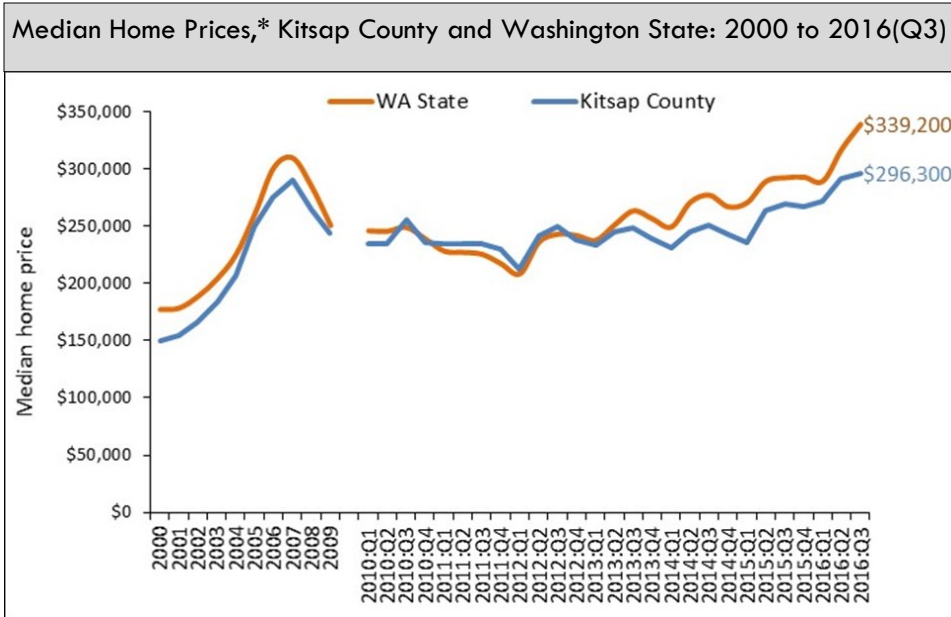


Rental costs are a hardship for many in finding stable affordable housing.

Along with renters, home ownership is also a challenging financial obstacle for many. The dramatic rise in real

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estate costs during the mid-2000's made home ownership even more difficult to attain. Median home prices in both Kitsap County and Washington State hit a peak in 2007, then topped as the recession began. The median home price reached its lowest level in nearly a decade during the first quarter of 2012. In the third quarter of 2016, the median home price in Kitsap County was \$296,300, which was slightly below the state median of \$339,200.⁴⁰



* Based on the sale of existing houses

Subsidized Housing

For people with very low or fixed incomes, accessing subsidized housing is often their best opportunity for long term housing stability. This housing stability is critical as described in a recent HUD study, “providing families experiencing homelessness with access to a permanent housing subsidy leads to significant spillover effects, including dramatic reductions in family separations, domestic violence, psychological distress, food insecurity, and school mobility – all of which have powerful impacts on child well-being.”⁴¹

A critical component to maintaining a stock of affordable housing is having a strong network of community landlords who are willing to consider renting to individuals with limited income as well as eviction, credit and even possibly criminal histories. The Housing Solutions Center works with over 100 such landlords who provide information regarding vacancies on a weekly basis. In addition, the community is supported by several organizations which provide affordable housing.

Bremerton Housing Authority

The Bremerton Housing Authority provides affordable housing opportunities in the City of Bremerton for people with limited financial means. They own and operate housing communities that include Public Housing units and affordable housing. In all, BHA has 179 public housing units, and there are roughly 700 families on the wait list, that could take upwards of 2 to 3 years to work through. BHA also

administers the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher program, which is their most desirable program since a voucher issued can be used anywhere in the U.S. Currently, BHA has 1,562 families leased on the voucher program and a waitlist of 400 households. BHA also manages the Housing Section 8 Choice Voucher program for Housing Kitsap, which includes 321 households receiving vouchers, and 250 households on the waiting list.⁴²

Housing Kitsap

Housing Kitsap is a housing authority serving all of Kitsap County except the City of Bremerton and their mission is to foster healthy housing communities by building and preserving safe, decent, and affordable housing. Housing Kitsap manages low-rent Public Housing, with apartments and single family homes (1-4 bedrooms) as well as senior/family apartments (1-3 bedrooms) throughout the county. In total, there are approximately 905 affordable housing units.⁴³ Most of these properties have a wait list which can average up to a year and a half. Kitsap Housing also administers the Self-Help Home Ownership Opportunity Program (SHOP) and operates several programs designed to expand affordable housing opportunities.

Kitsap Community Resources

Kitsap Community Resources also owns and operates 36 housing units, of which two are used for emergency housing purposes. Permanent and Supportive Housing is provided for families with children and participants are offered the opportunity to receive case management, rental subsidies and may be eligible for a Housing Choice Voucher after one year.

Housing Resources Bainbridge

Housing Resources Bainbridge (HRB) is an independent non-profit Community Land Trust that develops affordable housing projects on Bainbridge Island and has programs such as Home Share which connects individuals seeking to rent a room with homeowners. Currently, HRB's portfolio includes 89 affordable rental units and 30 owner occupied housing units that will remain affordable in the Community Land Trust in perpetuity.⁴⁴

KCR Housing Unit



Homelessness in Kitsap County

Kitsap County has been a leader in developing innovative solutions to address the challenge of homelessness in our community. Since 2012, the Housing Solutions Center, which is administered by KCR, has provided coordinated intake and referral services for anyone who is homeless or facing the imminent risk of becoming homeless. Recently, a collaboration of agencies including KCR, KMHS, The Salvation Army, and the Kitsap Public Health District formed the Kitsap Connect program designed to reach out to chronically high utilizers of emergency services, who were also often homeless, to help them connect with services and permanent supportive housing. The county is also served by a coordinated network of emergency shelters including lower barrier shelters operated by The Salvation Army and Kitsap Rescue Mission.

Despite these strides, homelessness increases every year. Nearly every dimension of our community is affected by the realities of homelessness. In our key informant interviews, we heard from elected officials who are often contacted by constituents regarding encampments in public places across the county in areas such as the Illahee Preserve, the Clear Creek Trail, and behind major retail establishments. During our Key Informant interviews, Commissioner Ed Wolfe posed a question which echoes a sentiment shared by many other community members, "What are we doing to clean up the camps alongside public areas? What are we doing long-term to fix these issues?" Since that discussion, Commissioner Wolfe has worked with Kitsap Rescue Mission and other community organizations to coordinate camp cleanups in the Central Kitsap area. Still, this will continue to be a challenge for our county as homeless encampments migrate to new locations.

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And the struggle of homelessness is not limited to the encampments, as Trudy Stacy – Manager of Customer Service for Kitsap Transit explains. “It is heartbreaking to wake people up in the ferry terminal and ask them to move along; knowing they have nowhere to go, especially in the cold and wet weather.”⁵⁴ Schools are affected as well. Linda Sullivan Dudzik of the Bremerton School District explains, “We have students and families living in vehicles and couch surfing. We are very concerned about what happens to students after they leave on nights and weekends.” The impact of homelessness is felt at the hospital as well where they report that homelessness at the Bremerton campus is on the rise and they are finding it increasingly difficult to identify a place for patients to go upon their release. At present, there is no “step-down” care facility for people exiting hospitals that are not in a position to go to a shelter, either due to mobility issues or care management concerns. Kirsten Jewell, Housing and Homeless Program Coordinator for Kitsap County sums up the situation well when she noted, “As a society, we haven’t found a place for everyone to be”.⁵⁵

How is Homelessness Defined?

Homelessness is defined by HUD to include “individuals who lack housing (without regard to whether the individual is a member of a family), including an individual whose primary residence during the night is a supervised public or private facility (e.g., shelters) that provides temporary living accommodations, and an individual who is a resident in transitional housing.” A homeless person is an individual without permanent housing who may live on the streets; stay in a shelter, mission, single room occupancy facilities, abandoned building or vehicle; or in any other unstable or non-permanent situation.⁴⁵

Homelessness takes many forms. While the general public perception of homelessness is typically a person at the street corner holding a sign, the reality is much broader than these generalized images suggest. With the economic downturn, homelessness touches every demographic of society. From children, families, seniors and youth, the crisis of homelessness knows no bounds. The former director of the Committee to End Homelessness in King County explains it well: “Homelessness is the bellwether for the rest of our society. Although a generation has grown up with massive homelessness, those of us who are older know that homelessness is not normal.”⁴⁶

Residential Shelters

Kitsap County is supported by a strong emergency shelter system which includes the YWCA Domestic Violence shelter, as well as St. Vincent de Paul and Georgia’s House, both serving women and children. Catholic Community Services operates a men’s shelter that includes a room for a father with children and Kitsap Rescue Mission runs a low-barrier shelter serving singles and families. The Salvation Army also recently opened a low-barrier shelter serving individuals during the winter months. In addition to these locations, KCR operates a safe park to provide families and couples with a vehicle to park safely with access to hygiene facilities.



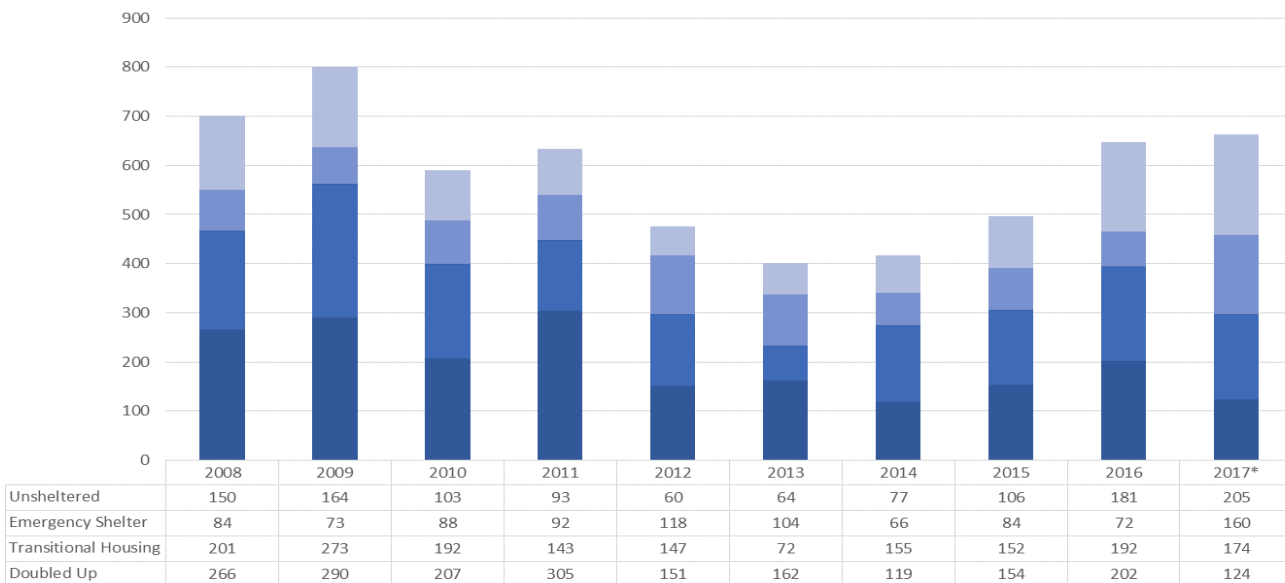
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Point In Time Count

During the 2017 annual Kitsap County Point-In-Time (PIT) homeless count, there were 205 individuals counted who identified themselves as unsheltered, which is nearly double (93%) the number of unsheltered counted increase over 2015.⁴⁷ The annual Point in Time Count is conducted in January of each year, is generally known to understate the actual number of homeless in the County because it is a snapshot of one day in time and it is difficult to capture many individuals who are living with others or sleeping out of doors and choose not to be identified. In order to participate in this count individuals are also required to provide personal demographic information and many in the homeless population do not want to provide such information.

Reflecting on the results of the 2017 Point in Time Count, Kirsten Jewell noted, “The affordable housing crisis and shortage of resources for behavioral health supports are pushing ever more of our neighbors into homelessness. Despite community partners adding 70 night-by-night shelter beds in the last year (50 are temporary), the 2017 Point In Time Count reflected a record number of people living unsheltered.”

**Kitsap Point in Time Count of Homeless Persons:
All Individuals, by Year**



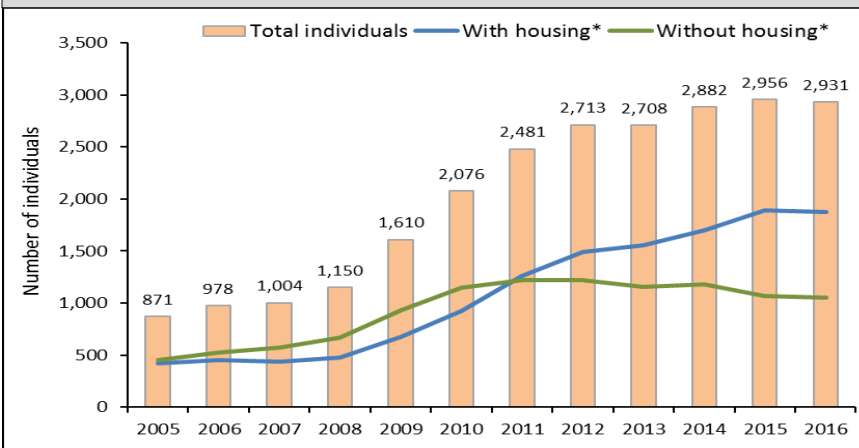
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DSHS Basic Food Applications

By reviewing the reported housing status on applications for Basic Food (formerly the food stamps program), is another way that we can estimate the number of homeless individuals in our community. According to these estimates, the number of homeless individuals more than tripled (337%) from 2005 to 2016.⁴⁸ The sharp uptick began in about June 2008 and has risen substantially ever since, with the exception of a slight dip in 2013. The

biggest growth has been among those reporting having a temporary place stay, whereas the number Basic Food clients reporting being without any housing has been relatively stable since 2010.

Average Monthly Number of Homeless Clients Who Apply for Food Stamps, By Housing Status, Kitsap County: 2005 to 2016⁴⁸



Housing Solutions Center

The Housing Solutions Center (HSC) provides coordinate intake and referral services for anyone who is homeless or facing the risk of homelessness. The HSC has sites across Kitsap County including Bremerton, Port Orchard, Poulsbo, Bainbridge and The Coffee Oasis locations. In 2016, the HSC met with 3,710 households, of whom 1,002 were literally living on the streets, their vehicles, tents, abandoned buildings, etc. In addition, of the households served 102 indicated they had a veteran head of household. Substance Use Disorder and Mental Illness are often characteristics of individuals who are without housing in our community. In 2016, 27% (268) of the Literally Homeless households served indicated they suffered from mental illness and 30% (296) indicated they were fleeing domestic violence.⁴⁹



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Homelessness in Schools

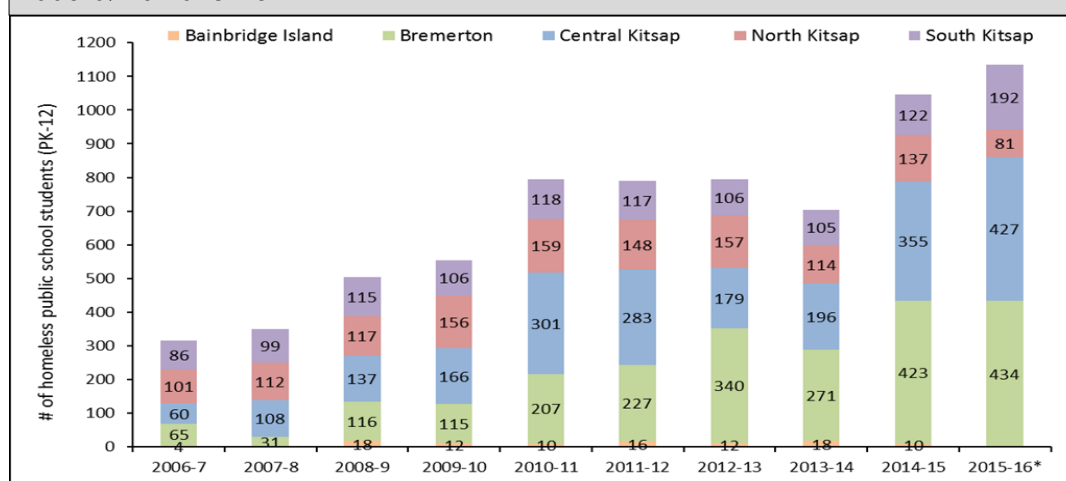
Overall, during the 2015-16 enrollment year, 12% of Head Start/Early Head Start (HS/EHS) children in Kitsap County received homelessness services.²³ This is similar to the 13% of children served in 2014-15. As evidenced below, Port Gamble S'Klallam once again had the highest proportion of both EHS (31%) children and HS children (34%) receiving services. Across all county programs, a total of 41% of families that were homeless acquired housing during the year.

Head Start/Early Head Start Families and Children Receiving Homelessness Services by Program and by Agency, Kitsap County: 2015-2016.²³

	Early Head Start			Head Start		
	# of families	# of children	% of all enrolled children	# of families	# of children	% of all enrolled children
Kitsap Community Resources	7	7	7.0%	26	28	8.8%
Olympic Educational Service District	32	37	16.0%	29	29	12.3%
Port Gamble S'Klallam Tribe	13	13	31.0%	12	12	34.3%
Suquamish Tribe	0	0	0.0%	0	0	0.0%
Kitsap County Total	52	57	13.7%	67	69	11.1%

Since 2001, school districts have had an appointed homeless liaison in compliance with the federal McKinney-Vento Act. Although not all school districts use the same methodology to count or define homeless students, there was a county-wide increase in the reported number of homeless students from 2006-07 to 2012-13, a slight decline in 2013-14, and a dramatic increase in 2014-15. A total of 1,047 students were reported as homeless during the 2014-15 school year, which was a 48.7% increase from 2013-14. The biggest increases were at Central Kitsap (81% increase) and Bremerton (56% increase).²⁴

Public School Students (PK-12) Reported as Homeless, Kitsap County School Districts: 2006-07 to 2015-16.²⁴



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While there could be many contributing factors to youth homelessness, Dave Frederick, Executive Director of The Coffee Oasis, a non-profit organization serving youth living on the streets, observed that they are “dealing with a lot of broken kids from broken families.” From their experience, mental health issues are a big factor in the reason kids become homeless. Frederick explains, “A lot of kids have been through trauma, and it takes a long time to build trust.” In the past, when they made referrals for other services such as mental health and substance abuse treatment, it was not uncommon to lose kids in the transition because the trust they have built doesn’t necessarily transfer. This situation led The Coffee Oasis to enter into a partnership with Kitsap Mental Health Services in an effort to bring mental health services in house.

The impact of homelessness on students are substantial and long term. In fact, according to the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness, “Students experiencing homelessness are up to nine times more likely than their non-homeless peers to repeat a grade.”⁵⁰ Having a stable home benefits children over their lifetime, by “improving their overall well-being, health, education, and future employment opportunities. When families experience homelessness and housing instability, children suffer. They face a significantly higher risk of chronic or un-addressed health and developmental issues than their peers. Those issues can affect their education and employment opportunities and, ultimately, their success.”⁵⁰

Domestic Violence

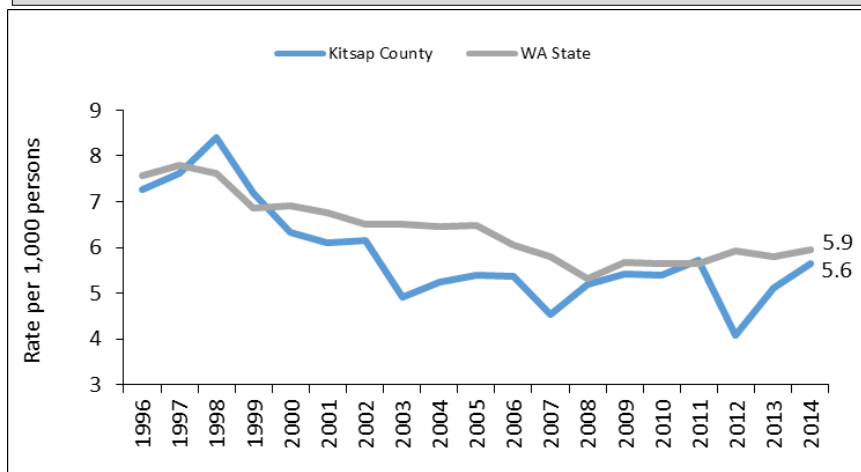
While data suggest that since 1996, domestic violence offenses have declined, there has been a recent increase in Kitsap County since 2012. The primary domestic violence services provider in our county is the YWCA, which provides victims of intimate partner violence access to shelter, transitional housing, advocacy and support groups. In 2015, approximately 14% (429 households) of the 3,258 households served by the Housing Solutions Center indicated that Domestic Violence was the primary cause of their homelessness.⁴⁹ YWCA Executive Director Denise Frey explained that the number one reason a victim chooses to remain with their abuser is that they have nowhere to go. As evidence of the prevalence of domestic violence in Kitsap County, the YWCA reported the following for 2016:⁵¹

- 3,541 calls to the 24 hour hotline
- 41 women and 31 children housed in the ALIVE shelter
- 1,014 support group participants
- 702 clients receiving legal advocacy with protection orders and court accompaniment

“To expect a woman or man to choose between housing and violence is not a choice.”

**Denise Frey,
Executive Director -
YWCA of Kitsap County**

Domestic Violence Offenses, Kitsap County and Washington State, 1996 to 2014



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Veterans

Veterans include anyone who has served in the United States military. The number of veterans age 18+ in Kitsap County is estimated to be 35,358, or 18.8% of the total population. Of these, 89.7% are male, 4.7% live in poverty, and 27.6% have a disability. Of those with a disability, 7.5% live in poverty. Of veterans age 18 to 64, 74.7% are in the workforce and of those in the workforce, 5.3% are unemployed.⁵

Veteran Status, Kitsap County, 2011-13⁵

	#	%
Total population 18+	187,613	
Veterans age 18+	35,358	18.8%
By gender		
Male	31,699	89.7%
Female	3,659	10.3%
By age		
18 to 34 years	4,125	11.7%
35 to 54 years	11,507	32.5%
55 to 64 years	8,979	25.4%
65 years and over	10,747	30.4%
In poverty	1,653	4.7%
With a disability	9,647	27.6%
In poverty	727	7.5%
Veterans age 18-64	24,611	69.6%
In workforce	18,373	74.7%
Unemployed	1,293	5.3%

"We have had so much success getting veterans off the streets and inside again. Our city and county have really stepped up to this challenge, but we still have work to do ensuring that there is affordable permanent housing available for our veteran families."

Mayor Patty Lent
City of Bremerton



Veterans Assistance Services

In 2016, the Housing Solutions Center met with 102 Veteran Households who were living in places not meant for human habitation, such as a car or tent.⁴⁹ There are several initiatives in place to meet the needs of our veterans:

Homes for All Who Served (HAWS) is lead through a collaborative effort of federal, state, and local veteran Housing and service providers with the goal of ending veteran homelessness in Kitsap by Veterans Day 2017. One of the key programs implemented by this cross sector team was the Veterans Housing Options Group (VHOG), which meets every Monday at KCR .It is open to any veteran who needs help with housing and accessing veteran resources. Since its inception in July 2015 through December 2016, the VHOG has helped transition 117 veterans out of homelessness and into permanent housing.⁵¹

Supportive Services for Veterans Families (SSVF) provides short-term rental assistance and flexible funding to overcome barriers to housing for veteran households.

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Veterans Assistance Program is administered by KCR on behalf of Kitsap County and provides financial assistance to income eligible veterans in order to bridge the impact of a financial emergency. Funds may be used for Housing, Motel Vouchers, Utilities, Food, Car repairs, Medical Expenses, and other items. The following table summarizes the assistance provided by the Kitsap County Assistance program in recent years.

Veterans Assistance Program Direct Services Expenditures, 2011-2016⁵²						
Type of Assistance Offered	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Rent	\$168,975	\$93,877	\$101,712	\$100,478	\$87,634	\$73,325
PSE	\$66,616	\$49,477	\$38,609	\$32,612	\$22,706	\$36,963
Auto Repair	\$26,033	\$16,404	\$16,129	\$18,770	\$15,096	\$12,821
Food	\$19,108	\$15,921	\$15,801	\$17,193	\$14,894	\$15,949
Medical	\$18,898	\$6,682	\$7,026	\$11,123	\$6,000	\$5,086
Other	\$58,267	\$33,078	\$34,797	\$38,059	\$30,607	\$39,131
Total Expenditures	\$357,897	\$215,439	\$214,074	\$218,235	\$176,937	\$183,275



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Kitsap County's Homeless Response

Kitsap County recently updated its Homeless Housing Plan in collaboration with multiple service providers which identified key strategies designed to keep homelessness rare, brief and one time. In recent years, there has also been a groundswell of support and determination among elected officials and the community at large to identify real solutions to the issue of homelessness. This has resulted in several new initiatives including:

Kitsap County Homeless Coordinating Committee: Kitsap County commissioners coordinated a countywide homelessness workshop with a special focus on identifying Housing First opportunities. The workshop was followed up with the creation of the Homeless Coordinating Committee which is focused on reducing barriers and making it easier to create alternative housing options including Housing First. The Housing First approach recognizes a safe and stable home is the highest priority need for people experiencing homelessness. Once a safe and stable home is in place, support services may be offered to help maintain housing and address underlying issues. Across the country, Housing First has been demonstrated to be highly effective in helping chronically homeless families and individuals move more quickly off the streets or out of our shelter systems.

Low Barrier Shelters: In 2015, both The Salvation Army and Kitsap Rescue mission opened low-barrier continuous stay winter shelters, providing shelter to many people who would otherwise live on the street.

Municipal Homeless Task Forces: Each of the cities in Kitsap County have each convened housing task forces comprised of local community leaders to identify opportunities to improve access to affordable housing and identify specific solutions to the issue of homelessness in their respective communities.

Kitsap Connect: Kitsap Connect is a multi-agency collaborative team led by the Kitsap Public Health District in partnership with Kitsap Mental Health Services, Kitsap Community Resources and The Salvation Army and will focus on identifying and serving individuals with active mental health and/or substance use disorder who are also high utilizers of emergency, law enforcement and/or emergency department services.

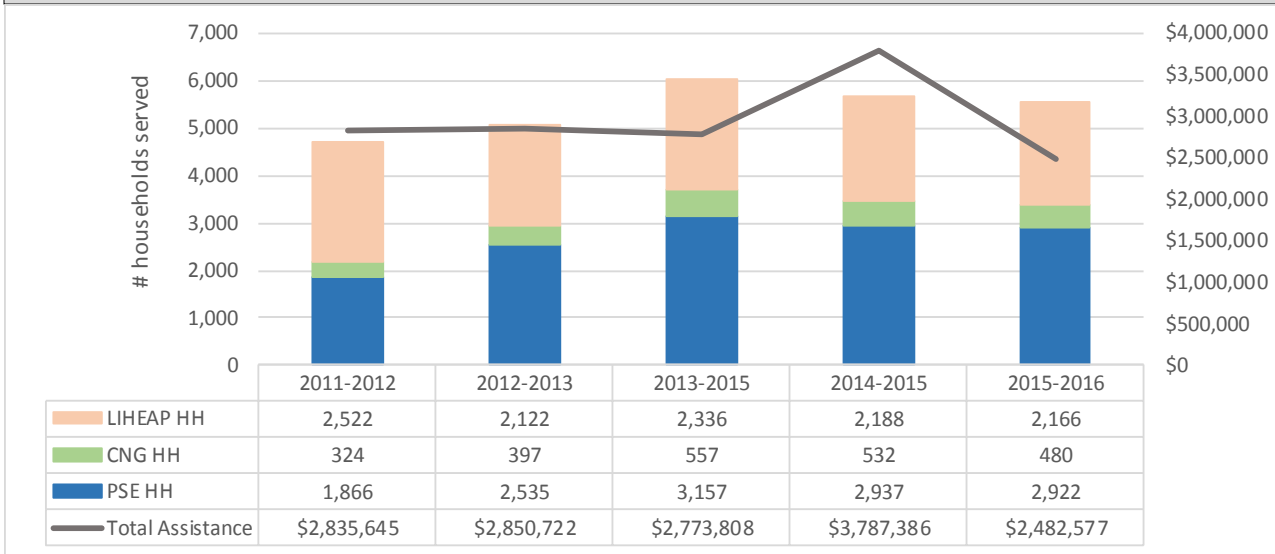
Mayor's Challenge to End Veterans Homeless: This initiative was spearheaded by Mayor Patty Lent and the project continues to be administered by Kitsap County Human Services. Through the work of multiple agencies and veterans organizations, Kitsap was able to achieve a virtual zero in homeless veterans; meaning that when new veterans become homeless, resources and housing opportunities are sufficient to help them rehouse.

HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS

Utility Assistance

Rising energy costs pose an extra housing burden on low-income households. There are a variety of community programs in place to help individuals cover these expenses. Energy assistance is provided to those in need in the form of grants from Puget Sound Energy (PSE), Cascade Natural Gas (CNG) and the federally funded Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP). The primary energy programs of LIHEAP, CNG and PSE are managed by Kitsap Community Resources and are offered on an October – September cycle. There are also limited discretionary assistance programs offered by select food banks that provide assistance with water, sewer and garbage shut off notices.

PSE, LIHEAP, and Natural Gas Assistance in Process with data provided by KCR Energy Department, Kitsap County, 2011-12 to 2015-16⁵³



Weatherization and Minor Home Repair Services

High energy costs contribute to the high housing cost burden experienced by low income households. KCR Weatherization services provides income eligible individuals with weatherization measures which help households conserve energy usage. On average, households receiving weatherization services experience a reduction in energy usage of 30%, which translates directly to a sustained reduction in their energy costs.

All weatherization measures are installed by local contractors and the types of conservation measures they install include insulation of doors, walls and ceilings, ductless heat pumps, furnace repairs, and blower door testing to assess heat leakage and improve combustion safety. In certain situations, they will also perform minor home repairs which increase accessibility such as repairing stairs and wheelchair ramps, as well as improvements that increase the effectiveness of the weatherization measures such as wiring, roof repairs, and plumbing. In 2016, KCR weatherized 56 units county wide.⁵³



FOOD AND NUTRITION

Key Findings in this Section

- Food Lifeline reports that on average 31% of households stated that they had to choose between buying food and paying for medicine or medical care at least monthly.
- There are eight Kitsap County food banks and the total number of households they served more than doubled (101% increase) from 2007 to 2015.
- The percentage of infants who were born in the County and served by the Women Infants and Children nutrition program (WIC) averaged 47% during the last 5 years (2009 to 2013).
- As of October 2014, a total of 12,833 students applied to receive free or reduced lunch during the 2014-15 school year.
- There was a 19% increase in the rate of individuals receiving food stamps over the past 5 years, growing from 14.8 per 100 in 2010 to 17.5 per 100 in 2014.

"As a community, it's possible to do so much more. We must be willing to take a few risks to get there."

**Dr. Susan Turner,
Health Officer**

Overview of Food and Nutrition

The latest food security data released by the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) shows that the hunger, and food insecurity rate has continues to fall but still has not reached pre-recession levels. In Washington State and across the country we continue to see slow but steady improvements in food insecurity, but we still have work to do to ensure that all members in our community have access to the food they need.

Impact of Poor Nutrition

According to a recent report by Food Lifeline in Seattle, many chronic-illnesses are diet related, including obesity, type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and hypertension. All of these diseases can be prevented or mitigated by consuming a healthy diet. However, many low-income individuals have limited financial resources and lack regular access to healthy foods; similarly they also have limited access to healthcare. In their 2014 Hunger in America Report,⁵⁴ Food Lifeline reported:

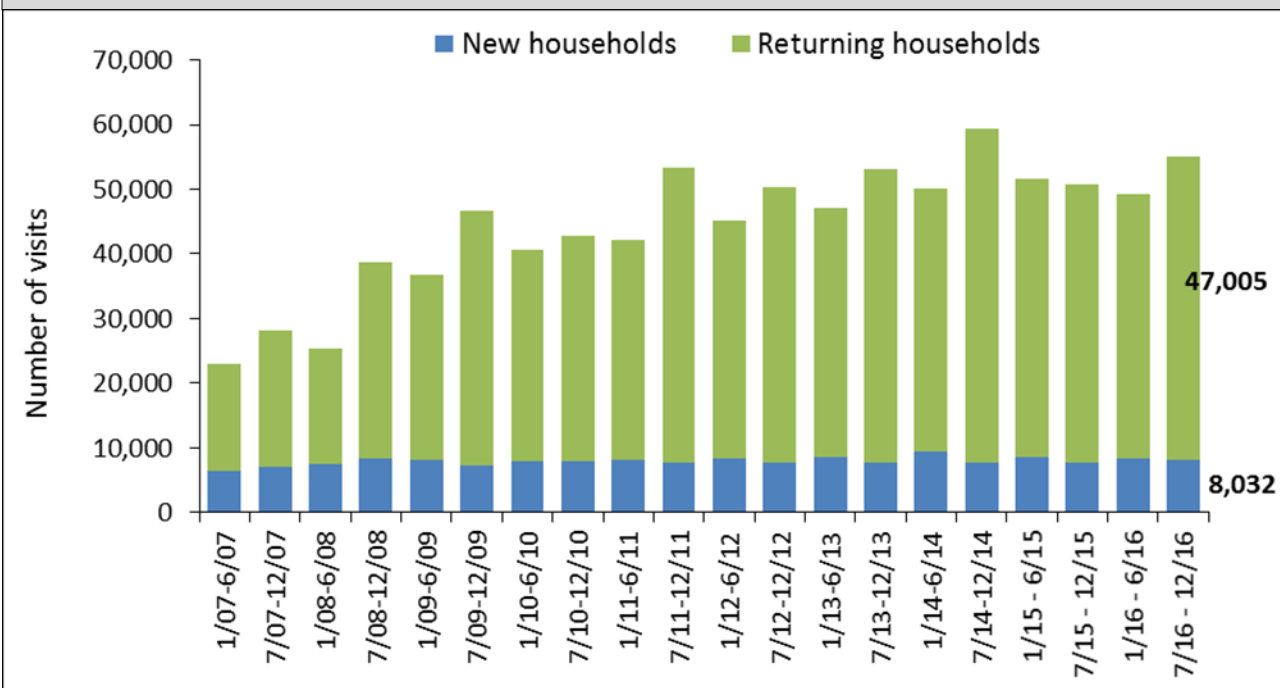
- 70% of households stated that they had to choose between buying food or paying for medicine or medical care at least once in the past year, with 31% reporting that they have to make this decision monthly
- 54% of households reported having unpaid medical bills
- 42% reported having at least one member of the household with diabetes

Food Bank Resources

Food insecurity data is not available at the County level, but a good indicator of the need to supplemental nutrition can be found by reviewing usage data at the local food banks. There are eight Kitsap County area food banks, including Bremerton Foodline, Salvation Army Food Bank, South Kitsap Help Line, Helpline House, North Kitsap Fishline, ShareNet Food Bank, Central Kitsap Food Bank, and St. Vincent de Paul. These food banks track how many new clients and households are served each month as well as how many return visits are made by existing clients. The total number of households served more than doubled (101% increase) from 2007 to 2015.⁵⁵ Over time, the number of visits by new households per year has remained fairly stable while the return visits continue to increase. Despite increasing visits and demand for food, the food banks in the area have experienced a decline in both food and monetary donations.

FOOD AND NUTRITION

Total Household Visits Made to Area Food Banks, Kitsap County, 2007 to 2016.⁵⁶



Infant and Child Nutrition

Proper nutrition and health are essential to ensure a woman is ready to carry a baby and that the baby receives essential nutrients for even the earliest developmental stages. Appropriate prenatal care promotes early detection and effective treatment of any complications. Ideal results are a full-term pregnancy without unnecessary interventions, delivery of a healthy infant, and a healthy postpartum period in a positive environment that supports the physical and emotional needs of the woman, infant, and family. However, about half the pregnancies in Washington State are unintended.^(FN) Unintended pregnancies, and especially unwanted pregnancies, have a wide range of negative consequences.

The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) is a federally-funded program to provide supplemental foods, nutritional education, and health care referrals for low-income pregnant, breastfeeding, and postpartum women as well as infants and children (up to age 5).⁵⁷ It is intended to support women and children who are found to be at nutritional risk. Education is provided through workshops, educational boards, and one-on-one counseling. WIC checks are issued to a family and can be exchanged for nutritious foods at many local grocery stores.

The number of clients served by WIC in Kitsap County was highest in 2009-2011, but has declined in recent years. The average annual percentage of infants who were born in the County and served by WIC during 2004 to 2015 was 47%. However, in recent years, this has fallen to only 44% in the last 5 years (2011 to 2015) and for 2015 was only 41%.⁵⁶

FOOD AND NUTRITION

Women, Infants and Children Served by WIC, Kitsap County: 2004 to 2015⁵⁶

Year	Infants and children under age 5	Pregnant, breastfeeding, and postpartum women	Total served	% of infants born in Kitsap County served by WIC
2004	6,755	2,961	9,716	48%
2005	6,626	2,861	9,487	47%
2006	6,507	2,835	9,342	48%
2007	6,337	2,760	9,097	48%
2008	6,780	2,970	9,750	50%
2009	7,595	3,187	10,782	51%
2010	7,681	3,084	10,765	48%
2011	7,667	3,131	10,798	47%
2012	7,012	2,910	9,922	46%
2013	6,704	2,759	9,463	44%
2014	6,684	2,819	9,503	44%
2015	6,214	2,587	8,801	41%



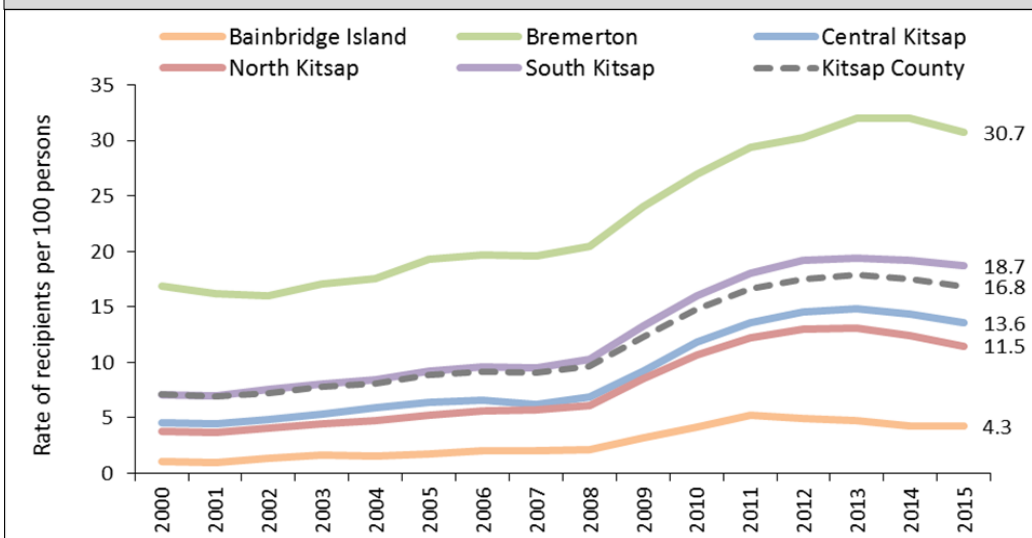
Photography Eugenie Jones

The KCR Women, Infants and Children (WIC) nutrition program serves more than 7,000 clients each year.

Food Stamps Recipients Increasing in Recent Years

In both Kitsap County and Washington State the rate of persons receiving food stamps through the Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP) has been increasing in recent years. The rate in Kitsap County climbed dramatically between 2008 and 2011, but slowed pace between 2011 and 2013, and slightly decline in 2014. Despite the recent slowing pace, there was still a 19% increase over the past 5 years, growing from 14.8 per 100 in 2010 to 17.5 per 100 in 2014. Bremerton residents have consistently had the highest rate of food stamp recipients; nearly 1 in 3 residents received food stamps in 2014.¹⁵ Bainbridge Island and Central Kitsap had slightly reduced rates of residents receiving food stamps, but all other regions in the county experienced an increase this past year.

Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP) Recipients in Kitsap County by Region: 2000 to 2015¹⁵

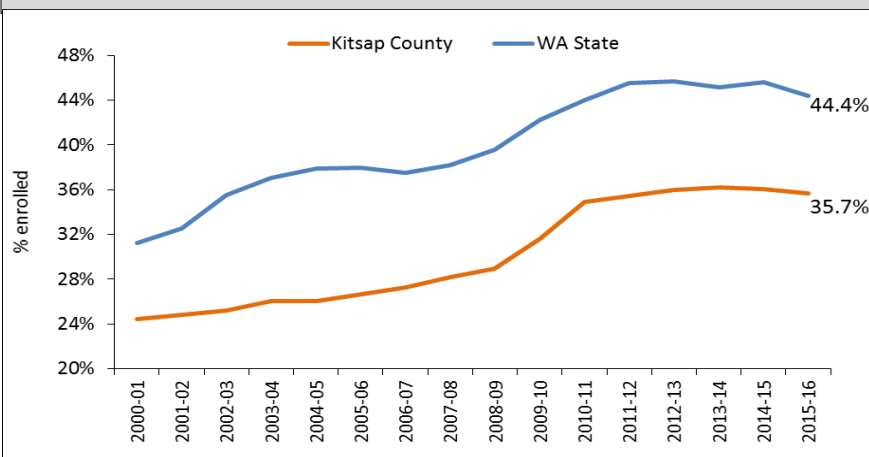


FOOD AND NUTRITION

Free and Reduced Lunch Programs: Enrollment on the Rise

The National School Lunch Program provides assistance with nutrition to children whose families are impoverished. There are two levels of eligibility within the program, free meals with an eligibility level of 130% of the federal poverty guidelines and reduced meals with an eligibility level of 185% of the federal poverty guidelines. The proportion of Kitsap County public school students enrolled in the Free and Reduced Lunch Program has statistically increased between 2000-01 and 2015-16; however, in the last 5 years since 2011-12 there has been no statistical change. Kitsap County has consistently had a statistically significantly lower proportion of students enrolled in the FRL Program than Washington State. As of October 2015, a total of 13,041 Kitsap students applied to receive free or reduced lunch.

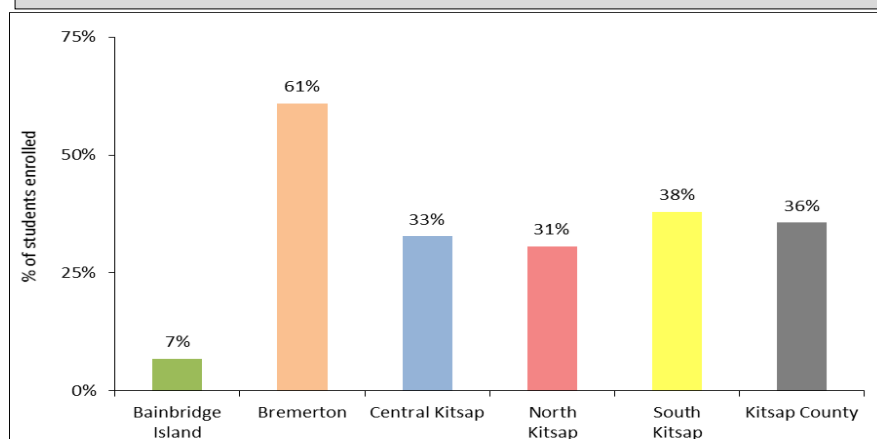
Public School Students Enrolled in Free or Reduced Lunch, Kitsap County and Washington State: 2000-01 to 2015-16⁵⁸



Eligibility for the program is \leq 185% of poverty ** Data are as reported in October of each school year

Consistent with where the largest proportion of children and families living in poverty reside, the Bremerton school district zone also had the highest proportion (61%) of students enrolled in the Free or Reduced Lunch Program in October 2015. South Kitsap was the only other school district to have a proportion of enrolled students higher than the county-wide proportion (38%). Bainbridge Island continued to have the lowest proportion (7%).⁵⁸

Public School Students Enrolled in Free or Reduced Lunch, Kitsap County: October 2015⁵⁸



FOOD AND NUTRITION

Total Enrollment and Enrollment in Free or Reduced Lunch, Kitsap County Public Schools
Serving Elementary-Age Students: October 2015

School District	School Name	Grades	Total Enrollment	% Free or Reduced Lunch
Bainbridge Island	Blakely Elementary	K-4	354	4.8%
	Commodore Center	K-12	316	6.0%
	Ordway Elementary	K-4	388	11.1%
	Sakai Intermediate School	5-6	583	8.7%
	Wilkes Elementary	K-4	375	6.1%
Bremerton	Armin Jahr Elementary	K-5	438	74.0%
	Crown Hill Elementary	K-5	452	56.6%
	Kitsap Lake Elementary	K-5	433	47.1%
	Naval Avenue Elementary	K-3	377	62.3%
	View Ridge Elementary	K-5	484	63.0%
	West Hills Elementary	K-8	603	68.0%
Central Kitsap	Brownsville Elementary	4-6	465	24.3%
	Clear Creek Elementary	4-6	556	47.3%
	Cottonwood Elementary	4-6	410	38.0%
	Cougar Valley Elementary	4-6	542	28.4%
	Emerald Heights Elementary	4-6	590	19.5%
	Esquire Hills Elementary	4-6	385	52.7%
	Green Mountain Elementary	4-6	412	32.0%
	Jackson Park Elementary	4-6	519	44.9%
	Pinecrest Elementary	4-6	444	43.9%
	Silver Ridge Elementary	4-6	410	31.0%
	Silverdale Elementary	4-6	423	33.3%
	Woodlands Elementary	4-6	454	52.4%
North Kitsap	Pal Program	4-12	62	21.0%
	Pearson Elementary School	K-5	347	32.3%
	Poulsbo Elementary School	K-5	555	31.5%
	Richard Gordon Elementary School	K-8	462	27.3%
	Suquamish Elementary School	K-5	386	50.0%
	Vinland Elementary School	K-5	626	29.7%
	Wolfe Elementary School	K-5	382	54.2%
South Kitsap	Bethany Lutheran School	K-8	90	4.4%
	Burley Glenwood Elementary	K-6	553	43.4%
	East Port Orchard Elementary School	K-6	524	51.1%
	ECEAP/Headstart Programs (P/S)	PK	144	100.0%
	Hidden Creek Elementary	K-6	534	40.3%
	Madrona PreSchool	PK	80	50.0%
	Manchester Elementary	K-6	378	42.1%
	Mullenix Ridge Elementary	K-6	516	25.8%
	Olalla Elementary	K-6	352	41.5%
	Orchard Heights Elementary	K-6	757	46.2%
	Sidney Glen Elementary	K-6	687	48.9%
	South Colby Elementary	K-6	398	20.9%
	Sunnyslope Elementary	K-6	512	31.3%

KEY INFORMANTS

KCR would like to extend our special thanks to the key informants who gave this assessment the benefit of their expertise, experiences and observations.

Mayor Patty Lent	Mike Gordon
Mayor Rob Putaansuu	David Rasmussen
Mayor Val Tollefson	Carl Borg
Doug Washburn	Kurt Wiest
Joe Roszak	Stuart Grogan
Jennifer Kriedler-Moss	Brian Pickard
John Powers	Annette Sharpe
Gina Lindal	Kathleen Wilson
Ursula Petters	Lionel Collins
Leonard Forsman	Denise Frey
Ed Wolfe	Harriette Bryant
Rob Gelder	
Dr. Susan Turner	
Dr. Aaron Leavell	
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Patty Page	
David McVicker	
Cheri Williams	
Stasha Dennard	
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Dr. David Mitchell	
Ray Garrido	
Sherriff Gary Simpson	
Chief Steve Strachan	
Kol Medina	
David Schultz	
Tina Robinson	

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