

# Children in the States

# WASHINGTON

July 2015



## Child Population

**1,602,721 children lived in Washington in 2014; 42 percent were children of color.**

- 58 percent were White
- 21 percent were Hispanic
- 4 percent were Black
- 7 percent were Asian
- 8 percent were two or more races
- 1 percent were American Indian/Alaska Native
- 1 percent were Pacific Islander

## Child Poverty

**Nearly 1 in 5 (18.8 percent) of Washington's children were poor in 2013, a total of 295,069 children.<sup>1</sup>**

- Washington ranked 22<sup>nd</sup> in child poverty among states.<sup>2</sup>
- More than 1 in 13 children lived in extreme poverty at less than half the poverty level.
- The youngest children were the poorest age group. Nearly 1 in 5 children under age 6 were poor; more than 2 in 5 of the poor children were extremely poor.

**Children of color in Washington are disproportionately poor.**

- More than 2 in 5 Black children, 1 in 3 Hispanic children, and nearly 1 in 3 American Indian/Native Alaskan children were poor in 2013, compared to more than 1 in 8 White children.

## Child Hunger and Homelessness

**Child poverty in Washington leads to unacceptable child homelessness and hunger.**

- Nearly 31,000 Washington public school students were homeless in the 2012-2013 school year.
- In 2014, 2 full-time minimum-wage jobs were necessary to be able to afford a fair market rent two-bedroom apartment in Washington and still have enough left over for food, utilities and other necessities.
- More than 23 percent of children lived in households that lacked access to adequate food in 2013. More than 26 percent of children ages 10-17 were overweight or obese in 2011-2012. Washington ranked 32<sup>nd</sup> of 50 states in child food security and 6<sup>th</sup> in percent of children overweight and obese.
- Nearly 27 percent of Washington children relied on the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) to meet their nutritional needs on an average month in FY2013.
- Nearly 89 percent of Washington children receiving a free and reduced-price lunch during the school year did not participate in Summer Nutrition Programs in 2014 – ranking Washington 36<sup>th</sup> of 50 states in ensuring that children have adequate summer nutrition.

## Child Health

**Although the majority of Washington's children have access to health coverage, that does not guarantee enrollment in coverage or access to care, which can jeopardize their education and their future.**

- In 2013, 88.0 percent of eligible children participated in Apple Health or Apple Health for Kids, Washington's Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP). In FY2013, a total of 768,387 Washington children ages 0-18 were enrolled in Apple Health, and 44,073 in Apple Health for Kids.

<sup>1</sup> A family of four was poor if it was living on less than \$23,834 a year, \$1,986 a month, \$458 a week and \$65 a day, and extremely poor if living on less than \$11,917 a year, \$993 a month, \$229 a week and \$33 a day.

<sup>2</sup> The state ranked 1<sup>st</sup> is the best for children for that outcome and the state ranked 50<sup>th</sup> is the worst for children.

- Nearly 95,000 Washington children ages 0-17 (5.9 percent) were uninsured in 2013. The state had the 24<sup>th</sup> highest rate of uninsured children among states.
- In 2012, 67,000 uninsured children ages 0-18 were eligible for Apple Health or Apple Health for Kids but not enrolled.

## **Early Childhood and Education**

### **Lack of early childhood investments deprives children of critical supports in the early years and reduces school readiness.**

- In 2013, the average annual cost of center-based child care for an infant was \$12,332 – 14.1 percent more than the average annual in-state tuition and fees at a public four-year college in Washington.
- Washington did not have a waiting list for child care assistance in early 2014.
- On average, 40 percent of Washington’s 3- and 4-year-olds were enrolled in public or private preschool from 2011-2013. Only 29 percent of children from families with incomes under 200 percent of poverty were enrolled.
- Washington’s state-funded preschool program only met 9 of the 10 quality benchmarks set by the National Institute for Early Education Research in 2013-2014.

### **Washington’s schools fail to educate all children, closing off a crucial pathway out of poverty.**

- In 2013, 60 percent of Washington’s fourth grade public school students were unable to read at grade level and 52 percent were unable to compute at grade level.
  - 75 percent of Black fourth graders could not read at grade level and 71 percent could not compute.
  - 81 percent of Hispanic fourth graders could not read at grade level and 76 percent could not compute.
- 79 percent of Washington public high school students graduated on time in 2012, placing Washington 30<sup>th</sup> among states. 57 percent of Black students and 79 percent of Hispanic students graduated on time compared to 80 percent of White students.
- Students who are suspended or expelled are more likely to drop out of school. During the 2011-2012 school year, 8 percent of Washington public secondary school students received at least one out-of-school suspension, placing Washington 14<sup>th</sup> among 48 ranked states. For Black and Hispanic students, the percentages were 19 percent and 11 percent, respectively.

## **Children Facing Special Risks**

### **Many vulnerable children need treatment, services and permanent families.**

- In Washington, 7,132 children were abused or neglected in 2013 – 4.5 out of 1,000 children.
- On the last day of FY2013, there were 10,339 Washington children in foster care.

### **Too many Washington children are involved in the juvenile justice system.**

- 1,062 children and youth were in residential placement in 2011. 16 percent of the children in residential placement were Black, 23 percent were Hispanic, and 48 percent were White.
- 24 Washington children were in adult jails in 2013.
- Washington spent 3.7 times as much per prisoner as per public school student in FY2012.

### **Washington ranked 4<sup>th</sup> out of 41 ranked states in preventing child and teen gun deaths.**

- A total of 35 children and teens were killed by guns in Washington in 2013—a rate of 2.0 out of 100,000 children and teens.

For sources please visit [www.childrensdefense.org/cits](http://www.childrensdefense.org/cits)